



“Sitrep, Over!”

Official Monthly Journal of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

JANUARY 2022

Patron - Major General Neil Wilson AM RFD

Editor David Laing 0407 791 822

CHIEF OF ARMY ORDER OF THE DAY

On the 150th anniversary of the Australian Artillery

1st August 2021

ON THIS day 150 years ago, the Colony of New South Wales raised its first permanent battery, known as the New South Wales Artillery. This marked the origins of the first substantive, professional Australian artillery force – a continuous presence enduring to this day, which has evolved into the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery. The service of Australian Artillery is long and distinguished, from its foundations in garrison artillery and coastal forts. Australian gunners contributed to the pre-Federation campaigns in Sudan and the Boer War; served staunchly in WWI, “the Gunners War”; defended Australia’s shores from the air and sea during WWII and the campaigns in the Middle East, Europe and the Pacific; and served in the conflicts in Korea, Malaya, Malaysia and Vietnam. In recent times, the men and women of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery have supported many global peacekeeping operations, protected Australian naval vessels from air attack in the Persian Gulf, defended Australian and coalition troops from hostile fire, and delivered vital fire support, surveillance, targeting and coordination in the Middle East Area of Operations. Wherever the Australian Army has served, Australian gunners have been there; steadfast alongside their comrades, a vital part of the combined-arms team for Australian and coalition troops alike, and a testament to their singular battle honour – Ubique. In the next decade, the Australian Army will introduce next-generation artillery ammunition, gun, missile, air defence, target acquisition and surveillance systems. These advances will increase the lethality and connectivity of the ADF. The versatility and dedication of the professional men and women of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery is the foundation of these new capabilities. These traits endure, from those who served before them over the past 150 years, to those who now uphold the Regiment’s motto, “Where Right and Glory Lead”. Today, the Australian Army recognises all forms of service to our community and the nation by Australia’s gunners – volunteer, militia, reserve, permanent and regular; at home, and overseas; defending assaults from the sea, in the sky, and on land; and advising, defending and supporting, always accurate, responsive, dependable and joint. The Australian Army acknowledges and celebrates the unstinting service of the Royal Australian Artillery and its forebears from 1871 to the present day – Ubique.

Lt-Gen Rick Burr Chief of Army

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CLOUD PUNCHERS

ITEMS OF INTEREST THIS MONTH

- Check out our webpage Page 2
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**OUR THANKS TO THE OFFICE
OF FEDERAL MEMBER FOR
BARKER, THE HONOURABLE
TONY PASIN MP FOR
PRINTING OUR NEWSLETTER
HARD COPIES.**



www.rsara.asn.au

Your website



Our website www.rsara.asn.au has now been operating since November 2012 when it was planned and set up by former webmaster Frank Morony, so this year is the 10th Anniversary of it's opening. Frank handed over to current webmaster Jesse Humphrys in 2018 and Jesse has "kept us honest" ever since. You can find loads of information on the website, including a list of current members, a list of those who have joined the "Great Regiment in the Sky", links to interesting military websites, and of course, all our latest newsletters. Thanks Frank & Jesse.



Fundraisers for RSAR Association



Ever since the inception of the Association in 2007 the Annual Fees have remained the same, and apart from a couple of donations we have existed without having to ask members to support us at Bunnings Sausage Burners or Can Rattling on ANZAC Day. We support the Regiment in a plethora (look it up) of ways, including awards presentations, honour boards upkeep and catering exercises. These all cost us money, for little or no recompense, therefore the sale of Association Merchandise is imperative in assisting us meet our goals.

Our various merchandise is manufactured mainly in Australia, as we try to support local businesses first and foremost, and although some prices are cheaper if made in Pling Xdong, we prefer to see our dollars remain onshore.

One of the ways YOU can support us is to purchase our merchandise, and although our mark-up profit is very minimal, at least we make some profit without it going overseas.

Postage is also a big game breaker, with ordinary envelopes costing over \$2 per items, so we have to charge for what we post. (I sent a book to the UK for Christmas. Book cost \$34, postage \$60!!)

A new list of prices is on **Page 8**, and these include the NEW Association Hoodie for only \$50, which is embroidered just outside Murray Bridge on the Mannum Road.

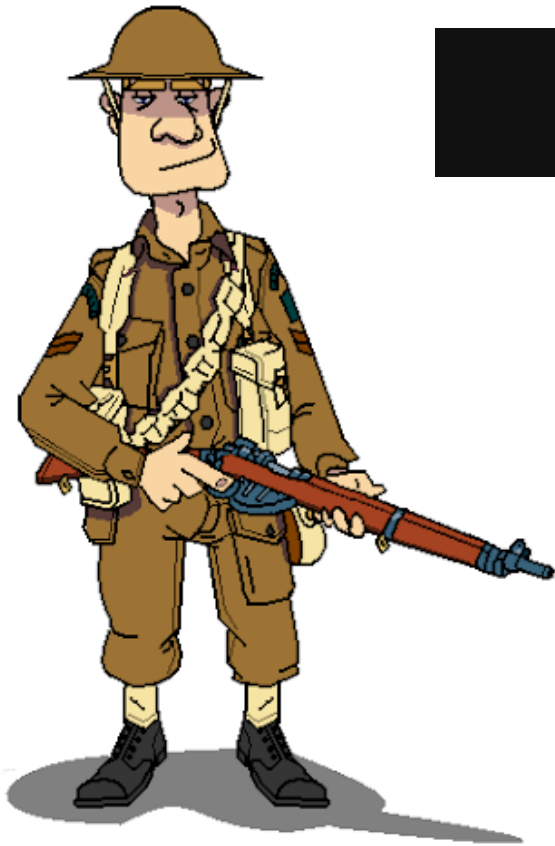
Please support the Association and help us carry on our support of the Regiment.

