



"Sitrep, Over!"

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA REGIMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

PATRON: MAJGEN NEIL WILSON AM RFD

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MARCH 2025

Australian Army - 124 Years Old

The **Australian Army** is the principal land warfare force of Australia. It is a part of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), along with the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force. The Army is commanded by the Chief of Army (CA), who is subordinate to the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) who commands the ADF. The CA is also directly responsible to the Minister for Defence, with the Department of Defence administering the ADF and the Army.

Formed in 1901, as the Commonwealth Military Forces, through the amalgamation of the colonial forces of Australia following the Federation of Australia. Although Australian soldiers have been involved in a number of minor and major conflicts throughout Australia's history, only during the Second World War has Australian territory come under direct attack.

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The Australian Army was initially composed almost completely of part-time soldiers, where the vast majority were in units of the Citizens Military Force (CMF or Militia) (1901–1980) during peacetime, with limits set on the regular Army. Since all reservists were barred from forcibly serving overseas, volunteer expeditionary forces (1st AIF, ANMEF, 2nd AIF) were formed to enable the Army to send large numbers of soldiers to serve overseas during periods of war. This period lasted from federation until post-1947, when a standing peacetime regular army was formed and the Australian Army Reserve (1980–present) began to decline in importance.

During its history, the Australian Army has fought in a number of major wars, including the Second Boer War, the First and Second World Wars, Korean War, Malayan Emergency, Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation, Vietnam War, the War in Afghanistan (2001–2021) and the Iraq War. Since 1947, the Australian Army has also been involved in many peacekeeping operations, usually under the auspices of the United Nations. Today, it participates in multilateral and unilateral military exercises and provides emergency disaster relief and humanitarian aid in response to domestic and international crises.

Editorial

Since our inception in 2008 we have relied solely on our membership fees, sales of merchandise, and sometimes donations from members to help us achieve our goals to support the Battalion, and at times it's been hard to juggle bills and invoices from suppliers and still make ends meet. Late last year we started a Fund Raiser Raffle, and we hope to raise some funds through this means, but last month we were delighted to accept a substantial donation of \$2,700 from RSL Care (SA). That organisation has a long history of supporting our veterans and their families since 1917, and they continue this great work today. You can read about their work on Page 3. Thank you to RSL Care (SA)

This month I have included a story about the Blitz on England during WW2. My father and 3 of his brothers were all away fighting in Europe, the North Atlantic, North Africa and Italy during the latter part of the war, so never experienced the terror of the blitz on England. That task was left to the mothers and those who remained at home. You can read part of that story on Page 4 & 5.

I do a fair bit of reading in what little spare time I have, and I found an article about Australian discipline in the First World War very interesting. Not ones for "spit and polish", the Australian and New Zealand soldiers who made up the ANZACs did things pretty much their own way, and although they proved to be some of the best soldiers on the Western Front, they lacked the traditional discipline of the British soldiers. Pages 14 to 17 have story.

As promised last month, I've asked for your own personal stories of your experiences when you served with the Regiment. I'll start the ball rolling with my own experience as the CO's Sig back in 1974. Read about my adventure on Page 18.

Next month is one of our most sacred days, being ANZAC Day on 25th April. The April newsletter will be published at the end of March, but the May newsletter will contain any ANZAC Day pics you send in. Wherever you are in Australia I urge you to send us some of your special pics so we can share them around in our newsletter and Facebook page, Lest We Forget.

We post out 5 hard copy newsletters to members who declare they have no internet access. This task is quite labour-intensive and costly, so if you are one of the five who no longer require a hard copy newsletter, please advise us ASAP so we can get on with supporting the Battalion.

After locating our Application Form under a pile of papers in his busy office, Honourary Colonel Steve Larkins is now a Full Member of this Association. Welcome Steve!

That's it from me. Stay safe.

David

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About ARVL

RSL Care SA's Andrew Russell Veteran Living (ARVL) is a veteran's housing program which aims to ensure that ex-service personnel in South Australia have the opportunity to access appropriate and affordable housing solutions.



ARVL provides housing options for veterans in two ways:

1. Through an emergency accommodation program designed for those that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This emergency housing has so far provided over 27,000 nights of emergency accommodation for 236 veterans, since January 2016.
2. An affordable housing portfolio designed to provide long term affordable housing solutions.

In early January we held a working bee at our ARVL emergency housing in Sturt. Our thanks to the Australian Army's 3rd Health Battalion for their amazing support and efforts! It was a hive of activity, and the results are absolutely fantastic! Bravo Zulu to all those who helped make this such a successful day.



www.arvl.org

100% of donations go to benefit the ARVL program and our veteran residents.
Scan the QR code to donate.

LIVING IN GOOD COMPANY WITH RSL CARE SA

A proud not for profit charitable care provider celebrating over 100 years of providing a range of care and support services to meet the needs of the community.

RSL Care SA is a proud not for profit charitable care provider serving the ex-service and wider community. In various locations throughout South Australia, we offer residential aged care (nursing home), retirement living and through our Andrew Russell Veteran Living (ARVL) program, we offer emergency and affordable housing.

Our mission is to support veterans, their dependents and the broader community through a range of integrated retirement living and aged care services.

Our residential aged care facilities are the War Veterans Home in Myrtle Bank, Morlancourt in Angle Park, and our newly built facility, Romani located in Murray Bridge.

