

"Sitrep, Over!"



JUNE 2014



Points of interest

- "An Experience of War" Part 4
- Did You Know that MONOPOLY played a part in the Allied victory in WW2?
- Just Soldiers
- Guest Speaker for June 15th Lunch
- ANZAC Day 2014 at Villers- Bretonneux was attended by member Chris Acton. See his report on Page 7.
- How To Contact Us -Page 8

Inside this issue:



Newsletter edited by David Laing 0407 791 822

Official Newsletter of the

e Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

An Experience of War.

Part 4

6 RAR's introduction to the Vietnam War began with the search and destruction of the deserted Long Phuoc village; a former nest of Viet Cong and communist sympathisers. The operation was uneventful except for harassment from snipers, who fortunately proved to be poor shots, the discovery of a tunnel system and the seizure of rice, documents and weapons.

In these early days I think we all thought this was another exercise but with a little more excitement. I treated and evacuated one soldier for a severe scalp laceration caused by a high velocity roof tile from the blowing up of the village chief's house. I also evacuated one man who had a high temperature, severe headaches and nausea. I was to learn later that he was suffering encephalitis, or cerebral malaria, from which he tragically died. This was a powerful incentive for us to take precautions against mosquito bites.

It was on this operation that my mates were highly amused at my expense in a night time incident and it is one which illustrates the difficulties when treating casualties in total darkness. Soon after 'stand down' a soldier crawled to my hutchie and hissed to me "Doc, I've been bitten by a scorpion!". A scorpion! "Christ", I thought. How do I treat that?" In the blackness of the night I examined him as best I could by touch and feel. Swelling on his arm was producing heat and he complained of localised pain and nausea. None of the first aid books I had read referred to scorpion bites – so what was I to do? The only solution was to get advice from the RMO, which necessitated my groping and stumbling in the darkness to reach company headquarters to speak by radio. This I did and I returned to my hutchie the same way. The RMO was not particularly helpful as he suggested that I give the man pain relief and take hourly observations.

Sitting wide awake throughout the night I measured the pulse and respiration of the bitten soldier who lay in my hutchie fast asleep and sighing softly. He awoke at morning 'stand to' to announce that he felt terrific and that he had had the best sleep in ages. I felt like 'shit'. Not surprisingly, anyone subsequently bitten by a scorpion got far less sympathy from me.

Another aspect to this story was that in the darkness I could not readily distinguish the difference between my supplies of codeine for pain relief, sulphur tablets for diarrhoea and others for fungal conditions, all of which were encased in identical plastic tubes. Later, I taught myself by trial and error to recognise the tablets by biting into them and identifying each by their texture and taste. I am reasonably confident that from then on my sick and injured were given the appropriate remedy.

6 RAR, like all battalion's of the day, had an RAAMC Medical Assistant and an infantry stretcherbearer at rifle company headquarters and a stretcher-bearer in each platoon. I had the assistance of this quota of bearers although I frequently went on operations without one or more of them. When they were available they were a tower of strength to me.

I will digress for a moment to relate my most fearful experience in Vietnam. My company headquarters stretcher-bearer corporal was a 'marriedy' with a couple of kids. With everything to live for he certainly didn't want to die. But die, he almost did when I accidentally fired my Owen sub-machine gun; the bullet missing his head by millimetres. He sat paralysed; and in his face, suddenly drained of blood, I saw fear and horror. I trembled uncontrollably; shocked, frightened and speechless.

I had very nearly killed my mate through inattention and too little respect for a loaded weapon. This was a salutary lesson for me, and one that I was never to repeat although others did and men were killed or severely wounded in the process. My powerful message here is to not let this happen to you. Be respectful of your weapon and concentrate always on what you are doing. **Continued next month**

BOOK REVIEW "THE FORTY EIGHT" by Drew Ellis



This year marks the Centenary of the start of The Great War: The War to End all Wars; World War 1. In 1914 many thousands of young Australians answered the "Call of the Motherland" and marched off to fight the dark cloud of tyranny in Europe. Most returned. Many did not.

This new book, "The Forty Eight" by **Drew Ellis** tells the story of the AIF men from one small SA country town. A nearly-perfect representative rural town in the South East; Keith.

