

# "SITREP, OVER!"

Official Journal of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

November 2021

Patron - Major General Neil Wilson AM RFD

Editor David Laing

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## Remembrance Day

***At 11.00am on 11 November 1918, the guns on the Western Front fell silent after more than four years continuous warfare.***

November 11 is universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the First World War. This conflict had mobilised over 70 million people and left between 9 and 13 million dead and as many as one third of these with no grave. The allied nations chose this day and time for the commemoration of their war dead.

On the first anniversary of the Armistice, 11 November 1919, two minutes' silence was instituted as part of the main commemorative ceremony at the new cenotaph in London. The silence was proposed by Edward Honey, an Australian journalist working in Fleet Street. At around the same time, a South African statesman made a similar proposal to the British Cabinet, which added its endorsement. King George V personally requested all the people of the British Empire to suspend normal activities for two minutes on the hour of the Armistice 'which stayed the world-wide carnage of the four preceding years and marked the victory of Right and Freedom'. The two minutes' silence was popularly adopted and became a central feature of Armistice Day.

On the second anniversary of the Armistice, 11 November 1920, the commemoration was given added significance with the return of the remains of an unknown soldier from the battlefields of the Western Front. Unknown soldiers were interred with full military honours in Westminster Abbey in London and at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

In Australia, on the 75th anniversary of the Armistice 11 November 1993, the remains of an unknown Australian soldier, exhumed from a First World War military cemetery in France, was ceremonially entombed in the Australian War Memorial. Remembrance Day ceremonies were conducted simultaneously in towns and cities all over the country, culminating at the moment of burial at 11.00am and coinciding with the traditional two minutes silence.

Four years later, in November 1997, the Governor-General, Sir William Deane, issued a proclamation formally declaring the 11th of November as Remembrance Day and urged all Australians to observe one minutes' silence at 11.00am on 11 November each year to remember those who died or suffered for Australia's cause in all wars and armed conflicts.

This year, we commemorate the 103rd anniversary of when the guns on the Western Front fell silent and reflect on the significance of that event. We also pause to remember all men and women of the Australian Defence Force who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

We will remember them.

**Lest We forget.**



### ITEMS OF INTEREST THIS MONTH

- The Militia Page 2
- 2021 AGM pics Page 3,4,5
- CPL Numbnutz Page 6,7,8
- WO1 John Percival Page 11,12
- Letters to the Editor Page 9
- Editorial / Contact Us Page 10
- Financial Members Page 13
- Application to Join Page 14

**OUR THANKS TO THE  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL  
MEMBER FOR BARKER,  
THE HONOURABLE TONY  
PASIN MP FOR PRINTING  
OUR NEWSLETTER HARD  
COPIES.**



# The offending 'M' - WW2 Army service numbers

2

During the Second World War, Australia's land fighting force was essentially composed of two separate armies, the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and the Citizen Military Forces (CMF or Militia).

Fighting side by side, in New Guinea helped to establish a professional respect between the AIF and the Militia. In this picture, four Australian soldiers await repatriation from Bougainville at the conclusion of World War 2.

During the Second World War, Australia's land fighting force was essentially composed of two separate armies, the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and the Citizen Military Forces (CMF or Militia).

An undercurrent of hostility and competition between the two armies, particularly during the early years of the war, has been well documented.

Men in the AIF volunteered for an indefinite time period and service in any location. The militia on the other hand were volunteers who enlisted for home defence and whose service had restrictions placed upon it, for example the localities to which they could be sent. Some members of the AIF doubted the abilities of the militia and predicted they would melt under pressure, derisively labelling them "chocos" (short for chocolate soldiers).



for

In general, it is easy to discern whether a Second World War Army Veteran served with the militia or with the AIF, simply by examining his service number. Members of the militia have service numbers that appear like thus: V25444. In this case, the V stands for Victoria, denoting the state of enlistment with the unique identifying number following. N6942 denoted a New South Wales enlistee, S78024 a South Australian enlistee, and so on.

A member of the AIF would have a service number resembling this: VX542. In this case, again, the first initial denotes the state of enlistment and the second initial, the 'X', indicates that the soldier was a member of the AIF.

Initially, when a soldier transferred from the militia to the AIF, an 'M' would be inserted into his service number. Thus, if he was originally a member of the militia and his service number was V5467 – following his transfer to the AIF, his number would change to VMX5467.