RSL Care SA also has four retirement living villages. Sturt Village is located in Marion and our Hamilton Retirement Village is located in Glengowrie. The War Veterans Retirement Village is co-located with the War Veterans Home in Myrtle Bank, and Waterford Estate in Murray Bridge is co-located with our Romani aged care facility, allowing us to provide a range of services to those living independently in the villages.



If you like the idea of Living in Good Company, please contact us to arrange a suitable time to come and see for yourself.

Phone: 08 8379 2600 | www.rslcaresa.com.au

The Blitz on England

The threat of German bombing

Fear that German bombing would cause civilian deaths prompted the government to evacuate children, mothers with infants and the infirm from British towns and cities during the Second World War. Evacuation took place in several waves. The first came on 1 September 1939 - the day Germany invaded Poland and two days before the British declaration of war. Over the course of three days 1.5 million evacuees were sent to rural locations considered to be safe.

Evacuation from the cities

Evacuation was voluntary, but the fear of bombing, the closure of many urban schools and the organised transportation of school groups helped persuade families to send their children away to live with strangers. The schoolchildren in this photograph assembled at Myrdle School in Stepney at 5am on 1 September 1939. The adults accompanying them are wearing arm bands, which identify them as volunteer marshals. Evacuation was a huge logistical exercise which required thousands of volunteer helpers. The first stage of the process began on 1 September 1939 and involved teachers, local authority officials, railway staff, and 17,000 members of the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS). The WVS provided practical assistance, looking after tired and apprehensive evacuees at railway stations and providing refreshments in reception areas and billeting halls. Volunteers were also needed to host evacuees.

Leaving the cities

Children were evacuated from cities across Britain. The children in this photograph are evacuees from Bristol, who have arrived at Brent railway station near Kingsbridge in Devon, 1940. Parents were issued with a list detailing what their children should take with them when evacuated. These items included a gas mask in case, a change of underclothes, night clothes, plimsolls (or slippers), spare stockings or socks, toothbrush, comb, towel, soap, face cloth, handkerchiefs and a warm coat. The children pictured here seem well-equipped for their journey, but many families struggled to provide their children with all of the items listed.

Life in the countryside

Evacuees and their hosts were often astonished to see how each other lived. Some evacuees flourished in their new surroundings. Others endured a miserable time away from home. Many evacuees from inner-city areas had never seen farm animals before or eaten vegetables. In many instances a child's upbringing in urban poverty was misinterpreted as parental neglect. Equally, some city dwellers were bored by the countryside, or were even used for tiring agricultural work. Some evacuees made their own arrangements outside the official scheme if they could afford lodgings in areas regarded as safe, or had friends or family to stay with.

Nursery school

Many stately homes in the English countryside were given over for use as nursery schools or homes for young children evacuated from cities across the country. This lithograph print is one of a series of five entitled 'Children in Wartime' by artist Ethel Gabain. This work was commissioned in 1940 by the War Artists Advisory Committee, who wanted a record of the civilian evacuation scheme.



The Blitz on England

Returning home against advice

By the end of 1939, when the widely expected bombing raids on cities had failed to materialise, many parents whose children had been evacuated in September decided to bring them home again. By January 1940 almost half of the evacuees returned home. The government produced posters like this one, urging parents to leave evacuees where they were while the threat of bombing remained likely.

Another wave of evacuations

Additional rounds of official evacuation occurred nationwide in the summer and autumn of 1940, following the German invasion of France in May-June and the beginning of the Blitz in September. Evacuation was voluntary and many children remained in the cities. Some stayed to help, care for or support their families.

V-weapon attacks

The German V-weapon attacks on cities in the east and south-east of England, which began in June 1944, prompted another wave of evacuations from these areas.

Returning home at the end of the war

For some children, the end of the war brought an end to a prolonged period of fear, confusion and separation. For others, it brought considerable upheaval as they returned to cities and families they barely remembered. But the government's voluntary evacuation scheme was an enormous undertaking that saw millions of children sent to places of safety, away from the threat of German bombs.



The bomb damage to the major cities like London, Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield was immense, and took years to clear and rebuild.

Editors Note:

My fathers sister was killed when a German V1 "buzz bomb" landed and exploded in the suburbs of North London in 1944

As a young lad growing up in London in 1949 to 1958 I recall playing with my mates on what were known as the "Bomb Sites." They were "out-of-bounds" to everyone, but young lads knew how to get around the red tape, the barbed wire and the local coppers! We were oblivious to the dangers of unexploded bombs and other ordnance, which are still being unearthed in the major UK cities today. Such is the innocence of youth.

David Laing

Padre's Ponderings

By Padre Stephen Albrecht. Chaplain of 10/27 Battalion RSAR

There's a saying, "If you can't laugh at yourself, you can't laugh at anyone else." Trust me, over the years, I've done plenty of things that were straight out of a comedy script, and I've found myself laughing at my own antics (often later). It turns out, there's more to it than just having a good laugh. Research shows that laughter boosts your immune system, elevates your mood, reduces pain, and the harmful effects of stress. So, if is the case, why aren't we laughing more?

Military life is tough, both physically and mentally. Soldiers are constantly under pressure to perform at their best, all while juggling high-stress situations. We might not have a literal "happy hour" each week, but laughter still plays an essential role. It helps us to manage stress, keep our mental health in check, and, yes, even makes us closer. So, here's why laughter is a secret weapon which should be in your arsenal.