All the 48 are named on the town's AIF Memorial, and although many came from Keith, others hailed from all over the states' South East

Drawing primarily from their Service records, Drew has painstakingly constructed the stories of the men's service in the First AIF. He also describes and gives context to the battles in which the men fought and died.

The book also includes two war diaries which capture the wartime experience from two distinct perspectives. One from a 44 year old blacksmith-soldier, and the other from a 23 year old member of a Light Horse Field Ambulance unit.

With the foreword written by Peter Goers OAM, The Forty Eight stands to become an important historical and biographical resource. It would be of interest to anybody who is connected with the state's South East, or anybody who has an interest in our AIF soldiers.

Peter Goers says of the book:

Drew Ellis has given us an excellent, comprehensive and beautifully wrought biography of the 48 united by Keith and war. The 48 whose service, sacrifice and struggle is crucial to the spirit of our nation. The volunteer spirit. This spirit never dies.

The family names of the men were:

Dall	Stewart	Tassie
Heath	Densley	Wells
McIntyre	McMutrie	Brailey
Pike	Redman	Harris
Schwark	Bice	Hill
Pilmore	Kennett	Mogg
Brinkworth	Gill	Hender
Taylor	Axford	Fidler
McBain	Miell	Mosely
Reeves	Smith	Hantke
Fulwood	Graves	

(Amongst them were several sets of brothers and a father and son pair.)

As well as being an important book for individuals, it should be considered an essential addition to the collections at every good community, military and school library as well as RSL Clubs.



The book is available by contacting the Author direct on

drewjellis@live.com

Or it can be ordered over the internet by contacting

www.yourbooksonline.com.au

Part 1

Just Soldiers

Sergeant Lawrence Barber, MM

Orders are orders and in times of war soldiers will carry out those orders, even when faced with certain death.

Lawrence Walter Barber was born in February 1894 and some might say he was destined to be a soldier. He was raised in the Sydney suburb of Granville and joined the compulsory, military cadet scheme at the age of 12.

Young Barber so enjoyed the discipline and mateship of military life that, in 1912, he enlisted in the local militia unit, the 20th Battalion. By March 1913, he had attained the rank of sergeant and was promoted to colour sergeant in March 1914. By the time war broke out in September of the same year he had been promoted to Regimental Sergeant Major of the 20th Battalion. In October 1915, Barber joined the Permanent Instructional Corps as a staff sergeant major, on a salary of three pounds a week. He enlisted in the AIF with the rank of substantive sergeant in March 1917 and was posted to the 36th Battalion. Barber arrived in France in February 1918 and joined his battalion on the Western Front in the stinking, mud-filled trenches of Messines, where the AIF had been bogged down in a stalemated winter campaign. The Diggers had three priorities: stay dry, stay warm and stay alive. For all too many Australian soldiers these proved beyond their reach.

On 12 April 1918, the 34th and 36th Battalions were holding the brigade front at Hangard Wood. The battalions' outpost line extended south from the wood, then eastwards around the northern flank of the jutting spur nicknamed '99'. At the southern foot of this spur lay the village of Hangard. The 165th French Infantry Regiment was positioned to the extreme right flank. Opposing the Diggers and their French allies were three crack German regiments, supported by both medium and heavy artillery units.

The post, which lay astride the Australian/French boundary, was commanded by Lieutenant HM Colyer, a 31-year-old school teacher from Sydney—his second-in-command was Sergeant Barber. Each morning Lieutenant Colyer would visit his French

counterpart at the next outpost and discuss the day's activities. One morning, as Lieutenant Colver made his way back to his men, the Germans launched a devastating artillery barrage, which caught the officer stranded in the open where he was hit by a 5.9-inch German shell that blew him to pieces. Sergeant Barber immediately assumed command of the post. As the German shells slammed into the Allied position, they showered the Diggers manning the post with red-hot splinters. Suddenly a shell scored a direct hit and as the smoke cleared the one lone survivor began to stir. It was Barber. The blast from the projectile had buried him under a deep layer of dirt, protecting him from the deadly metal fragments. As he recovered from the impact, he slowly began to dig himself free.