The tension between the two forces was evident at a meeting of the Advisory War Council in Melbourne on 6 August 1942.

Here, council member and future Prime Minister, John 'Black Jack' McEwen questioned the numbering practice used for men voluntarily transferring from the militia to the AIF.

While it may seem a triviality, this practice proved unpopular with the troops. The main reason for this was that it differentiated between troops who had enlisted in the AIF directly, and those who had arrived there via the Militia.

When John McEwen raised concerns about this practice to the Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Military Forces, General Thomas Blamey, who replied that this practice occurred merely for the purposes of record keeping.

Nevertheless, Blamey acknowledged that the administrative practice was causing discontent amongst the troops and as a consequence, advised the members of the Council that the practice would be discontinued and a new batch of numbers would be allotted to the militia transfers – minus the offending 'M'.

This, coupled with the respect the Militia gained from the AIF after they distinguished themselves in the brutal fighting of the Papuan Campaign, helped to alleviate friction between Australia's two forces.



# 2021 Annual General Meeting

The 2021 AGM on Sunday 24th October was well patronised at the Avoca Hotel, with 56 members, wives, partners and 2 sprogs enjoying the camaraderie of the event. Lots of words were exchanged and laughs had, and apart from the usual admin we farewelled 3 members of the Committee of Management who stood down to allow others to lend their support. Our thanks go to Norm Tregenza, Nat Cooke and Colin Phillips for their years of assistance and guidance, and we only hope any new committee members can do half as much as their predecessors. Special thanks to guests LTCOL Sam Benveniste, Capt Paul Ghanem (Padre) and WO1 Ben Read for their attendance and support. After the admin was completed members enjoyed a lovely meal and a few drinks in the company of friends. Our thanks go to the Avoca and staff for being our hosts for the day.





# 2021 Annual General Meeting



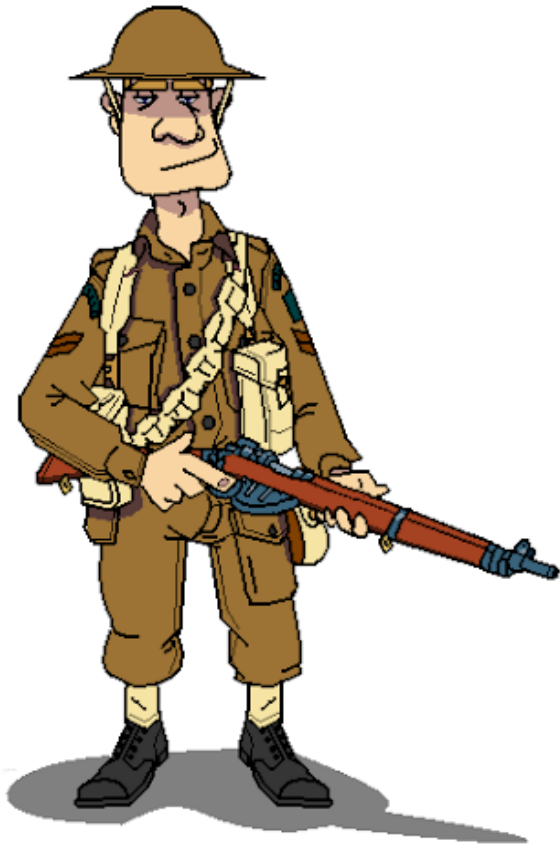


# 2021 Annual General Meeting





## Corporal Numbnutz Funnies.

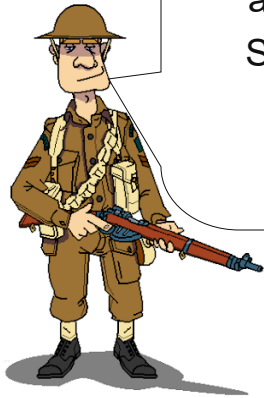


**Last Night, My Neighbor Came Home Drunk & Banged On His Own Door For Like 5 Mins. Problem Is, He Lives Alone, So I Went Outside And Told Him He Wasn't There & He Left!!!** 😂😂😂



A new supermarket opened near my house. It has an automatic water mister to keep the produce fresh. Just before it goes on, you hear the sound of distant thunder and the smell of fresh rain. When you approach the milk cases, you hear cows mooing and experience the scent of fresh hay. When you approach the egg case, you hear hens cluck and cackle, and the air is filled with the pleasing aroma of bacon and eggs frying. The veggie department features the smell of fresh buttered corn. I don't buy toilet paper there any more.