First, laughter is one of the best natural stress relievers. It's like a mental reset button. When soldiers laugh, their brains release endorphins, the body's "feel-good" chemicals. These little mood boosters help reduce tension, calm anxiety, and make it easier to relax. In the middle of a stressful exercise or training session, a good laugh can give soldiers a much-needed mental break, helping them recharge so they can tackle the next challenge with renewed focus. Just don't do it too loud.

Being able to laugh, even in tough times, helps soldiers dodge the trap of negative emotions. Instead of getting bogged down in the c*@p, laughter keeps things in perspective, making it easier to stay emotionally flexible and mentally sharp. It's like having a mental PT session, just without the push-ups.

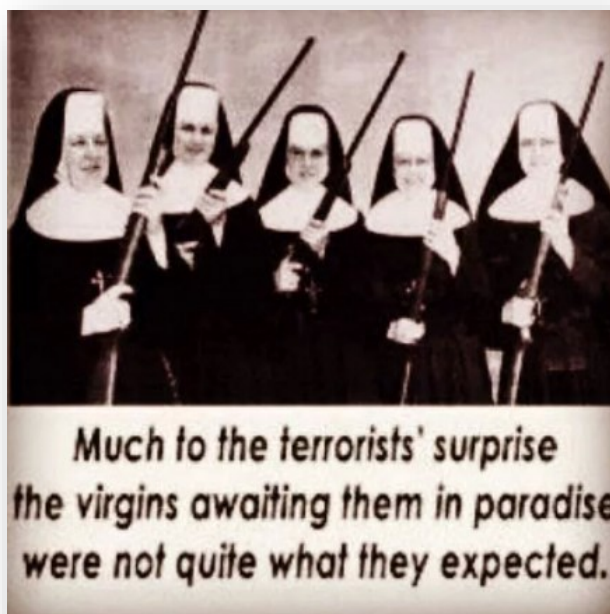
Laughter is a fantastic way to bond. Shared jokes and funny moments break down walls, build trust, and boost team morale. When soldiers laugh together, they become more than just a unit, they become a well-oiled, cohesive team that works better together.

Of course, military service can bring about tough emotional challenges including anxiety, depression and PTSD. While laughter isn't a replacement for professional help, it can still serve as a valuable emotional buffer. A good laugh shifts the focus from stress to positive thoughts, lightens the mood, and helps soldiers feel more connected to others.

Did you know, laughter stimulates the cardiovascular system, improves circulation, and even releases muscle tension. It promotes relaxation and can boost the immune system and makes us more resilient to illness.

Could I suggest, laughter could be the key to balancing the demands of military life. It fosters mental resilience, strengthens teamwork, and boosts overall well-being. So, the next time things get intense, don't forget to laugh. It might just be what you need.

Padre Stephen Albrecht





Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

FUND RAISER RAFFLE

The Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc is conducting a raffle, with the winning prize being 2 nights accommodation in the newly opened

Welcome Swallow Boat House

Located at White Sands on the River Murray.

Normally valued at over \$700, you can win this prize for only **\$5** per ticket.

The winning ticket will be drawn at the RSAR Association Annual General Meeting held at the Avoca Hotel, Clarence Gardens on 3rd August 2025 at Middy

The Winner will be contacted by mobile phone and announced in the monthly RSARA newsletter.

Tickets available by contacting Selina Laing on 0418 822 874 or lebanonsel@live.com.au



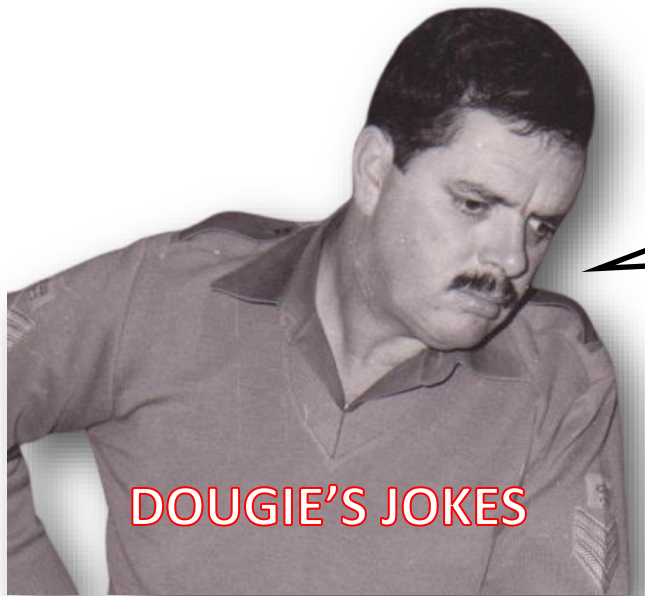
2nd Prize: Wallis Cinemas E Gift Card valued at \$120

3rd Prize: BCF Gift Card valued at \$50
and a Bunnings Gift Card valued at \$50. Total \$100.