He crawled to a battered Lewis gun nearby and mounted it ready for action. When the smoke in the valley cleared, Barber could see the German infantry



AWM E04851. Gassed Australian soldiers lying out in the open at an overcrowded aid post near Bois de l'Abbe. They have been gassed in the operations in front of Villers-Bretonneux. These casualties should have removed affected uniforms. Lying on the ground with contaminated clothes and not wearing respirators means that they are inhaling quantities of vapour and adding to their injuries.

swarming towards him from two different directions. He sighted the leaders of the first group and fired. In between bursts, he sent up the SOS signal, guiding the French guns to bring down a barrage of artillery fire on the advancing Germans. Barber's Lewis gun eventually stopped firing as a result of the damage it had sustained but the company commander, Captain Gadd immediately sent up his reserve gun with orders for Barber to hold his ground and keep firing. **Final Part Next Month** By courtesy Darryl Kelly and ADCC Publications. Kelly, Darryl 2004, Just Soldiers, ADCC Publications, Brisbane, pg 1 to 4

Be who you are and say what you feel....Because those that matter.... don't mind....And those that mind.... don't matter!

RETURN TO INDEX

Letters to the Editor re:- Closure of Fort Largs

A story was aired recently of the State Governments intention to sell off the old Fort Largs military establishment for housing development. http://www.weekendnotes.com/fort-largs-under-threat-of-demolition/

Mike Phillips from NSW adds his thoughts.

Hí Davíd,

A couple of things about Fort Largs. As a small boy I visited the Fort on several occasions, a chap called (I think) Reg Williams was a friend of my parents and he and his family as I recall, lived at Fort Largs. I think he was a Captain in the ARA, and probably had some sort of a caretaker role in the early 50s. I remember the Fort as being, in those days, miles from anywhere, but I guess with West Lakes et al suburbia must be on the Fort's doorstep.

The other matter I thought worth raising is the fact that many of the old Army installations around Sydney Harbour have been disposed of in the past few years, but rather than becoming the site of housing developments, the buildings have been preserved in many cases and are being used as restaurants and cafes with sensational outlooks. There is now an Artillery Museum at North Head and the old gun emplacements are part of a very interesting tour. The old Artillery Officers' Mess was even used in the making of a couple of the "Biggest Loser" series!

I'm sure the people interested in preserving the old military establishments have looked at the NSW sites, but I just thought it may be of interest to some people,

Cheers,

Míke.

Mike Phillips Honorary Secretary, RAAC Corporation Ltd., Paddington NSW 2021. E. mike.phillips2@defence.gov.au

Editorial

ANZAC Day 2014 has come and gone, and with it the attention given to those brave souls who gave their all so that we may enjoy ours. However we should not just pay homage to our ANZAC forebears on this one day of the year. Our lives are governed by societies which demand equal rights and free speech for all, penalties for racial vilification, and mainstream focus on job losses and welfare benefits.

The people we remember on ANZAC Day each year had no such luxury: to be able to have a say in the way their lives would go was not even thought of. They put up their hand to fight in wars, usually in far off places they had never heard of, so their mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers could live freely in a society that has become the Australian way of life.

Whilst we go our own way for another year, we must constantly remember not only those who never returned from the battlefields, but those who bought home with them everlasting memories of the horror of armed conflict. We need to remember the surviving soldiers who were on the ground in Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan, and whilst the majority returned home to their loved ones, a large percentage are suffering from the unseen effects of their service, and the havoc it's memories have played with their minds.

Every day I look at the wall where my fathers' medals hang, and I thank him for the war service he gave so that I might live my life a free man. Every day I think of friends my age who served in the South East Asian conflicts and my younger friends who have in recent years returned from overseas missions, my daughter amongst them. And I know that whilst we have brave, self-less Australians like them, we will always enjoy this freedom and the liberties it brings.

We must never forget the sacrifices they still make. LEST WE FORGET.

David Laing

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RETURN TO INDEX

"Sitrep, Over!"



Private Gomad reckons......

TO ME MISSUS!!