**She said she missed me! Normally that would be good, but at the moment she's reloading!**



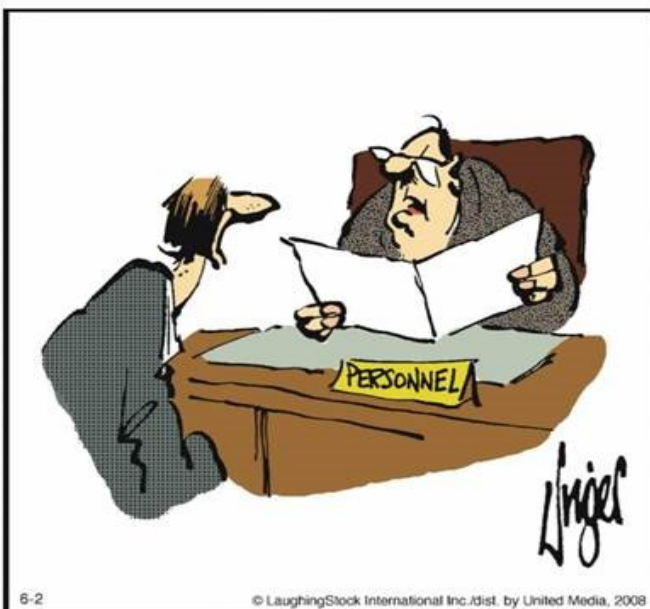
Yesterday a 2 seater  
Cessna crashed into  
an Irish cemetery.  
So far police have  
recovered  
252 bodies.



If the person who named  
Walkie Talkies named  
everything

Stamps - Lickie Stickie  
Defibrillators - Hearty Starty  
Bumble bees - Fuzzy Buzzy  
Pregnancy test - Maybe Baby  
Bra - Breastie Nestie  
Fork - Stabby Grabby  
Socks - Feetie Heatie  
Hippo - Floatie Bloatie  
Nightmare - Screamy Dreamy

Somehow, I don't think the 5 second rule  
applies here.

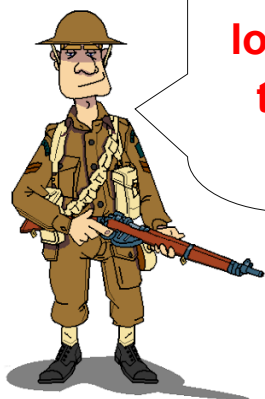


6-2

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"Your resume says you spent  
'fore years at collej."





**So I want you all to  
work twice as hard, pay  
lots of taxes to keep me in  
the manner I plan to get  
accustomed to !**



David received a parrot for his birthday. This parrot was fully grown with a bad attitude and worse vocabulary. Every other word was an expletive. Those that weren't expletives were, to say the least, rude.

David tried hard to change the bird's attitude and was constantly saying polite words, playing soft music, anything that came to mind. Nothing worked. He yelled at the bird, the bird got worse. He shook the bird and the bird got madder and ruder.

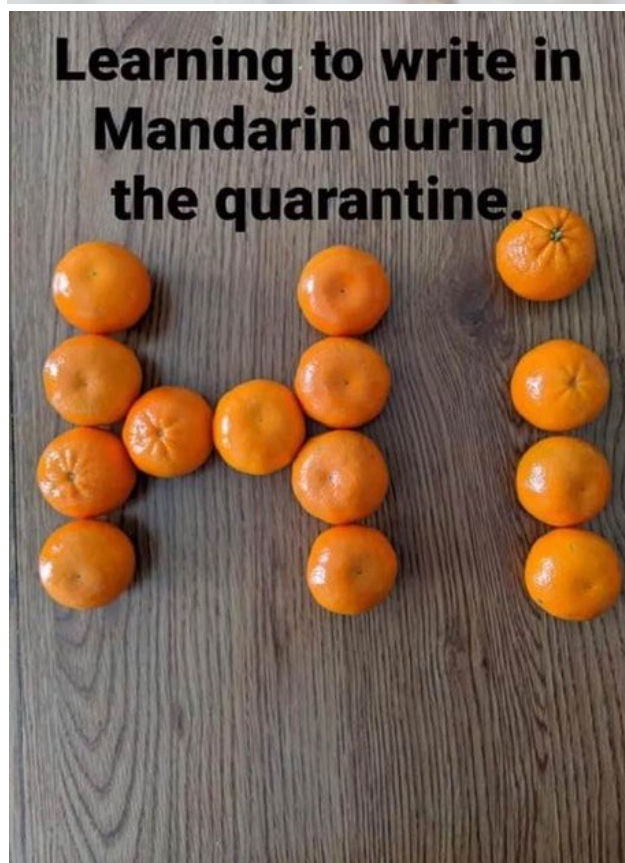
Finally, in a moment of desperation, David put the parrot in the freezer. For a few moments he heard the bird squawking, kicking and screaming and then, suddenly, all was quiet.