Tickets on sale NOW

For more pics check out the website. <https://www.thewelcomeswallow.com/>

Our Account is: RSARA BSB 633 000 Acc. 1616 585 88


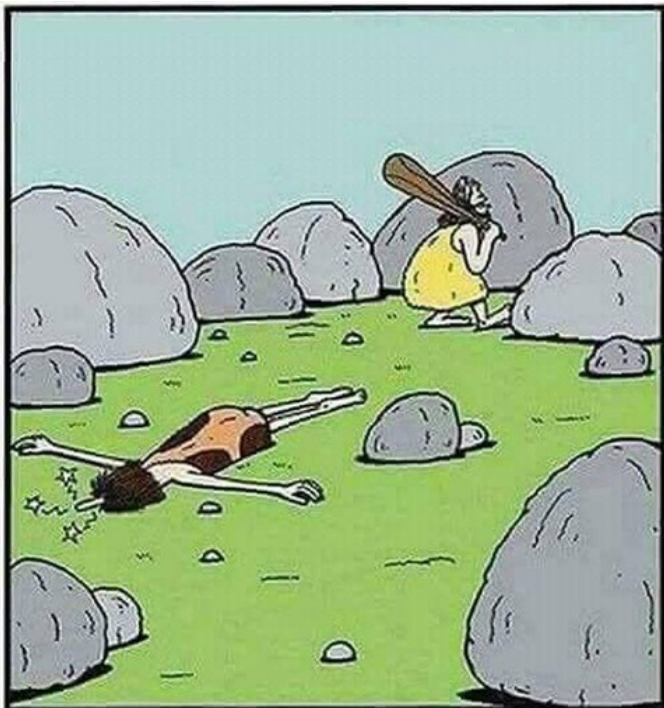


DOUGIE'S JOKES

**If I say it's funny,
IT'S FUNNY!**

AmoMama

"I think youngsters need to start thinking about what kind of world they are going to leave for me and Keith Richards!" — Willie Nelson

Unfriending – the early years

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

Larghetto J.S. Zameck



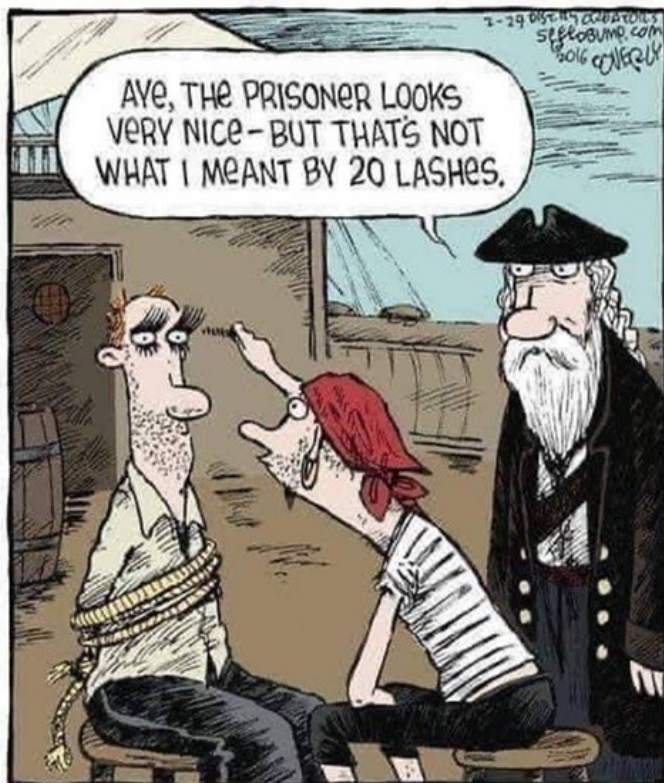
When a man says he'll do anything for a woman, he means fight bad guys and kill dragons, not vacuum or wash dishes.



So China has 1200 coal-fired power stations



but my car is the problem?



I told my boss I needed a pay rise as 3 other companies were after me... He asked which ones? I said "gas, water & electric"



MY WIFE ASKED ME WHY I SPOKE SO SOFTLY IN THE HOUSE. I SAID I WAS AFRAID MARK ZUCKERBERG WAS LISTENING! SHE LAUGHED. I LAUGHED. ALEXA LAUGHED. SIRI LAUGHED.



Police have confirmed that the man who tragically fell from the roof of an 18th floor Nightclub Was not a bouncer

The manager at the local IKEA is retiring, so I sent him a cake.



Battle of Maryang San Korea 1951



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H0BJ2612

Unidentified members of the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), in Korea, welcome relieving troops of the 20th Battalion, Philippines Regimental Combat Team. The Australians have been involved in fighting in the Battle of Maryang San and an area near the Imjin River.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C363380>

During the second year of the Korean War, as fighting continued, there was a large United Nations operation called Operation Commando launched in October 1951. The main aim of this was to attack a Chinese salient near the Imjin River. Forces involved were from Australia, Belgium, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, South Korea and New Zealand.

As a part of this operation, the 3rd Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) participated in the Battle of Maryang San, which stands as an exemplar of the Battalion attack on prepared enemy positions.

Colonel Peter Scott (ret) was the Battalion Intelligence officer of 3RAR at the time and went on to command the Battalion on its second tour in Vietnam. He provides this first hand account:

"On 23rd April 1951, after the enemy had commenced a general offensive the day prior, 27th Brigade was ordered to occupy positions astride the Kapyong Valley. The Battle of Kapyong then took place over the period 23-24 April for which 3RAR was awarded the US Presidential Unit Citation. The battalion suffered 28 KIA, 4 died of wounds, 3 were taken prisoner and 59 wounded.