All items can be purchased by contacting the Secretary in the first instance via email to davidlaing49@bigpond.com

Please allow 2 - 3 weeks for delivery and ensure you order the correct size as returns are not possible.

Thanks for your support.

Corporal Numbnutz Funnies.

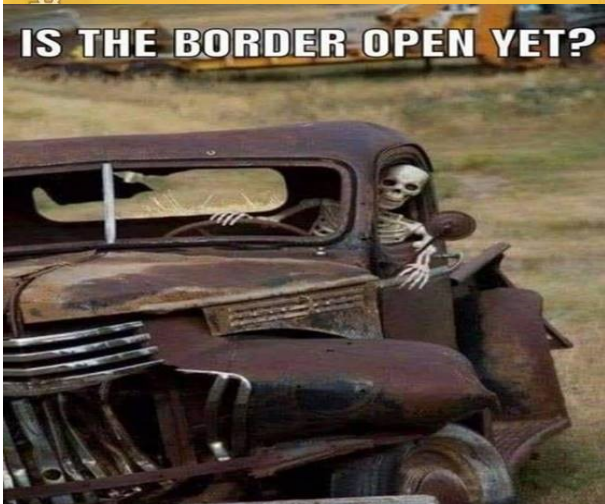


**Felt
uncomfortable
driving into the
cemetery. The
gps blurted out
you have reached
your final
destination.**

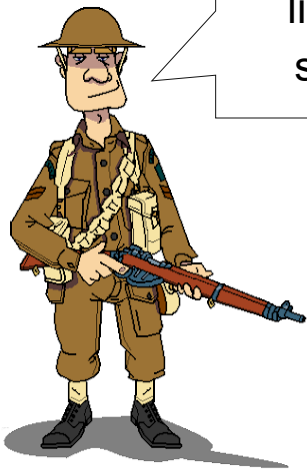
What's a man's idea of helping with the housework?

**My neighbors
complained about me
groaning too loud
having sex in the
morning....if they only
knew I'm just trying to
put my socks on...**

IS THE BORDER OPEN YET?



My wife says I have two faults. One, I don't listen to her, and something else!



Just had my 7th vaccination!



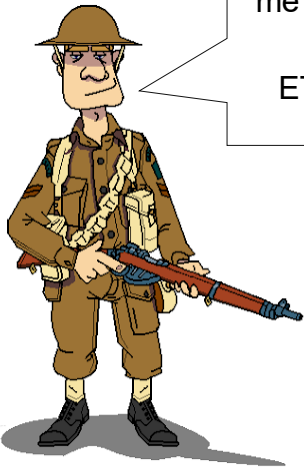
(Forgive me Padre? Editor)



WITHOUT FREEDOM OF SPEECH, WE WOULDN'T KNOW WHO THE IDIOTS ARE!

"If you ever feel useless, remember it took 20 years, trillions of dollars and 4 US Presidents to replace the Taliban with the Taliban"

Before my surgery the anaesthetist offered to knock me out with Gas or a Boat Paddle. It was an ETHER/OAR situation.

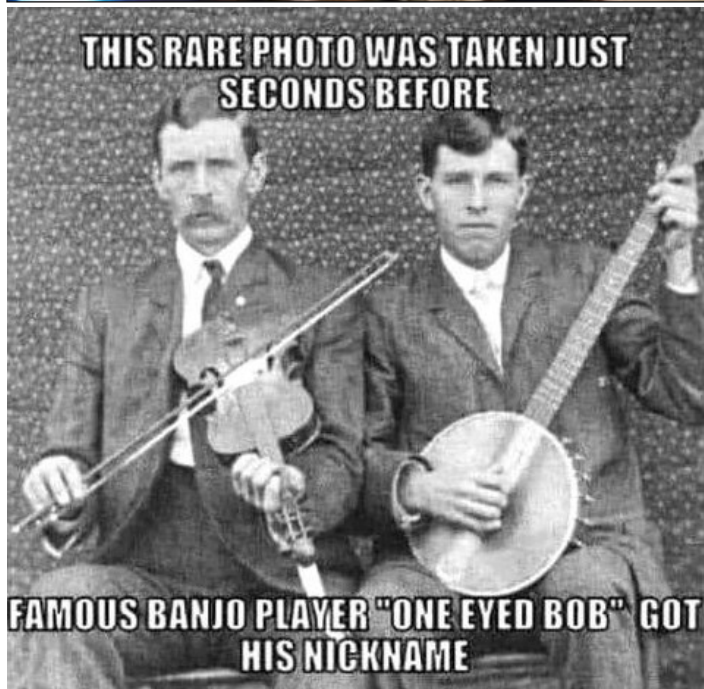


Department of health is looking to hire couples married for 7 years or more to educate people on social distancing.