Of course I love ya darling You're a bloody top-notch bird And when I say you're gorgeous I mean every single word

So ya bum is on the big side I don't mind a bit of flab It means that when I'm ready There's somethin' there ta grab

So your belly isn't flat no more I tell ya, I don't care So long as when I cuddle ya I can get my arms round there

No bird who is your age Has nice round perky breasts They just gave in to gravity But I know ya did ya best

I'm tellin' ya the truth now I never tell ya lies I think it's very sexy That you've got dimples on ya thighs

I swear on me nanna's grave now The moment that we met I thought you was as good as I was ever gonna get

No matter what u look like I'll always love ya dear Now shut up while the footies' on And fetch another beer!

Brings a lump to ya throat don't it!!

MONOPOLY, and its' part in winning World War 2

Monopoly - Some very interesting facts about one of our favourite board games, sent in by member Chris Acton.

Starting in 1941, an increasing number of British Airmen found themselves as the involuntary guests of the Third Reich, and the Crown was casting about for ways and means to facilitate their escape...

Now obviously, one of the most helpful aids to that end is a useful and accurate map, one showing not only where stuff was, but also showing the locations of 'safe houses' where a POW on-the-lam could go for food and shelter.

Paper maps had some real drawbacks -- they make a lot of noise when you open and fold them, they wear out rapidly, and if they get wet, they turn into mush. Someone in MI-5 (similar to America 's OSS) got the idea of printing escape maps on silk. It's durable, can be scrunched-up into tiny wads and unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise whatsoever.

At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk, and that was John Waddington, Ltd. When approached by the government, the firm was only too happy to do its bit for the war effort.

By pure coincidence, Waddington was also the U.K. Licensee for the popular American board game, Monopoly. As it happened, 'games and pastimes' was a category of item qualified for insertion into 'CARE packages', dispatched by the International Red Cross to prisoners of war.

Under the strictest of secrecy, in a securely guarded and inaccessible old workshop on the grounds of Waddington's, a group of sworn-tosecrecy employees began mass-producing escape maps, keyed to each region of Germany or Italy where Allied POW camps were regional system). When processed, these maps could be folded into such tiny dots that they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece.

As long as they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add:

1. A playing token, containing a small magnetic compass

2. A two-part metal file that could easily be screwed together

3. Useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian, and French currency, hidden within the piles of Monopoly money!

British and American air crews were advised, before taking off on their first mission, how to identify a 'rigged' Monopoly set -- by means of a tiny red dot, one cleverly rigged to look like an ordinary printing glitch, located in the corner of the Free Parking square. Of the estimated 35,000 Allied POWS who successfully escaped, an estimated one-third was aided in their flight by the rigged Monopoly sets. Everyone who did so was sworn to secrecy indefinitely, since the British Government might want to use this highly successful ruse in still another, future war.

The story wasn't declassified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's, as well as the firm itself, were finally honoured in a public ceremony. It's always nice when you can play that 'Get out of Jail' Free' card! I realize some of you are (probably) too young to have any personal connection to WWII (Sept. '39 to Aug. '45), but this is still very interesting.

The stories and opinions that appear in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Committee of Management, nor any other members of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc (Metro). All stories and articles are reprinted with permission of the authors. With humorous articles, no intention to offend is intended in any way. If any offence is taken, the Editor can be contacted on 0407 791 822.

Letters to the Editor - From Villers– Bretonneux 2014

RSARA Member Chris Acton attended the Dawn Service this year at one of the first ANZAC battlefields on the Western Front. Here is his report.

Hí Davíd,

I have just attended the Anzac Day Dawn Service which was held at the Australian National Memorial here at Villers-Bretonneux. The weather this morning was very cold and we left for the service at 3am as we are located in Amiens. The trip to the memorial took around 20 minutes but then our guide had to negotiate many of the road closures and this took another 10 minutes or so but finally we arrived and even at this time it was apparent that there was going to be a very big crowd.

As we disembarked I happened to run into an old friend who is working at the Australian embassy in London. He was there to work the French security team and he explained that were 20 agents working in the crowd and he described them as very professional with one problem and that was the concealed weapons they were carrying. Evidently each agent has a concealed sub machine gun with 5 magazines plus a hand grenade. He was pretty alarmed at the weapons they had selected and he said if anything happened and the security agents responded they would take out more Australians than terrorists. I could see his point.