The UN front was stabilised, and Truce Talks began in June. 3RAR had become part of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade moving north to the Imjin River where it remained static until October. The 1st Commonwealth Division was formed on 28th July comprising the 28th Commonwealth Brigade, 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade and 29th British Infantry Brigade, as well as the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars (Centurion tanks), Sherman tanks of the Canadian Lord Strathcona's

Battle of Maryang San Korea 1951



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P04953.002

Informal group portrait of non-wounded survivors of the 5th Platoon, B Company, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) after the company was withdrawn from the line at the end of the Battle of Maryang San in October 1951. The 5th Platoon helped capture the Hinge feature and held it through days of heavy shelling and human wave assaults.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1123357>

Horse and an Artillery Regiment from Great Britain, Canada and New Zealand.

The Battle of Maryang San (Hill 317) took place over the period 2-7 October 1951 and 3RAR was not only involved in the capture of the division's first objective, Hill 355, but went on to capture Hill 317 after a series of company and platoon attacks orchestrated by our brilliant CO, then Lieutenant Colonel Frank Hassett, who was decorated with the Distinguished Service Order by the 1st Commonwealth Divisional Commander, Major General Jim Cassels, immediately after the battle concluded. Casualties suffered were 21 killed, 5 of whom had already survived the Battle of Kapyong (April 1951), and 104 wounded."

As Intelligence Officer for 3RAR during this operation, I think the statement written by Australia's official historian for the Korean War, Robert O'Neill, says it all:

"In this action 3RAR had one of the most impressive victories achieved by any Australian battalion. In five days of heavy fighting 3RAR dislodged a numerically superior enemy from a position of great strength. The Australians were successful in achieving surprise on 3 and 5 October, the company and platoon commanders responded skilfully to Hassett's direction, and the individual

Battle of Maryang San Korea 1951

soldiers showed high courage, tenacity and morale despite some very difficult situations, such as D Company when the mist rose on 5 October and those of B and C Companies when the weight of enemy fire threatened their isolation of Hill 317 on 7 October. The Victory of Maryang San is probably the greatest single feat of the Australian Army during the Korean War."

Peter Scott's story



Peter Scott OAM

Francis 'Peter' Scott was born in Elsternwick, Victoria, in 1929. A keen cadet in his school days, Peter joined the Royal Military College – Duntroon in February 1946. He graduated as a lieutenant in the Australian Staff Corps and was posted to infantry in December 1948.

Peter was serving with the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan when the Korean War began in 1950.

Re-deployed to Korea, Peter served there from 19 July 1951 to 19 July 1952. He was a platoon commander when he first arrived. Unfortunately, Peter was evacuated almost immediately after being wounded by a grenade during a training exercise. On return to the battalion, he was appointed as Intelligence Officer and fought in the Battle of Maryang San in October 1951.

Peter recalls the fighting being particularly heavy on Hill 317. He said he felt very lucky to survive. He affectionately remembered the 3RAR commander Lieutenant Colonel Frank Hassett, who successfully planned the capture of the hill.

Peter also recalled the use of a helicopter to evacuate a wounded man from the front line, which was a new extraction method at the time.

Peter went on to have a distinguished career in the Australian Army. He was awarded a Distinguished Service Order (DSO) while commanding 3RAR in Vietnam. Later, he was Commander 2nd Military District, Sydney, and was awarded an OAM in 2025.

3 RAR soldiers on board a troopship bound for South Korea.



The Aussie Way of Discipline

Until this very day military strategists impress on officers the value of discipline among the troops. Almost unanimously is the thought that only disciplined soldiers are ready for war. *Undisciplined men are disobedient troublemakers. They can't be trusted and they won't fight well.*

It seems that one of the great experiences of the First World War - and a true heritage of that Great War - is going to be forgotten. This Australian lesson is worth to be remembered - not only in Australia, and not only in military circuits.

The Australian lesson learns that discipline has nothing to do with dedication, and very little with training. The keywords in this lesson are: *collective discipline* and *individualism* - words that sound like curses in the ears of many a commanding officer.

Reputation

In the First World War the Australian soldiers earned an outstanding reputation. They fought in many of the great theatres of war: Gallipoli, Damascus, Gaza, Somme (Pozières), Fromelles, Péronne, St. Eloi, Ypres and Passchendaele.

Right from the beginning English officers complained about the undisciplined behaviour of the Australians. Their officers and soldiers did not keep the necessary distance, they dressed improperly, even with nonchalance - some didn't even *shave* everyday. And some soldiers even dared to *object* if they had to carry out a task they did not like.

The rumours very soon reached the War Cabinet and the Prime Minister in London. It was obvious: with these dirty and slovenly troops you can't win a war.

As soon as the Australians were engaged in their first major battle - at Gallipoli - the War Cabinet send their Secretary, Sir Maurice Hankey, down to investigate what was going on. Sir Maurice visited every corner of the peninsula and he spent a good deal of time in the Australian trenches, even in the front line. He was impressed, and he wrote to the Prime Minister:

"I do hope that we shall hear no more of the 'indiscipline' of these extraordinary Corps, for I don't believe that for military qualities of every kind their equal exists. Their physique is wonderful and their intelligence of a high order."

In France

At Gallipoli the Aussies were landed at the wrong beach and suffered terrible casualties in a rugged and confined war theatre. But it was worse in France where, in hellish conditions, the young men were led to pure slaughter. But there too, they fought like no one had ever seen before.

The Australians began to arrive in France from the Middle East in March 1916. At the end of that month Commander-in-Chief Field-Marshal Douglas Haig (**picture right**) inspected the 2nd Division.