I'm not injecting no vaccine in my body that's not natural



They sing because they can.



I'M TAKING CARE OF MY PROCRASTINATION ISSUES; JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE.

EDITORIAL

My thanks this month go to RSARA Historical Officer Des Hawkins, who accepted a challenge from me to provide some information on a former Commanding Officer of 10 Battalion during the First World War. Member Max Hill had been “pestering” me for some time, so I spoke with Des, and the result was 7 pages of interesting information on LTCOL Maurice Wilder-Neligan. It contains some very interesting facts about a very interesting and persistent man. I hope you’re happy Max? Thanks Des!

Since the Christmas Edition from December last year we’ve had a small influx of new members, and although these are always welcome, we’d love for more former and current serving members to sign up. And we know they’re out there! They make comments on our Facebook page and they speak to existing members, but they don’t join, and they should! For a paltry \$20 per year they can join the most progressive ex-services organisation around. I’ll make it easy for you. There’s an application to join on Page 19. Print it off and give it to a mate! Simple!

Are you OK mate? Those four words may not mean much to most, but to anyone who may be suffering physically or mentally, those words can mean a whole lot of comfort. If you are unwell for any reason, there is no need to struggle on your own. Reach out and just ask a mate for a chat. And if you can’t find someone to chat to, give me a call. I’m always available. I know how much a simple call can mean, as I’ve been in that unenviable position before, and just when you think you’re on your own, the phone rings and there’s a mate checking up on your welfare. To those mates who checked up on me, thank you. What goes around comes around! Are you OK mate?

So now we’re into a new year, eh? 2022? Bring it on! What can they do to us that could make life worse? Social distancing made us all realize exactly how far 1.7 meters is! Hand cleanliness made us all certain not to touch our eyes after washing our hands with sanitizer! Ouch! QR Codes and checking in made a lot of us aware of the remarkable capabilities of our smart phones, and..... We’re all still here. Point taken?

That’s what I think, anyway!

David Laing - Editor



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PAYMENTS FOR SUBS & MERCHANDISE

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

RSAR Association Inc
BSB 633 000
Acc. 1616 585 88

Cheques etc can be mailed to

The Treasurer
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The Unknown Soldier

On the 7th September 1920, in strictest secrecy, four unidentified British bodies were exhumed from temporary battlefield cemeteries at Ypres, Arras, the Asine and the Somme.



None of the soldiers who did the digging were told why. The bodies were taken by field ambulance to GHQ at St-Pol-Sur-ter noise.

There the bodies were draped with the union flag. Sentries were posted and Brigadier-General Wyatt and a Colonel Gell selected one body at random.

The other three bodies were reburied. Wyatt said they were re-buried at the St Pol cemetery but Lt. (later Major General Sir) Cecil Smith says they were buried beside the Albert-Baupaume road to be discovered there by parties searching for bodies in the area.

A French honour guard was selected, and stood by the coffin overnight.

On the morning of the 8th (a specially designed coffin made of oak from the grounds of Hampton Court, was brought and the unknown warrior placed inside.

On top was placed a crusaders sword and a shield on which was inscribed '(a British Warrior who fell in the GREAT WAR 1914-1918 for king and country'.

On The 9th of November the unknown warrior was taken by horse drawn carriage through guards of honour and the sound of tolling bells and bugle calls to the quayside. There it was loaded onto HMS Verdun bound for Dover..... the coffin stood on the deck covered in wreaths and surrounded by the French honour guard.

On arrival at Dover the unknown warrior was greeted with a 19 gun salute, normally only reserved for field marshals. He then travelled by special train to Victoria Station London.

He stayed there overnight and on the morning of the 11th of November he was taken to Westminster Abbey where he was placed in a tomb at the west end of the nave - his grave was filled in using 100 sandbags of earth from the battlefields.

When the Duke of York (later King George VI) married Lady Ellizabeth Bowes Lyons in the Abbey in 1923 she left her wedding bouquet on the grave as a mark of respect (she had lost a brother during the war) Since then all royal brides married in the Abbey have sent back their bouquets to be laid on the grave.

The idea of the unknown soldier was thought of by a Padre called David Railton who had served at the front during the great war and it was the union flag they used as an altar cloth at the front, that had been draped over the coffin.

It is the intention that all relatives of the 517,773 combatants whose bodies had not been identified could believe that the unknown warrior could very well be their lost husband, Father, brother or son.

Today we remember them.

Association Merchandise



CAP - \$25



Hoodie - Only \$50



Name Badge - \$30

Tie - \$30

Lapel Pin - \$20

**PLEASE ADD \$5 POSTAGE FOR
SMALLER ITEMS AND \$10 POSTAGE
FOR HOODIES AND POLO TOPS**

**Stubby Holder
\$6 each
6 for \$30**



**Polo Top - \$45
Many sizes available**



Letters to the Editor

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Hi David,

Hope the health is holding up.

Another great "Sitrep". I must admit I get a bit homesick for Adelaide particularly after reading about trips to Coffin Bay etc.

The article on WO1 John Percival was brilliant.