David was frightened that he might have actually hurt the bird and quickly opened the freezer door. The parrot calmly stepped out onto David's extended arm and said: "I'm so sorry that I offended you with my language and actions. I ask for your profound forgiveness. I will try to check my behaviour in the future."

David was astounded at the bird's change in attitude and was about to ask what changed him when the parrot continued, "May I ask what the chicken did?"

**MOTHER IN LAW  
CAME FOR DINNER  
AND SAID "WHY DOES  
YOUR DOG KEEP  
LOOKING AT ME"**

**I SAID "IT'S BECAUSE  
YOU'RE USING HIS  
PLATE"**





# SOLDIER BOY      The Youngest ANZAC

Private James Charles (Jim) Martin (1901-1915) is believed to have been the youngest Australian to die during service at Gallipoli.

He had convinced recruiting that he was 18 years of age, when in fact, at enlistment he was 14 years and three months.

Jim landed at Gallipoli on 8 September 1915 as part of the 21st Battalion and saw action near Courtney's Post. He wrote very few letters home to his family, however he did indicate that all was well. Being so young it is difficult to re-search his life prior to enlistment.



On 25 October 1915, Jim was evacuated to the hospital ship 'Glenart Castle' due to the effects of typhoid fever. He passed away from heart failure that same evening and was buried at sea. His name is recorded on the Lone Pine Memorial.

Want to know more: read the book 'Soldier Boy' written by Anthony Hill

Source: [Australian War Memorial Website](http://www.awm.gov.au)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

G'day David

Pro Patria was excellent David, my father was a 39 er, 2/10 Battalion, Rat of Tobruk and New Guinea vet, he said bugger all about the war, got most of information out of the book "Purple and Blue", had massive nightmares into my early teens, he never bought anything Japanese and was in his 80's before he sort of forgave them. Signed me into the CMF but wouldn't for the regular army, I had to wait until I was 21 to join. Just a bit of probably useless information. Reading about the battalion in Pro Patria brought it to mind, thanks for the unit sending it

*Bill Blackmore*

Dear Mr Laing

亲爱的莱恩先生。我很喜欢阅读您的时事通讯，并且非常高兴地嘲笑您的漫画。我们在中国没有幽默感，所以我很感谢你们的国家有。问候。李清萍

**清玲萍**



## EDITORIAL

**B**etween the publishing of these newsletters, emails and letters fly back and forth with members suggestions for articles in "Sitrep, Over!" One member Max Hill has been in my ear for a number of months about dedicating some pages to one of our Regiments most famous soldiers, Warrant Officer Class One John Percival. Max, it starts this edition on Page 9 & 10.

**B**y now most of the Financial members would have received a FREE copy of "Pro Patria", the Battalions Annual Journal. It makes interesting reading of the work done by the Battle Group over the past 2 years, and shows just how hard our soldiers work. It was also heartening to see that our previous "poster boy" SGT Mark Blondell, who seemed to get his photo in everything military, has been outdone by another Association member, Major Aaron Jackson, the co-editor of the journal. At last count there were 43 photos and 28 mentions of Aaron in the publication, with only 4 photos of Blondie and 5 mentions, plus one article. By contrast there was only one photo of Rodney Beames, and he was presenting an award to..... you guessed it, Mark Blondell!!! Well done Major Jackson and Lieutenant Mathew Hume for your hard work in getting the journal published and circulated.

**H**istorian Des Hawkins is looking for a video or DVD of the Linking Parade of the 10th and 27th Battalions RSAR back in 1987 at the Torrens Parade Ground. Member Tex Ranger had a VHS copy that was very "grainy" and trying to convert it to DVD has been almost impossible. Des would like one for the Regimental Historical Collection, so if anyone has a "Good" copy, please let Des know via this newsletter.