Afterwards Haig wrote in his diary: *"The men were looking splendid, fine physique, very hard and determined-looking. The Australians are mad keen to kill Germans and to start doing it at once!"*

The Australians had their first battle experience on European soil on July 20th, in the Battle of the Somme. They took the village of Pozières. However, their claim to reach the Windmill proved untrue. Prompt German counter-attacks made their position very delicate.

Haig wrote: *"The situation seems all very new and strange to Australian HQ. The fighting here and the shell-fire is much more severe than anything experienced at Gallipoli. The German, too, is a very different enemy from the Turk!"*

The Australians, like their British comrades, were learning the art of war the hard way. They learned amazingly fast - and their morale stayed terrific. More than once Haig intervened personally when he thought the Aussies were going too fast.

Haig in his diary: *"The Australians had said at the last moment that they would attack the Windmill again without artillery support and that 'they did not believe machine-gun fire could do them much harm'. We arranged that the original artillery programme should be carried out. The Australians are splendid fellows but very ignorant."*

Behaviour

In the trenches (**picture next page**) ignorance and innocence soon died, together with numerous men. An Australian soldier wrote home:

"There, dead lay everywhere. The deeper one dug the more bodies one exhumed. Hands and faces protruded from the slimy



The Aussie Way of Discipline

toppling walls of trenches. Knees, shoulders and buttocks poked from the foul morass..."

And the German learned to fear Australians, because they were reckless, ruthless - *and* revengeful. During the Third Battle of Ypres, autumn 1917, the ANZAC's (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) met the Germans on high ground, in front of Polygon Wood. That evening the official communique read:

One ANZAC Corps obtained all its objectives and took 3.900 prisoners. The other ANZAC Corps took all its objectives and met the Prussian Guards who they had met before at Pozières on the Somme. This Corps took no prisoners.

One of the fierce Aussie soldiers who fought at Polygon Wood was Barney Hines, known as the *Souvenir King* due to his escapades of robbing the German dead. Apparently even the Kaiser heard of him and branded him a "barbarian... typical of Australian Troops on the Western Front".



But private Hines was of Irish descent and born in Liverpool. When the Great War broke out he was working in a sawmill in Australia. Despite being in his early 40s, he tried to enlist but was turned down on medical grounds. Undeterred, he haunted recruiting centres until he was accepted. Hines became one of the legends of the Great War. He generally disdained conventional weapons such as his Lee Enfield rifle preferring to go into action with two sandbags packed with Mills bombs (hand grenades).

There are other accounts of downright cruelty - even warcrimes - committed by Australians against the enemy. The British officer Robert Graves quotes (in *Goodbye to all that*, 1929) an anonymous Australian who told him: 'Well the biggest lark I had was at Morlancourt, when we took it the first time. There were a lot of Jerries in a cellar, and I said to 'em: "Come out, you Camarades!" So out they came, a dozen of 'em, with their hands up. "Turn out your pockets," I told 'em. They turned 'em out. Watches and gold and stuff, all dinkum. Then I said: "Now back to your cellar, you sons of bitches!" For I couldn't be bothered with 'em. When they were all safely down I threw half a dozen Mills bombs in after 'em. I'd got the stuff all right, and we weren't taking prisoners that day.'

It is uncertain whether stories like this ever reached the staff. But they sure contributed to the reputation of the Australian soldier.

Admiration

As the war continued Field-Marshal Haig's admiration for these notable soldiers grew, though they never ceased to puzzle him, as they did most British officers - and ordinary Tommies too.

During Third Ypres lieutenant P. King of the 2/5th Btn. East Lancashire Regiment, was stuck with a small left-over of his company in the mud near Poelcapelle. The men were exhausted, had been under constant fire for two days and desperate for relieve. But no one seemed even to know that they were there.

LT. King already began to wonder whether his company had been secretly chosen to be a suicide force. King:

"Suddenly, to my great surprise, I heard voices behind me and I looked back and there were three very tall figures, and one was actually smoking. I could hardly speak for astonishment. I said, 'Who the hell are you? And put that cigarette out, you'll draw fire!' He just looked back at me. 'Well, come to that, who are you?' I said, 'I'm lieutenant King of the 2/5th East Lancashire Regiment.' At which he said: 'Well, we're the Aussies, chum, and we've come to relieve you.' And they jumped down into the shell-hole. Well, naturally, we were delighted, but of course there are certain formalities you've always got to carry out when you hand over, and I was a bit worried about that. So I explained, 'There are no trenches to hand over, no rations, no ammunition, but I have got a map. Do you need any map references?' He said, 'Never mind about that, chum. Just fuck off.' They didn't seem to be a bit bothered. The last I saw of them they were squatting down, rifles over their shoulders, and they were smoking, all three of them. Just didn't care!"

'So much trouble'

Behind the lines, the Australians had modes of behaviour which conflicted totally with the British Army's habits. In February 1918 Haig wrote in a letter to his wife:

"We have had to separate the Australians into Convalescent Camps of their own, because they were giving so much trouble when along with our men and put such revolutionary ideas into their heads."

The Aussie Way of Discipline

Haig was convinced that a great deal of the problems were caused by General Birdwood's relaxed disciplinary methods. Sir William Birdwood (**picture right**) was *Imperial* (English officer who commanded the I ANZAC Corps and later the Australian Corps) and he never found great favour in Haig's eyes.

The truth is that Birdwood was one of the very few senior British officers who possessed the 'touch' to command Australians, the perception necessary to extract their qualities.