I had a short meeting with WO1 Percival the day I enlisted in 10 RSAR in March 1966. I recall climbing to the first floor of the Torrens Training Depot and knocking on his door, which was the first left from the stairs. He asked me what I wanted and I responded that I was here to enlist in the CMF. He asked me my name and I responded "Brookes, spelt with an e." "Ah, the aristocratic Brookes" he said and subsequently enlisted me. The "e" in Brookes didn't help in my career path, but a particular WO1 on that day in 1966 impressed me greatly; a man who had seen and experienced much.

Cheers

Phil Brookes

Thanks for the newsletter David and hope all goes well with your recovery. A very good event yesterday at Keswick and there is great fellowship amongst the group.

Cheers,

Howard Parslow

Hi David

Thanks for the update. Another good one. Wishing you all the best for Xmas n New year.

Pat n Joe Vella

Greetings David

Wishing you all Seasons Greetings from the Territory. Thanks for the magazine Pro Patria you sent. Great reading.

All the very Best,

Wm. (Bill) Matchett

Association member Chris Acton sent the photo at right of his twin brother Adrian, Adrian's first wife and Chris (at a place that looks suspiciously like the Torrens Parade Ground) in about 1961 when they were part of an Anti Tank Platoon of the Regiment.

I thanked Chris and said I would love to have a gorgeous looking woman like the one pictured to carry my SLR around, but that wasn't an option back in my day.

I do note Chris's Fur Collared Jacket and wonder if it was regimental issue or something purchased privately to supplement the meagre uniforms that we had to put up with back then.

If anyone has any pics of their days in service, I'd love to see them.

Note: Adrian Acton sadly passed away just before Christmas after a long battle with cancer. Vale Adrian and condolences to Chris and family.



Letters to the Editor

10

Dear David

Thank you for being a really nice person.

Thank you for all that you do for THE Association. I'm sure that there is much we don't hear about.

Especially, thank you for the amazing newsletter that you publish.

I trust that you and those that you love have a very Happy Christmas and jolly good New Year, with good health and lots of happiness.

Kind regards

Hank Ramm



What does our Army do?



When someone asks you "What exactly does the Army do?" you can answer them with this.....

Our Army is always protecting the interests of Australia and our people

The Australian Army is the foundation of the nation's land power. As part of the joint force, it promotes and protects Australia's interests, deters threats to Australia's sovereignty and, if necessary, defeats them.

We provide a formidable military capability built upon service, courage, respect, integrity and excellence; combined with the use of cutting-edge weapons, vehicles and military technology.

Our Army is always helping communities and supporting international operations

In addition to defending our nation, the Army supports a broad range of operations in Australia and overseas, including:

- supporting international security and counter-terrorism initiatives,
- protecting our borders from illegal activity and incursions,
- supporting humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, and helping communities affected by natural disasters.

Our Army is always adapting to complex strategic environments

The defence landscape is changing at an unprecedented rate, with potential threats coming from areas barely envisaged a decade ago.

As a modern and forward-thinking organisation, the Army is constantly evolving to meet these complex challenges. This includes maintaining our ability to deploy effectively when required to. We invest in the latest military technology, and provide world-class training to ensure all personnel are equipped with the skills to adapt to future strategic needs.

So, THAT's what our Army does!

LT COL. MAURICE WILDER-NELIGAN

CMG, DSO & BAR, DCM, CROIX de GUERRE

AKA Maurice Wilder.

CO 9th Bn. 1914 – 1917

CO 10th Bn. 1917 – 1919

District Officer A.N.M.E.F. 1920 - 1923.

The Early Years

Maurice Wilder Neligan was born in Tavistock, Devon England on 4th. October 1882. His parents, John West Neligan, a clergyman, and Charlotte Maud Putland, were married in Dublin Ireland in 1879.

He attended the Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School Ipswich and later the Bedford Grammar School from 1894 - 1895.

After leaving school he spent a number of years at sea in the British merchant fleet.

In 1903 at aged 20, he joined his Uncle the Rev Moore Richard Neligan and family aboard the PA-PANUI bound for Auckland NZ.

Maurice was to return to England in 1904 where he eventually marries a divorcee, Frances Jane Wyatt at a London Registry Office on 18 February 1905.

In 1910 having lowered his age and giving Auckland NZ as his place of birth, he enlisted as Maurice Wilder in the Royal Horse Artillery "H" Battery for a short time before purchasing his discharge.

Leaving his wife and daughter in London, and his step son Cedric Wyatt, Maurice departs as a passenger on the RMS ORVIETO on 9th June bound for Sydney Australia, arriving on 20th July 1911.

In Australia he initially works as a clerk at the Kalamia Sugar Mill near Ayr in North Queensland, living at Kelly's Hotel in Brandon, during which time he became very close to the Kelly family. He continued to use the name of Maurice Wilder, when he joined the Queensland Police Force in November 1911, and again providing a false date and place of birth. Neligan's service with the Queensland Police did not end on a happy note and he had a number of disagreements with his senior officers, who accused him of stealing a very small amount of money and of drunkenness. Although Neligan was able to address these allegations, he resigned in disgust in June 1914 and stated that he was completely out of sympathy with the current Queensland Police methods and policies at that time.

