

"Sitrep, Over!"

Official Newsletter of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc



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Exercise Hamel

by Pte Laclan Harris B Coy

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Years in the planning, 'Hamel 2016' was the main training exercise 10/27 RSAR and supporting elements from 9 Brigade prepared for. Under Plan Beersheba, each of the three regular brigades would be supported by two reserve brigades. For us, that meant Battle group Jacka, consisting of 9 Brigade (SA & TAS) and 4 Brigade (VIC), would be "ready" and capable of supporting 1 Brigade on operations.

For this purpose, we were issued regular army gear – the Tiered Body Armour System (TBAS – a combined body armour and webbing package) and helmets early in the year in time for Ex. Predator's Gallop in March. Brand new Land 125 packs were distributed just in time for Ex. Hamel.

Early on Saturday, July 2nd, after a short address from the CO & RSM at Keswick barracks, we took a short bus ride to Edinburgh, where we were briefed on safety and the conduct of the exercise. The scenario involved the ADF and allied forces stopping Islamic state from taking control of Whyalla. Our platoon was formed into an Orbat and issued weapons and equipment. On Sunday morning, we drove to Cultana in Bushmasters, one section per "Bushy". Our section's Bushy, "Aquila", would be our home for the following 8 days.

Cultana

We arrived at Cultana early afternoon, stopping outside of Camp Baxter for more briefings and equipment, before heading to our night location at 1 Brigade HQ. For most of us, it was our first time working with the Bushies and they were quickly appreciated. They protected us from wind chill, making piquet more comfortable and thankfully carried our packs – marching order was close to 50kg! They also provided extra food (notably Weetbix and milk!), gas for hot water, and electricity to sustain our mobile

phones. This enabled Facebook time, which was a big morale boost, but no doubt left 'old-school' soldiers shaking their heads! Nonetheless, we remained focused on our main task – to protect the mobile command centre, which was coordinating friendly troop movements. Arriving at the new position, July 4th, we patrolled forward to clear an area in front of the HQ. Our platoon formed the inner layer of protection, while friendly forces operated all around us. As such, no enemies were spotted on our patrols around the position. By



Pte Harris' section in front of their Bushmaster "Aquila" during Ex Hamel

Exercise Hamelcontinued

Friday morning, July 8th, with the frontline advancing, we re-located and cleared a rocky hill that overlooked a patch of woods where the HQ was re-established. This position was occupied for two days, before we re-located and cleared a new position.

Due to 1 Brigade securing victory that evening, earlier than expected, we filled in pits that had been dug only hours before and left, another example of the Army's unpredictable nature! By Monday morning, July 11th, we were cleared of ammunition and ready to leave Cultana. Our next task was to head to Port Pirie to guard the helicopters that had been supporting the exercise; 6 Tiger attack helicopters, 3 Chinook transports and 3 MRH-90's.

Port Pirie

We arrived at the Port Pirie aerodrome mid-afternoon, taking over the security tasks from the airfield defence guards (ADG's). Just when we thought our war was over, we were issued blank ammo and immediately came under attack from an enemy party that were meant to be unleashed on the ADG's. That was the only "fighting" we got into, and the next few days were spent guarding the base, particularly the billion dollars' worth of helicopters! Each of the sections rotated between manning the gate, QRF and rest.

The highlight was undoubtedly the helicopter ride, a new experience for most of us. After a safety brief, we were separated into groups and flew in either a Chinook or MRH-90. The Chinook proved to be surprisingly agile as the scenic half-hour flight over Port Pirie and the surrounding wetlands featured tight turns and simulated low gravity. With end-ex in sight, only the post battle maintenance on the choppers stood between us and the trip home.

The last helicopters flew out on Saturday morning, July 16th. We departed for Keswick, where we returned weapons, disassembled our TBAS and handed in helmets and packs. The OC thanked us for our efforts, and we were released, free to enjoy the rest of our weekend!

Private Lachlan Harris

B Coy 10th/ 27th Battalion RSAR

Editors Note: *Private Harris was one of hundreds of soldiers from South Australia who took part in a very gruelling 2 weeks of crucial training in the far north of SA during July 2016. We thank him for taking the time to give our readers an insight into how the Australian Army works today, and hopefully he and his mates can keep us up to date with their future adventures.*

Annual Fees now due

The Charter of the RSAR Association is "To Perpetuate the Regiment" and one of the ways we do that is to provide awards, trophies, musical instruments and BBQ meals to soldiers of the 10th/27th Battalion at various times. We can't do this without your help by way of subscriptions, and they are due every year at or after the AGM in early August.

With our serving members, we allow them the first year FREE, and **\$10** per year after that whilst still serving. We currently have 54 serving members, most of them within 10/27 Bn RSAR, and your fees will go a long way to helping us achieve our goals.

Gentlemen and ladies, if you are a current serving member, and you haven't yet paid, **YOUR FEES ARE NOW DUE.**

You can pay your \$10 by EFT to:

BSB **015 211**
Account **482 441 406**

In the name of Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc.