Another 'troublemaker' was the Australian brigadier-general Thomas William Glasgow. Passed into a proverb are his remarks when he was ordered to attack Villers-Bretonneux, a French village vital to the integrity of the whole Allied line. General Heneker told him that the attack was to be made from Cachy.

Glasgow, who had studied the scene, said he could not do it that way, because that would cost too many lives. *"Tell us what you want us to do, Sir,"* he said, *"but you must let us do it our own way."*

General Heneker was flabbergasted, especially when Glasgow also said that he wanted the time of the attack changed. British army officers were not supposed to argue with their superiors. But after some arguing it was settled that the attack should be made as Glasgow desired (the attack became a resounding success).

Goal

Another important difference between Australian and British troops was that the Aussie officers explained extensively to their men the objectives of the battle they were about to engage in. Even ordinary soldiers then knew the strategy that was behind it. When they became cut-off they still knew what to do, what the goal was.

Unlike their British colleagues, common Australian soldiers were not treated like ignorant donkeys, but like individuals who will function better in a team when they know their collective aim. The Australian lieutenant-general Sir John Monash (**picture right**), successor of Birdwood, said:

"Very much and very stupid comment has been made upon the discipline of the Australian soldier. That was because the very conception and purpose of discipline have been misunderstood. It is, after all, only a means to an end, and that end is the power to secure co-ordinated action among a large number of individuals for the achievement of a definite purpose. It does not mean lip service, nor obsequious homage to superiors, nor servile observance of forms and customs, nor a suppression of individuality... the Australian Army is a proof that individualism is the best and not the worst foundation upon which to build up collective discipline."

Strazeele

An example of the clashes between the two conceptions is what happened at the camp in Strazeele (Belgium), where the Australians were encamped on the other side of the road from the 10th Royal Fusiliers. The Tommies were simultaneously shocked and impressed by the Aussies' casual attitude to war - or at least to the Army. It could hardly be right for Aussie privates to address their commanding officer as 'Jack', but the Fusiliers heard them do so with their own ears.

For their part, the Australian 'Diggers' as they were often called, were equally disapproving of certain rites observed by the Fusiliers. As Private C. Miles of the 10th Btn. Royal Fusiliers recalled:

"The Colonel decided that he would have a full dress parade of the guard mounting. Well, the Aussies looked over at us *amazed*. The band was playing, we were all smartened up, spit and polish, on parade, and that happened every morning. We marched up and down, up and down.

The Aussies couldn't get over it, and when we were off duty we naturally used to talk to them, go over and have a smoke with them, or meet them when we were hanging about the road or having a stroll. They kept asking us: 'Do you like this sort of thing? All these parades, do you want to do it?' Of course we said, 'No, of course we don't. We're supposed to be on rest, and all the time we've got goes to push up and turn out on parade.' So they looked at us a bit strangely and said, 'OK, cobbbers, we'll soon alter that for you'.



The Aussie Way of Discipline

The Australians didn't approve of it because they never polished or did anything. They had a band, but their brass instruments were all filthy. Still, they knew how to play them.

The next evening, our Sergeant-Major was taking the parade. Sergeant-Major Rowbotham, a nice man, but a stickler for discipline. He was just getting ready to bawl us all out when the Australians started with their band. They marched up and down the road outside the field, playing any old thing. There was no tune you could recognise, they were just blowing as loud as they could on their instruments. It sounded like a million cat-calls.

And poor old Sergeant Rowbotham, he couldn't make his voice heard. It was an absolute fiasco. They never tried to mount another parade, because they could see the Aussies watching us from across the road, just ready to step in and sabotage the whole thing. So they decided that parades for mounting the guards should be washed out, and after that they just posted the guards in the ordinary way as if we were in the line."

Wagon wheel

To the Australian troops it seemed that the British Army was obsessed by discipline. *They* would never stand for it. At several occasions Australian soldiers sabotaged *First Field Punishment* British soldiers were sentenced to (for instance when Tommy had been found drunk or had been wearing dirty clothes when off duty).

First Field Punishment meant that the soldier first had to parade in full pack. Then he had to take the pack off and Military Police-men strapped him up against a wooden cross, often one in a wagon wheel. It looked like he was crucified. This happened twice a day, an hour in the morning and an hour at night, and for as many days as the soldier was sentenced to.

It happened that Australian troops, incensed by the sight of a man undergoing Field Punishment, cut the man loose again, and again, and threatening the MP's - with loaded rifles, daring them to truss poor Tommy up again.

No executions

The British Army Staff did not very well know what to do with these and other Australian *crimes*. The mutinies in the French Army made some high-ranking officers nervous. They feared that the casual and highly self-conscious attitude of the ANZAC troops would have a deleterious effect on the more docile British troops under their command. "*Independent thinking is not to be encouraged in a professional Army. It is a form of mutiny. Obedience is the supreme virtue*", the British Prime Minister Lloyd George warned.

In the British assessment the reputedly high crime rate of the Australians also played a significant role. A rather high number of Aussies were put behind bars for some time. In the winter of 1918 an average of 9 per 1,000 Australian soldiers resided in prison. Canadians, New Zealanders and South Africans had an average of 1.6 per 1,000 men behind bars.

Some punishments however were not forced down on Australian troops. Though liable to be executed for mutiny, desertion to the enemy or treachery, the 129 Australians (including 119 deserters) that were sentenced to death during the war (117 in France) were *not* shot.