First World War

At the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914, Neligan enlisted in the AIF on 20 August in Townsville, Queensland, under the name Maurice Wilder, again giving Auckland as his place of birth with 1st. April 1886 as his date of birth. He often told the story of his enlistment. The recruiting Clerk had asked his name and age, marital status and if any dependents. He gave his name, correct age and with a wife and family. He was then informed that younger and single men were offering in great numbers and so he would not be required. As he turned to make his way out he re-joined another queue and supplied amended details to another clerk. His age had dropped to 31, now single with no dependents. He became an approved volunteer for the AIF and proceeded into camp at Enoggera Brisbane with the rank of private and allotted to the Queensland raised 9th Battalion of the 3rd. Brigade, which was part of the 1st. Division, with the regimental



number 974.

Within three weeks he had been promoted to lance corporal, and by late September was a corporal.



Colonel M Wilder-Neligan DSO DCM, on horseback, leading a parade of the 9th Battalion past Gen. Birdwood (not visible) towards the Ypres front.

The battalion embarked for overseas the following month and sailed via Albany, Western Australia, to Egypt on the *Themistocles*, arriving in early December. On 1 January 1915, Wilder was promoted to sergeant, and he was posted as battalion orderly room sergeant.

From the landing on Gallipoli on 25 April he distinguished himself. On the 26th he carried in a wounded man under heavy fire, collected stragglers and led them back to the firing-line. For this action he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Officer casualties were heavy: although he was only the battalion's orderly-room sergeant, he was soon acting as adjutant of the 9th and was commissioned as second lieutenant on 28 April 1915. On the night of 27th May he led a raid on a Turkish post near Gaba Tepe, inflicting casualties and bringing back a prisoner without firing a shot and without losing a man; his careful planning of the operation ensured its swift success, for which he received a Mention in Despatches. He was wounded several days later when a shell burst prematurely and was evacuated to Egypt, discharging himself from hospital he made his way back to the 9th.

He was appointed adjutant and then temporary captain in September, and obtained official promulgation for a change of name to Wilder-Neligan for family reasons.

One of the many stories that surrounded Neligan was that he had prematurely discharged himself from the hospital in Egypt to return to his unit, which could have resulted in disciplinary action and so when he was asked as Acting Adjutant, whether a Maurice Wilder had returned to the unit, he could now truthfully say no one by that name was serving with the 9th Bn.

After the evacuation from Gallipoli, the transfer of the A.I.F. to France in 1916 brought him wider opportunities. He carefully planned and trained the troops for a major raid near Fleurbaix, launched on the night of 1-2 July, resulting in over 50 Germans being killed or wounded and 25 captured. Neligan himself entered a German trench at the height of the action in the hope that the enemy would think he was one of their own



officers coming to see them. He effected a complete surprise and killed several German soldiers with a "**knobkerrie**", which was a primitive wooden stick with a cog of nails attached to the end. The mission's success was recognized by the award of the Distinguished Service Order to Wilder-Neligan who, despite a serious head wound, had continued to command until all his men had returned. After recovering, he took part in desperate fighting at Bullecourt in May 1917 and in the 3rd battle of Ypres. For brief periods that year he was acting Commanding Officer of the 9th and the 10th. Battalions.

Promoted lieutenant-colonel, he returned to the South Australian 10th Bn. on 30 June 1917 as its commander.

There was some resentment that he had been promoted above the present acting Commanding officer, his frosty reception at the Officers' mess was legendary. Not only was he not from South Australia but an Englishman with eccentric behaviour, and promoted over the heads of many other officers more senior to him.

Neligan immediately launched a thorough training program for the battalion and it was not long before the men realised that he was someone quite unique and different. He acquired new uniforms for the men, food particularly in the front line improved markedly; and the band was re-introduced to give concerts. His attention to detail, even down to marching was something to behold. He was a great networker and used these conditions to improve the conditions for his men. He

would not hesitate to berate officers or senior NCO's in front of their men, and could be difficult, argumentative and demanding. Slowly but surely, he began to win the confidence of the troops under his command.

Training and conditions were one thing, but it was vital that Neligan also be able to demonstrate success in battle and be seen to be caring about the lives of his men. His opportunity came in September 1917 during the Battle of Polygon Wood. An offensive was timed to begin on 20 September and Neligan had reorganised his attacking force into storm and carrier companies, which was a significant innovation. Similar to his planning for previous actions, each man knew his exact role and his orders were remarkable for their detail, clarity and thoroughness.

The attack was highly successful and one episode before the final assault on the third objective was to make Neligan famous among the troops. The storm troop companies were resting before the attack, sitting in shell holes eating sandwiches and smoking German cigars.

Neligan sent runners to fetch the latest copies of London newspapers and distributed copies of the Daily Mirror and Daily Mail to the troops before they attacked. It was a gesture that only he could have conceived. By this time he had gained the full confidence of his men; any doubts about him and his abilities were dispelled.

In October 1917, Neligan's battalion was involved in one of the most controversial battles of the war – the raid on Celtic Wood, of which in the official history C.E.W. Bean later wrote that a considerable number of men were missing and remained unaccounted for after the war. Neligan had just returned from leave prior to this action and was not in control of events until the last minute. There has been considerable specula-

tion as to what happened to these men, but recently, research undertaken by Robert Kearney has accounted for most of the missing men. He has argued that this action was no different from many other actions where men had become missing and unaccounted for, and where there was some uncertainty as to what precisely had happened.