Please remember to include an identifier such as your surname, so the payment can be matched to you.

ie:- "Smith 2016 FEES."

Or send a cheque or money order to the address on Page 6. Your support helps us continue OUR support to the Regiment.

THANK YOU

How the Anzac tradition gave a little 'new Australian' girl a chance

The following is a story posted in Veterans SA newsletter from Professor Pamela Schultz OAM about her late father's role in WW2. It makes for compelling reading.



It was a typical hot summer's day in Houghton in the Adelaide Hills. The primary school playground was abuzz with children playing cricket and throwing balls around. One little girl however, was getting a hard time from a boy named Jack. He didn't like the look of her lunch box (it had strange looking cheese in it) and the fact that she had a funny name and a weird accent. Only being in grade 3, she was frightened of the tall grade 7 boy, plus the odds were stacked against her - Jack was a good cricketer and played well in the local junior competition, and she had surmised, was probably good at footy too.

"Why don't you go back to where you came from you dirty Dutchy" Jack snarled menacingly. This young school bully was unaware that this little girl's dad Leo, had won the Dutch Bronze Cross for Bravery and Valour for fighting under fire against the Nazi menace, serving as he did, alongside the Allies. Leo was presented with this award at Buckingham Palace in 1943, by the late Queen of the Netherlands - Queen Wilhelmina - while she was living in exile there with the British Royal Family.

Her dad had been very impressed with his Australian comrades. He had nothing but praise for them because of their brave sorties behind enemy lines dropping food parcels and other supplies to the Dutch people, who in WWII were being systematically starved to death by the Nazis. There is actually a vague legend in his family that one of these planes was shot down, landing in Venlo in the southern part of The Netherlands, and that some members of her father's community saved and protected two Aussie Allied pilots who survived the crash and hid them in cellars from the enemy.

When he travelled to Whitehall in the United Kingdom for an intelligence briefing not only did he meet his English sweetheart, Betty (who also worked in intelligence) but (apparently) his intelligence colleagues told him "Adelaide was the safest place in the world that he could possibly bring his family to." A few years later, Leo and Betty (who herself had lived through the London Blitz) set a course for South Australia arriving in 1953, joining Leo's younger brother who had arrived here 18 months earlier. Together they worked and managed an apple orchard at Paracombe as Leo's intelligence and medical credentials proved non-transferable at this time.

But on this day, some year's later, when Leo's only daughter was in the playground cowering to avoid some rubbish being thrown at her by Jack, she felt very small and vulnerable. Suddenly a loud voice boomed across the playground - "What do you think you are doing Jack? That is no way to treat a young lady! And do you realise that men have fought and died for this country so that we can live in peace! Listen carefully children..." Twenty five boys and girls gathered round this craggy faced man - our School Principal (Mr William H Cropley) to learn what he considered to be an important life lesson.

"Boys and girls we are going to hear about the bravery and the story of the ANZACs. They were this amazing group of men who, despite the odds, fought bravely and did their best for their mates in terrible circumstances. This form of mateship is what makes Australia special." Then he added in a very strong, firm voice - "Now we have a new mate here at our School. She is from another country and speaks another language, but she wants what you want - a safe place to eat and play in the school playground. Our Anzac tradition shows that when things get rough and the situation is deadly, we can rely upon the Anzac way of dealing with it; strong and powerful help, provided to those who are in need of it".

The Principal went on to tell the story of Simpson and his donkey. He also described the concept of international cooperation between allies, and how Australians, fighting on the other side of the world, had travelled, at great cost to those at home and to themselves, to help defeat the enemies of the British Empire in WWI and the Axis forces in WW2. He related his strong views

about the Australian Government's call to our country's people to help build a strong and peaceful Australia in post WW2. He believed this could not happen without our new mates from other countries coming to Australia to support and help build our nation. What a gem this man was, particularly, as you may have guessed it, that this little 'new Australian' girl was me. He was an inspiration to me and many others; firm, fair and fiercely intelligent.

The "Anzac Book" written by Charles Bean and the men of the AIF at Gallipoli, became the focus of our history lessons for the remainder of that term. This tiny primary school in the Adelaide Hills remains so special to me because of this man's intervention on that day. His actions showed me that one person can make a real and important difference to another. Because of those Anzac lessons, I have been inspired to attend an Anzac Day Service and the march every year since. Plus over the years I've become a proud member of the defence family, finding ways to serve the defence community in my civilian life as my way of paying forward what this man and this country have done for me.

During this Anzac Centenary I think it is very important that we stop and take the time to thank all the Anzacs from across history and from across time who have served this country, and who have inspired others in our community to honour the Anzac tradition and legacy.