**A**t the recent AGM a number of Committee personnel stood down after many years combined service. Nat Cooke, Norm Tregenza and Colin Phillips have stood aside to allow some "fresh blood" into the committee, and we thank them for their support, assistance and wisdom over the years. All three have assisted during various catering and battalion support exercises (Norm always accompanied by wife Lyn) and it is heartening to know that they will all continue to assist when the call goes out in the future. To Nat, Norm and Colin, from all of us, thank you for your valuable service, and we look forward to catching up really soon. Should any financial member wish to provide a willingness to support the committee, please let the Secretary know and the committee will discuss it at the next meeting.

That's what I think!

*David Laing* - Secretary / Editor



### Contact Us, via

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David Laing**

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Visit us on the web at

[www.rsara.asn.au](http://www.rsara.asn.au)

### 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  
Christian Bennett  
RSAR Association  
5 Ashwin Parade  
Torrensville SA 5031**

[christianbennett95@gmail.com](mailto:christianbennett95@gmail.com)



# SX1323 WO1 JOHN GEORGE PERCIVAL, MBE

11

RSM 2/10<sup>th</sup> Bn. 1940 – 1945  
RSM 65th Bn. 12 October 1945 to 8 May 1946  
RSM 1RAR 10 January 1952 to 6 March 1952  
RSM 2/10<sup>th</sup> Bn. 1948 -1967

## The Early Years 1912 to 1939

John George Percival was born in Carlisle, England on 14 November 1912. His parents, John James Percival, a civil service postman, and Alexandrina Corbett Mathieson, were married in England in 1911. His father fought in the Great War as Private John James Percival, born 1879, a member of the 8th (City of London) Battalion (Post Office Rifles). He died in September 1916 of a severe gastric ulcer while in France and is buried at the Millencourt Communal Cemetery Extension.

In 1922 the remaining family members, his mother, Alexandrina Corbett, sister, Agnes Jessie and John George, departed Liverpool on 28 October 1922 as passengers on the SS CERAMIC bound for Adelaide, South Australia. John passed the Intermediate Certificate of education at the Unley Central School in 1928 and began work at the Holden Woodville plant as a sheet metal worker.



Around 1929/30 John George Percival attended two years' compulsory Army service before joining the 27th Infantry Battalion and serving ten years in the militia. He was promoted corporal in 1931 and a year later promoted to sergeant. During this period he was frequently mentioned in the South Australian press for his marksmanship with rifle and machine gun.

In 1933 at the age of 21 Sergeant Percival was promoted to warrant officer class 2 and in 1937 **"The Mail" Adelaide** reported that:

***"Probably the youngest man in Australia to receive the Coronation Medal [GRVI] this week was John George Percival, a 25 year old volunteer Warrant Officer serving in the 27th Battalion at Keswick. The award was unique as far as the South Australian list was concerned, as he was the only militia man honoured below commissioned rank...."***

## England and Middle East 1939 to 1942

At the outbreak of World War 2, Warrant Officer Percival enlisted, as a founding member, of the 2/10th Infantry Battalion with the rank of sergeant, acting company sergeant major. He was promoted WO1 and appointed RSM, 2/10th Battalion within three months of enlisting. (The original RSM WO1 T. J. Schmedje was promoted lieutenant, Assistant Adjutant, 2/10th Battalion, on 12 January 1940 creating the vacancy.) After training in and around Woodside camp, the 2/10th Battalion, 18th Infantry Brigade embarked for the Middle East on 5 May 1940. On route, however, the Battalion was diverted to England to bolster defences in the wake of Dunkirk. The unit was based and trained in and around Salisbury and Colchester before embarking for Alexandria, Egypt, on the last day of 1940.

In March, RSM Percival was warned *"for Special Duty, Lustre Force [but] did not embark for Greece."* As noted in the War Diary, this force was to be deployed to Greece in response to the failed Italian invasion and the imminent German intervention in Greece. Thus the proposed deployment was overtaken by events. The first major operation occurred when the Battalion was dispatched to Tobruk in April 1941. The War Diary notes that the sea journey to the fortress was "very rough...many sick".