From October 1917 until June 1918 the 10th Bn spent time training and moved in and out of the line. Neligan was again injured on 31 March 1918 when he was involved in an accident and spent some time in a hospital in England. He returned to his battalion at the end of May and immediately organised a highly successful attack upon the German lines. This time he improvised by utilising as back-up troops, soldiers who were cooks, runners, batman and other headquarters Staff. He was congratulated by senior officers for the success of the operation.

In June 1918 Neligan was awarded the CMG and in July he organised what was to become one of his crowning achievements, the capture of the village of Merris. Described by the inspector general of training in the British Expeditionary Force as the *'best show ever done by a battalion in France'*. Wilder-Neligan was awarded a Bar to his D.S.O. for this innovative and daring operation. The 10th Bn was then involved in a number of battles following the August 8 offensive. In one action on 9 August, Neligan placed himself in front of the attacking troops with two lamps on his back. One was red to halt, and the other yellow to mean follow on. Later, Neligan was given command of several battalions for the attack on Crepey Wood and in a fast moving and difficult operation he had a resounding success. He considered this battle his best of the war. He had proved himself not only an outstanding battalion commander, but very capable at controlling larger operations. The 10th Bn. saw its last action on 21st. September and on 10th. October Neligan was awarded the French Croix De Guerre for his achievements. In 1919 he was given a composite command of the remaining members of the 9th and 10th Battalions and returned to Australia on board the Takada in September 1919.



Circa 1970 Last known photo of Neligans grave

POST WW1.

Wilder-Neligan's A.I.F. appointment terminated in Queensland in October 1919 after being welcomed back in Brisbane a hero and was praised by General Birdwood during his visit in May 1920.

He became actively involved in the welfare of ex-soldiers and believed that officers had a duty of care to ensure that returning soldiers fitted into society as easily as possible. He recognised that many had great difficulty in finding a place in society when they returned. He also became involved in the New Party, which was a conservative movement and which primarily represented ex-service personnel. He gave many speeches and opened a number of war memorials around the State.

Neligan never really found a place for himself in in post-war Australia. He was a restless and adventurous

soul and in May 1920 he was taken on strength at the Rabaul Garrison in New Guinea as part of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force. He later transferred to the Civil Administration when military rule ended on 9th May 1921 and became the District Officer in Talasea on the Island of New Britain. From all reports Neligan was a popular administrator and highly respected by local people, despite an unorthodox approach to his duties. One remaining patrol report written by him was described by the Administrator as the best report he had ever seen.

Clouds began to darken for Neligan, however, when in 1922 he was accused by a Hans Schipmann and Walter Raettig former German plantation owners of taking almost £900 pounds in an attempt to smuggle money out of New Guinea back to Europe, on behalf of the planters, which was illegal. This was a time when German property was being appropriated by Australian authorities. Neligan also owed money to a number of other people in Australia and he was becoming known for displaying peculiar behaviour. One friend, who had been a medical doctor in the 10th. Bn and had lent money to Neligan, said his behaviour was probably as a result of the serious head injuries he had sustained during the war.

When confronted with the allegations Neligan appears to have resigned his position in the Administration and commenced his return to Rabaul.

Death

During his return voyage by sea, he decided to stop over and rest at the village of Ekerapi for a couple of days. It was on the morning of 10th. January 1923 when Yami one of assistants went to wake him, that he was found dead.

His body was taken back to the Government station at Garua, examined by the medical assistant Francis Giles (not a doctor). A coronial inquest on the 11th by the acting district officer at Talasea found that the cause of death was unknown and that there were no suspicious circumstances.

He was buried, according to his wishes, at a location on the Garua Station at Talasea overlooking the sea in **eight** feet of clay on 12th. January 1923. A memorial was later placed over his grave, the 9th and 10th Battalion AIF Clubs were willing to contribute to his monument however Mrs. Neligan declined such offers and paid for it herself, even though it can be assumed that they had separated, but not divorced, many years ago.

He was survived by his wife Frances (1863 -1954) and his daughter Gwendoline (1905 – 1972) who later became a world fencing champion during the 1930's.

Forms of Service

Royal Horse Artillery 1910,
1st. AIF; 20 August 1914 to 25 October 1919, and,
Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force 1920 - 1923.

Honours and awards

Companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George.
Distinguished Service Order.
BAR to Distinguished Service Order
Distinguished Conduct Medal
Mention in Despatches. (5 times)
French Croix de Guerre.

Medical Summary

During his service, Neligan was hospitalised on at least three occasions.

In June 1915 at Gaba Tepe he suffered a bullet wound to the back, admitted to 2nd A S. Hospital Lemnos then transferred to 1st A.G.H. Heliopolis.

In July 1916 he was admitted to 7th Stationary Hospital Boulogne with a G.S.W. to the head, invalided to England and admitted to the Empire Hospital with a severe compound skull fracture, paralysed for a few months and underwent several trephines (removal of bone). Discharged from Hospital to France in October.