The 1903 Australian Defence Act stipulated that the Governor General of Australia had to confirm all sentences passed by courts-martial - and he never endorsed death sentences. Although Haig made strong representations for power to inflict the extreme penalty upon Australian soldiers, the sanction was continually denied.

A major consideration was the Australian soldier's status as a volunteer, and that as such, these men should not be subject to the extreme penalty.

After all - enough men were killed already. More than 61.000 Australians died in this war, mostly on the Western Front.

Australia's casualty rate was, relatively, the highest of all allied nations.

Story By Rob Ruggenberg

Source: <https://greatwar.nl/frames/default-australians.html>



French children tend to Australian graves

The Commanding Officers Sig

This story was originally published in the Battalion Annual Magazine "Pro Patria" compiled by good mate WO2 Craig Thomson in 2014.

It concerns a time when "cams" were only worn by Special Forces, and Ration Packs were hard to come by and even harder to eat. I refer to my time with 10 Battalion RSAR from 1971 to 1976. In 1974 when the Alberton Depot was closed down, the resident A Company moved to Torrens Training Depot and became the Signals Platoon. Shortly after that I was picked to be the CO's personal signaller, and the job had its pitfalls but also many benefits.

Some of our gear was unconventional, as were some of our uniforms. The green shield lightning patch on my beret is the Sig Platoon emblem of the lightning flash. An unofficial patch, frowned on by the CO but "allowed" by the Battalion 2IC Major Felix Fazekas MC.

LTCOL Doug Creten was Commanding Officer when I joined the 10 Battalion RSAR Signals Platoon at Torrens Training Depot in 1971. I have many personal memories of "The Boss" as I used to refer to him from when I was posted as his Signaller in 1974.

We were paired up for nearly 2 years and there were many benefits of being beside him for sometimes weeks on end. When the CO showered, I showered. When the CO ate, I ate. When the CO went for a recce in a Kiowa chopper, I went for a ride in the chopper. When the CO went to the long drop..... I waited outside!! I went virtually everywhere he went, except for one notable occasion!!!

Exercise "Maiden Magpie" was taking place out at Cultana (where else?) and Doug was directing a multi-Battalion attack across an escarpment on "Sumerian enemy forces" from 3 RAR. Our forces consisted of 3/9th SAMR, 10 Battalion, 27 Battalion and the blokes from the bush, 43 Battalion RSAR.

We were crossing the top of a ridge line at a great pace and I was having trouble keeping up. I should add that I was carrying the ANPRC 25 radio, a full pack, my webbing and an M16 rifle, (swapped for my SLR with a 3 RAR digger.) Doug was carrying a water bottle, a 9mm handgun, and the handset of the radio.



LTCOL Doug Creten

The quickest route across a narrow chasm was across two gigantic boulders, and this was the path that Doug chose! As he jumped between the two boulders he pulled me behind him, tethered by the cord of the radio handset, but I didn't make the distance, being weighed down by my gear. The result was a heavy tumble down the side of the cliff, a dislocated collarbone and lots of bruises. The Boss grabbed the radio off my back and continued directing the battle on his own, whilst I had to wait for medical attention, and then endure an uncomfortable 12 km ride in an M113 APC, back to the RAP at Cultana HQ.

I never found out who won the battle, but I did eventually forgive the CO for nearly dragging me to my doom.

I didn't see Doug after I left the Army in 1977, until a chance meeting at the Adelaide Town Hall in 2011 at a Lord Mayors Reception. I recognised him instantly and re-introduced myself.

The first thing he said, smiling, was "Hey Laingy, how's the shoulder?" The "Boss" left us in 2016 and joined that big "Regiment in the sky."

The "Boss" left us in 2016 and joined that big "Regiment in the sky."

VALE BOSS! It was a real pleasure!

*CPL David Laing - CO's Signaller
10 Bn RSAR Signals Platoon 1974-76*





Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP 2025



Membership Category

Date of Application / /

| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full Membership \$30 (Former member of the RSAR) | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Serving Military Member Must be serving with the RSAR or a sub unit. FREE 1st year. \$10 thereafter while still serving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non Voting Associate Member \$15 (Spouses, non former members of RSAR) | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership (By invitation Only) <input type="checkbox"/> FULL Member \$300 <input type="checkbox"/> ASSOCIATE Member \$150 |

My Details - Please print clearly

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| Full Name: | Address: |
| Date of Birth: | Post Code: |
| Mobile No: | Email: |
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| Period of Service / / to / / | Can you assist the Committee? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spouse/Partners name. | PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY |

Method of Payment

| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque or Money Order - Payable to The Treasurer Christian Bennett RSAR Association Inc PO Box 1133 Kensington Gardens SA 5068 | <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 below and posted Application to The Secretary RSAR Association PO Box 5218 Murray Bridge South SA 5253 |

| | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Account Name: | RSAR Association Inc |
| Bank: | Bendigo Bank |
| BSB: | 633 000 |
| Acct # | 1616 585 88 |

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.



Website: www.rsara.asn.au

Please send this completed application, **with proof of service** to the RSAR Association Secretary at davidlaing49@outlook.com

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Please welcome
new Paid Member
COL Steve Larkins
Honorary Colonel
10/27 Bn RSAR
and new Honorary Member
Capt. Charles Jilbert Adjutant
10/27 Bn RSAR