There was also a helicopter with thermal imaging flying around the area as at last years event they had detected two Bulgarians who were considered a threat. So without anyone realising it this event was being covered with a very aggressive security screen. I doubt you will see any mention of this aspect of the service in the press.

The Australian National Memorial is quiet spectacular in itself especially lit up like it was on a hillside. It is a wonderful tribute to our fallen boys but also to those who did survive the carnage of the western front. In our travels over the past few days which have included visits to Menin Gate , Fromelles and several other areas where our troops fought, the realisation of the magnitude of

the sacrifice these blokes made and terrible conditions and dare I say it, but the leadership of some of the Generals makes you think just how futile some aspects of this war were. I think a good example is Fromelles which was the first major battle the Australians fought. In just 24 hours we had more than 5500 casualties. That is a hell of an introduction to war on the western front. The Dawn Service was well organised but from my perspective a few too many speeches, particularly those in French. Never the less the service was emotional at times and there was good participation from the crowd singing hymns and our national anthem. The catafalque party was mounted by members of our Federation Guard and they were spot on with their drills. There were a number of other service personnel present from all arms of our services.

Look I would like to say this was the best Dawn Service that I have attended but for me it lacked that pure emotion I would normally feel. I can compare it to a Dawn Service I attended at Gallipoli back in 1998 and that was emotional and also our own Dawn Service in Adelaide which always evokes a strong reaction when remembering our fallen lads. Everything about the service went like clock work but I just felt it was sterile even though we were surrounded by the graves of our fallen Diggers. It just seems to me that for Villers-Bretonneux and the surrounding cities it is a very big tourist event. We see it as sacred and they see it as tourism. But that said the event is a wonderful recognition of the Australians who fought and died here during World War 1.

Best regards and I hope to catch up with you soon,

Chris Acton



"Sitrep, Over!"

Official Newsletter of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

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Find us on FACEBOOK

www.rsara.asn.au

Meet our new team member - JESSE HUMPHRYS

Association Webmaster Frank Morony has done a marvellous job creating and managing our website, and we thank him wholeheartedly for his brilliant efforts. We also thank Franks' very understanding wife Brenda for not beating him senseless with his own computer on a number of occasions, and hope they continue their loving marriage for many years to come :-)



We recently placed an advertisement for an Assistant Webmaster to help Frank with the day -to-day administration of the website, and we're pleased to announce the successful applicant is **Jesse Humphrys**. 27 year old Jesse runs his own pro fitness gym at Windsor Gardens, has been an Army reservist with 10th/27th Battalion for 5 years and is a serving member of the RSAR Association.

Jesse created his own website for his business, and with Frank's involvement it is hoped they can keep up their good work and make some additions within <u>our</u> website. To check out Jesse's own website AND his workplace, visit www.crossfitproficient.com.au

I'm sure all members of the Association will give Jesse a warm welcome, and we look forward to seeing some of his innovations on the website in the very near future.

GUEST SPEAKER FOR JUNE 15th LUNCHEON

The Guest Speaker at the June luncheon is to be **Lieutenant Colonel Graham Goodwin**, Commanding Officer of 10th/27th Battalion RSAR. Graham recently returned from a deployment to Timor Leste as Operations Commander, and he will give an insight into his role and the peacekeeping operation involving Australian troops.

The luncheon will be held at the Royal Hotel, North Terrace, Kent Town on **Sunday** 15th June at midday in the upstairs Functions Room. Full bar facilities will be available at the Functions Room Bar.

Seating is limited, therefore anyone wishing to attend is asked to contact Norm Rathmann on 0448 460 884 or email Norm on <u>normgeelong@yahoo.com</u> to reserve their seat.

Ancient Chinese Acoverbs 従編輯器的話 · J'f you want no one to know, don't do it! · · Jo know the road ahead, ask those returning! · · Don't waste your hour - the sun sets soon! · · Lorget the favours given. Remember those received! · · Jo stop drinking, study a drunkard while you are sober!