In March 1918 he was admitted to 15th.C.C.S with an injury to his left foot and knee, transferred to the 30th Gen. Hospital, Calais then invalided to the 3rd London Gen Hospital England. He was discharged in May 1918 from Hospital and proceeded back to France.

IMPRESSIONS

Lt. Col Maurice Wilder Neligan, was one of the most highly decorated and esteemed Australian soldiers of the First World War. Indeed he has been described by some as one of the most outstanding Australian battalion commanders of that war. During the war, he was not only respected but worshipped by the men under his command, the Queensland 9th and South Australian 10th Battalions. Many prominent senior soldiers such as Gen Birdwood, Commander of the Australian forces during much of World War 1, Gen Walker, Commander of the Australian 1st Division and Gen Gordon Bennett, Neligan's Brigade Commander, also shared that view, as did the Official War Historian C.E.W. Bean.

He came from a cultured and high achieving family and was educated in some of the best private schools in England, albeit for a short period. Apart from his period at sea and brief time in the British army, at the lowest rank, he had not held a regular job in England; but for a man who had no profession, and almost no prior military training, he shone like a beacon during the war. From being bankrupt in England to living under an assumed name both in England and Australia, he found in war a place which suited his personality and drive, and he thrived in this environment. He was able to master the battlefield as few others had done and in doing so had become a hero to the soldiers who served both below and above him.

Neligan had something to prove to his family following his bankruptcy and disgrace in England, and his upbringing, natural intelligence and cunning allowed him to achieve so much in such a short period of time. His instincts were remarkable, as was his understanding of the Australian soldier and what drove him. If it had not been for the war Neligan would probably not have achieved much in life. Whatever happened in New Guinea following the war, there can be no taking back Neligan's achievements during the war and this should not be forgotten. Many men returning from that war never found a place for themselves in post-war Australia and Neligan was one of them. He was very lucky to have survived the war and probably never fully recovered from the serious wounds and psychological trauma he had suffered, like so many others.

Wilder-Neligan when he
was serving as CO of
10th Battalion





Wilder-Neligan (2nd from Left) with Officers of
9th Battalion

He died without leaving a will, his family had requested the return of his wedding and signet rings, which appear to have been buried with him. The exhumation of the body to retrieve those items had been discussed but I can find no record of this happening.

Despite what is now known about him, there will always be some mystery surrounding this enigmatic man. He might have been known as Mad Neligan by some, but he was much more than that. He was a brilliant commander with an original approach to warfare. He cared about his men and they cared about him.

He was also long remembered at the Talasea post and while the Australian Administration remained, a service would be held alongside Neligan's grave each Anzac Day. This has long since passed, following the end of Australian Administration, however, and the grave is now forgotten.

As time has marched on we can only now wonder what his reasoning may have been behind the misleading information on Government records regarding his true name date and place of birth.

Given it is now almost the Centenary of his death, it is a pity we cannot do more to honour the man.

While I have tried to contact various PNG bodies to confirm certain details and obtain an updated photo of his memorial – it seems however New Britain is still a very isolated and lonely place and Covid 19 has not helped.

PRO PATRIA

I wish to recognise the following whose previous research, efforts and contributions made by the Bio possible:-

Keven Draper, Medals Curator AMOSA, Chap. Paul Ghanem 10/27 RSAR, Peter Holmes – Sabretache 2014, the 9th Bn .Assoc. and the former 10th Bn. Assoc.

Des Hawkins

Historical Officer - Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc.