**SX1323 WO1 JOHN GEORGE PERCIVAL, MBE****Continued**

Over the next four months the defenders were subjected to intense periods of aerial bombing, dive bombing, artillery barrages, tank fire and armour breaches of the perimeter. To make matters worse, Tobruk was under constant threat of sandstorms, water shortages and uncertain lines of supply; even the war diary consists of hand written notes.

The significant armoured forces that comprised Rommel's Afrika Corps posed a major threat to the Tobruk Fortress chronically short of effective anti-armour weapons and ammunition. An emphasis on ingenuity improved the situation by the use of Molotov cocktails, tank pits, and obstacles/barricades to channel armour into killing areas covered by available anti-armour resources; some of which were recovered from the battlefield as a result of night-time raids dedicated to scavenging enemy equipment.

The lack of anti-armour assets was not improved by the introduction of the secret "Hand Grenade, Anti-Tank No. 74" which had more power than its predecessor but was dangerous to use, as the thrower was prone to become attached to the weapon; often with fatal results. The grenade came with handle and an adhesive surface. It was nicknamed the "sticky bomb", was not popular and seldom requested. Of course the oversight, acquisition and distribution of all munitions for the Battalion was the preserve and critical responsibility of RSM Percival.

On the completion of successful defence of Tobruk, the Brigade deployed to Palestine, Syria then Lebanon.

**South West Pacific Area 1942 to 1945**

Japan's advance towards Australia led to the recall of most Australian forces from the Middle East. The 2/10th returned to Adelaide in March 1942. Later in the year, still fresh from the deserts of the Middle East, the Battalion prepared for the defence of the vital advanced fighter airstrip in the jungle around Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea (PNG).

On the eve of 27 August 1942, during a fierce Japanese assault, the Battalion was overwhelmed but the integrity of the perimeter held. The battle for Milne Bay was the first decisive land defeat suffered by the "invincible" Japanese forces. The Battalion's casualties amounted to 43 killed and 26 wounded in action. The next significant deployment was at the battle of Buna. The Battalion attacked the well-fortified defences held by a determined enemy in its last ditch effort to retain a toe-hold in PNG. The Battalion lost 113 killed in action and 205 wounded in action. The Battalion, now a shadow of its former self, returned home in January 1943 to reinforce, retrain and regain battle worthiness in preparation for its next deployment. RSM Percival was awarded the MID for "Gallant & Distinguished Services S.W.P. Area."

By August the 2/10th was back in PNG, initially training around Port Moresby, before deployment to the Finisterre Mountains. Towards the end of the year the Battalion was in action at Shaggy Ridge. The prelude to the last campaign commenced with a major amphibious operation. In July the Battalion assaulted the heights of Parramatta Ridge before clearing the enemy from in and around Balikpapan, Borneo. The War ended abruptly obliging Australian forces to arrange the Japanese surrender and became responsible for the civil administration of Borneo. Despite the lack of resources and the enormity of the tasks, these unexpected responsibilities were managed satisfactorily.

Tom Daly, now Commanding Officer 2/10th Battalion, prepared a citation commending RSM Percival for the award of the MBE. On the citation the Corps Commander, previously commander at Tobruk, General Morshead, recommended a DCM. (Tom Daly later became Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Daly, KBE, CB, DSO, and Chief of the General Staff)

Later in the year, the 2/10th Battalion was disbanded, and the last 42 members embarked for Australia. RSM Percival served as RSM to the five commanding officers of 2/10th Battalion: Lieutenant Colonels: Verrier, Bruer, Dobbs, Geard and Daly.

To be continued next month







# Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP



Membership Category

Date of Application / /

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

My Details - Please print clearly

Full Name:	Postal Address:
Date of Birth:	Email:
Mobile No:	How did you hear about the Association?
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 name as an identifier								
<input type="checkbox"/> CASH (In person to the Committee)	<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Deduction (The Fire & Forget option) <table border="1"><tr><td>Account Name:</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Bank:</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>BSB:</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Acct #</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Funds will be deducted at the start of each financial year and can be ceased on written notification to the Secretary or Treasurer</p>	Account Name:		Bank:		BSB:		Acct #	
Account Name:									
Bank:									
BSB:									
Acct #									

☐ 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](http://www.rsara.asn.au)



Please send this completed application, with any proof of service to the RSAR Association Secretary at [davidlaing49@bigpond.com](mailto:davidlaing49@bigpond.com)