Our Anzacs did so much more than go to war and fight alongside our allies. Indeed the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is often the first responder when our neighbours and allies need help in times of disaster or catastrophe. Think of the wonderful men and women in uniform who were part of RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands). They upheld the Anzac tradition there by helping to build the Solomon Islands nation from the ground up. There is the support our ADF provided for Timor-Leste – one of the World's newest nations. Or the devastating tsunami that ravaged Indonesia and the islands to our north, to which Australian forces deployed to assist our mates in trouble there.

These actions exemplify what the Anzac tradition really represents - supporting mates when they are in need. Many may not know that since Federation, in addition to our full time forces, over one million Australians have volunteered to serve in Australia's Reserve Forces (formerly known as Civilian Military Forces) and that they too are significant members of our country's defence force capability.

Sure this story is about a school principal who we might have expected to do what he did in standing up for me that day. But that does not diminish the way in which he chose to do it. He used the Anzac values to instil in me and the other children, a lifelong pride in the Anzac tradition, and I have no doubt, in many other children who passed through that school.

There are many examples of this sharing of Anzac values across our nation. Teachers and Principals alike, members of our community, volunteers, ex-servicemen and defence force personnel, families who have servicemen and women who have or have not seen active service, been injured or not returned; all these Australians honour and share the Anzac tradition in their own particular way.

For me, it is the act of communicating the Anzac values and the way in which this is done, that has ensured that the great tradition of Anzac continues. The phrase "Service above self" encapsulates this. It is something I learned from both my father and from Mr Cropley. It has been reinforced in me by my defence colleagues over the decades. And by the many veterans I've been honoured to meet in my time in the defence family, not least of which was the recently deceased South Australian Air Force Ace, Bob Cowper, and the late Major Maurie Hurford who was a WWII Z Special Unit veteran.

Their stories have nothing to do with the glorification of war, but everything to do with honouring service and mateship, and putting a hand out to pull up those who are in need. I'd be curious to know what happened to that school yard bully Jack, and whether he was similarly inspired to change his ways that day? I wonder too if he now enjoys any of the 'strange' things in my lunchbox, such as Dutch Edam or Gouda cheese and Dutch liquorice.

I most certainly hope he went on to become a great sportsman and contributing member of our community as Jack and I both learned something significant that day.

Lest We Forget.

The Sea Voyager

A young woman, down on her luck, decided to end it all one night by casting herself into the cold, dark waters of Sydney Harbour. As she stood on the edge of the dock, pondering her fate, a young sailor noticed her as he strolled by.

"You're not thinking of jumping, are you?" he jokingly asked. "Yes, yes I am." replied the sobbing girl.

Putting his arm around her, the kind sailor coaxed her back from the edge, "Look, nothing's worth that. I tell you what, I'm sailing off for Europe tomorrow. Why don't you stow away on board and start a new life over there. I'll set you up in one of the lifeboats on the deck, bring you food and water every night, and I'll look after you if you 'look after' me." The girl, having no better prospects agreed and the sailor snuck her on board that night.

For the next 3 weeks the sailor would come to her lifeboat every night, bringing food and water and making love to her until dawn. Then, during the fourth week, the captain was performing a routine inspection of the ship & it's lifeboats. He peeled back the cover to find the startled young woman and demanded an explanation. The young woman came clean; "I've stowed away to get to Europe. One of the sailors is helping me out, he set me up in here and brings me food and water every night, and, and.....he's screwing me."

The puzzled captain stared at her for a moment before a small grin cracked his face and he replied; "He sure is darlin', this is the Manly Ferry!

The THREE legged chook

A motorist was driving quietly along the road when, suddenly, his eyes goggled as, believe it or not, he espied a three-legged chook running beside him. It suddenly made a right hand turn, heading up a side track towards a nearby farm house. Intrigued, the motorist decided to follow the chook. At the end of the track, he met a farmer leaning on a gate.

The motorist said, "You probably won't believe this, but I reckon I saw a three-legged chook running this way."

The farmer was nonchalant in response. "Yep, we breed them here."

"But why?" asked the motorist.

"Well, you see, I like a leg, my wife likes a leg, and me son likes a leg."

"And what do they taste like?"

"Dunno", replied the farmer, "no one can catch the little bastards."

Waiter! There's a fly in my soup

It all depends on local custom. In Australia, a fly in one's soup results in it being sent back to the kitchen and a row with the management.

In England, the head waiter quietly, daintily, fastidiously extracts the fly and removes it beneath a serviette.

In France, the soup is eaten, the fly left high and dry on the side of the bowl.

In the Orient, the fly is eaten first and washed down by the soup.

In Scotland, the fly is shaken over the bowl and carefully wrung out. Then the soup is consumed.

And there are places where the diner stares into the bowl and complains. "What's this? Only one fly?"



Private Gomad reckons.....



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Denotes NEW MEMBER

223 members

as at 6/8/16

FUTURE FUNCTIONS

30th October
Luncheon
Hackney Hotel

18th December
End Of Year BBQ
Kibby Club
Keswick Barracks