Life Members			Members A-S			Honorary Members	
Last Name	First Name	Serving	Last Name	First Name	Serving	Last Name	First Name
Acton	Chris		Abel	Colin		Read WO1	Ben
Ayles	Jeff		Abraham	Michael	SM	Benveniste LTCOL	Sam
Beckett	David	SM	Attenborough	Geoff		Wilson MAJGEN	Neil
Benveniste	Sam	SM	Bampton	Michael	SM		
Blackmore	Bill		Bennett	Christian	SM	Honorary Member for Life	
Boscence	Bob		Blondell	Mark	SM	Beames	Rodney
Brookes	Philip		Brown	Bruce			
Burnard	Trent	SM	Burnard	Saxon	SM	Associate Life Members	
Burns	Wayne		Burton	Ray		Last Name	First Name
Carnachan	Ian		Buttars	Erik		Elliott	Julie
Carpenter	Ian		Carlisle	Lesley-Ann	SM ∑	Field	Shirley
Cotton	Bob		Cooke	Nat		Johnson	Sally
Dart	John		Cram	Kevin	∑	Laing	June
Davey	Trevor		Demosani	Tony		Phillips	Heather
Elliott	Graham		Dew	Trevor		Sanderson	Lorraine
Gaborit	Lyndon		Domanski	Glenn		Associate Members	
Harris	Lachlan		Dunn	Bob		Last Name	First Name
Hawking	Don		Dunn	Peter		Abel	Karen
Haynes	Malcolm	SM	Eva	Keith		Brown	Jenni
Higgins	Jonathon	SM	Ewens	Mimi	SM	Carnachan	Dom ∑
			Faquiri	Reshad	SM	Dunn	Trish
Hogan	Mark		Faunt	Joshua	SM	Hudson	Margaret
Hook	Alan		Foy	Erin	SM	Johnson	Margaret
Hope	David		Gatley	Graham	▲	Parsonage	Yvonne
Horseman	Ian		Gibson	Lindsay		Pollard	Kay
Hudson	Mike		Gill	Graham		Toy	Jill
Jackson	Aaron	SM	Goodwin	Graham	SM	Trogenza	Lyn
James	Grant	SM	Gordon	Frank		Winger	Kathleen
Jeffrey	Scott		Groffen	Renee		Honourary Member for Life	
Johnson	Paul		Harrington	Malcolm		Honorary Members	
Johnson	Barry		Harrison	John		Life Members	
Klopf	Alex		Harrison	Keith		Serving Life Members	
Laing	David		Harrison	Nigel		Members	
Lakin	Bruce		Hawkins	Des		Serving Members	
Marlin	Robin	SM	Higgins	Kevin		Associate Life Members	
Meredith	Michael	SM	Hill	Max		Associate Members	
Miller	Nick		Hudson	Rick		Total financial members	
Moore	Terry		Hume	Matthew	SM	Prepaid Members	
Moore	Thomas	SM	Humphrys	Jesse	SM ∑		
Paul	John		Jones	Brett			
Pollard	Barry		Koop	Joshua	SM	▲ 2022/23	
Salamon	Piotr		Loveder	Peter		Please welcome new member Kevin Higgins from Whyalla and new Associate Member Kay Pollard	
Sanderson	Max		Matchett	William			
Standing	Michael		McCulloch	Don			
Stewart	Robin		McIver	Bill			
Stewien	Peter		Mitchell	Barry			
Vella	Joe		Moroney	Frank			
Waters	Ian		Mulroney	Dennis			
Watters	Matthew	SM	Normadale	Zachary	SM		
Westover	Rhys		Oakley	Andrew			
Wilson	Graham		O'Daly	Ryan	SM		
Yorke-Simpkin	Reg		Orrock	Alan		Do you still see people you served with?	
Members	S - Z		Parslow	Howard	∑		
Last Name	First Name	Serving	Parsonage	James			
Sanders	Ashley	SM ∑	Pascoe	Michael			
Schuh	Simon	SM	Payne	Bob			
Scott	Rhys	SM	Pexton	Timothy	SM		
Skapin	Corey	SM	Phillips	Colin Rex			
Smith	Ryan	SM	Portakiewicz	Anthony	SM ∑		
Sniedze	Julie	SM	Portakiewicz	David	SM ∑		
Tasker	David		Powell	Gary			
Thomas	David		Preece	Brian		Print out the Application on Page 19 and give it to them. Tell them what we do, and encourage them to help us support the Regiment.	
Thomson	Jim		Rado	Steven			
Trogenza	Norm		Ramm	Hank			
Trezise	George		Ranger	Denis			
Tsoulakis	Christos	SM	Robertson	James			
Tucker	Belinda	SM	Rossetti	Lee			
Vozelj	Blaz	SM	Sage	Andrew			
Weepers	Nicole	SM					
Wheeler	Chris						



Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc



Membership Category


Date of Application / /

<input type="checkbox"/> Full Membership \$20 (Former member of the RSAR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Current Serving Military Member Must have served with the RSAR or a sub unit. FREE 1st year. \$10 thereafter while still serving
<input type="checkbox"/> Non Voting Associate Member \$10 (Spouses, non former members of RSAR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership (Once only payment) FULL Member \$200 <input type="checkbox"/> ASSOCIATE Member \$100

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Full Name:	Postal Address:
Date of Birth:	Email:
Mobile No:	How did you hear about the Association?
Regt No. or PMKeys No.	
Period of Service / / to / /	<input type="checkbox"/> Current Serving Member of the RSAR or Sub Unit
Spouse/Partners name.	Have you been a member since then? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Method of Payment

<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque or Money Order - Payable to The Treasurer Christian Bennett RSAR Association Inc 5 Ashwin Parade Torrensville SA 5031	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Funds Transfer Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc BSB 633 000 Account 1616 585 88 Include your <u>name</u> as an identifier								
<input type="checkbox"/> CASH (In person to the Committee)	<input type="checkbox"/> I have paid my Fees by <u>Cheque</u> to the Association Account listed and posted to The RSAR Association PO Box 5218 Murray Bridge South SA 5253 <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Account Name:</td> <td>RSAR Association Inc</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bank:</td> <td>Bendigo Bank</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BSB:</td> <td>633 000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acct #</td> <td>1616 585 88</td> </tr> </table>	Account Name:	RSAR Association Inc	Bank:	Bendigo Bank	BSB:	633 000	Acct #	1616 585 88
Account Name:	RSAR Association Inc								
Bank:	Bendigo Bank								
BSB:	633 000								
Acct #	1616 585 88								
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that receipt of this application constitutes my acceptance of the Associations Rules as set down in the Constitution found at the website address below. I also authorise the processing of my preferred method of payment and acknowledge that I may be required to provide proof of past or current military service as required.									
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Please send this completed application, with any proof of service to the RSAR Association Secretary at davidlaing49@bigpond.com									

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Please send them to
davidlaing49@bigpond.com