

# Birth of a Battalion

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*



**late Brigadier A. L. Varley, M.C.  
Bar. Original C.O. 2/18th Battalion,  
AIF.**

Arthur Leslie Varley, at the age of 25, returned from World War I with a Military Cross and Bar. In that war he was adjutant in the 45th Battalion, with the rank of Captain.

In September, 1939, when World War II commenced, he commanded the 35th Battalion of our Citizen Army, with the rank of Lt.-Colonel. When the 8th Division was formed in July, 1940, he was selected to command the 2/18th Battalion. He

quickly raised and organised that unit, choosing his officers with sound judgement. Then followed the tedious course of training the unit for war.

His qualities as a leader was quickly recognised by both his Seniors and the men who were serving under him. In Ingleburn and Bathurst, he welded the Battalion into a fine unit and instilled into it a grand fighting spirit.

On 4th February, 1941, the unit moved to Malaya by the "Queen Mary". There he rapidly trained in the peculiar methods of jungle fighting. Despite his age — he was then 48 — he withstood the severe physical test of hard work in a trying tropical climate.

He was sparely-built, and had keen blue eyes — and looked every inch a soldier. In September, 1941, with the rest of the 22nd Brigade, the 2/18th moved to Mersing, considered to be the most vulnerable part of the Malayan defences.

In a way, it was unfortunate that the strong defences built by this brigade in the Mersing area were never put to a test. Circumstances forced a withdrawal just as the Japanese forces approached the position.

In the early stages of this withdrawal, Lt.-Colonel Varley organised an ambush, with the object of trapping the approaching enemy. Unfortunately, this operation had to be broken off before the final coup-de-grace could be delivered. Nevertheless, heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, who suffered a severe

# NOTICE TO MEMBERS

**AN EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE AUDITORIUM ON SUNDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER, 1980 at 9 am.**

The meeting will be held to consider the following recommendations from the Board of Directors of the City of Fairfield RSL Memorial and Ex-Servicemen's Club Ltd., and if thought fit to pass the following Special Resolutions:

That the Articles of Association of the City of Fairfield RSL Memorial and Ex-Servicemen's Club Ltd., be amended as follows:

**1. ARTICLE 6 (a), (b) and (c) be deleted**

- (a) No person under the age of twenty-one (21) years shall be admitted as a member of the Club.
- (b) The provisions of Articles 6 (a) shall not apply so as to prevent the admission as a member of the Club of persons under the age of twenty-one (21) years if he has attained the age of eighteen (18) years and has served outside Australia as a member of the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth.
- (c) The provision of Article 6 (a) shall not apply so as to prevent the admission as a member of the Club of persons under the age of twenty-one (21) years provided they are a son or a financial member of the Club or a son of a deceased member of the Club.

**To be inserted**

**ARTICLE 6**

No person under the age of eighteen (18) years shall be admitted as a member of the Club.

**2. ARTICLE 23, sub-clause (a)**

That the word "two (2) years' membership" be deleted and "five years' membership" be inserted.

Article 23, sub-clause (a) now to read as follows:

The Entrance Fees Annual Subscription and other annual fees or charges payable by any class of members the amount thereof and the time and manner of payment thereof and all other matters pertaining thereto not by these Articles specially provided for shall be such as shall from time to time be prescribed by the Board provided that the Annual Subscription shall not be less than Two dollars (\$2.00) and that T.P.I. Service Aged and Invalid Pensioners shall after five (5) years' membership have their Annual Subscription remitted.

**R. T. THOMPSON, M.B.E.,**  
For and on behalf of the  
Board of Directors.

setback. Throughout this difficult and trying battle, Lt.-Colonel Varley showed himself to be the same cool, efficient leader as he was in World War I.

After this engagement, he came to me to explain the action in detail. It was evident that he was deeply moved by the losses his unit had sustained, and at the same time proud at the courage and skill of his men.

His next conflict with the enemy came when the Japanese landed on Singapore Island. His unit and his neighbouring unit, the 2/20th Battalion, bore the full brunt of an attack by two Japanese Divisions. Though

our position was lost, it was no fault of either our officers or men.

A few days later — 13th February, 1942 — Varley was promoted to the rank of Brigadier to command the 22nd Brigade, a position he was holding when Singapore fell two days later. During the period of imprisonment, Brigadier Varley once more proved himself a valiant leader and a sound administrator.

By his death Australia has lost a valuable citizen and his comrades of the 8th Division a much-loved and highly-respected friend.

H. GORDON BENNETT,  
Formerly G.O.C., 8th Div.  
AIF, Malaya.

Under threat of rifle butt bashing, Brigadier Varley stood firm and at all times demanded the rights of his men as POWs, time and time again, not once taking a backward step.

As a result of his access to Changi Camp and his personal experiences in Malaya, Burma, Siam (Thailand), Indo-China (Vietnam) and information supplied to him of POWs in Borneo, Java and Sumatra, Brigadier Varley had the most extensive knowledge of the conditions of POWs in the Far East — probably he was the best informed of all Senior officers.

The Japanese had found his records but before he embarked on the prison ship, he briefed a meeting of Senior officers on the facts from memory.

He was lost at sea when the Japanese ship "Rokyu Maru", transferring POWs was torpedoed by American submarines on the 12th September, 1944.

#### Enlishment in the AIF

It was a known fact, that some people with an axe to grind, stated that most AIF were either unemployed or wanted to get away from their wives. In some cases maybe yes, but not so in the majority of cases.

I cannot speak for the other Divisions, but I can speak for the 2/18th Battalion men and the false statist-

ics can be explained by the fact that recruiting officers in Moree made all pastoral workers exempt from army service at that stage. So to get around this we listed ourselves as labourers, unemployed.

Among our ranks were school teachers, railway workers, shop assistants, sons of graziers, store owners, bank tellers, pastoral workers which embraced shearers, drovers, station hands, wheat men, etc.

The recruiting officers accepted labourers, unemployed without question. In fact when I was accepted, under the above heading, I had to cancel a six-month's run of sheds with shearing contractor Bill McKecknie.

There was laxity in the recruiting as I knew of one case, Clarrie Weir (age 17) in front of me, stated his correct age and the recruiting officer said he was under-age, so he went outside, had a smoke, re-entered the office and gave an incorrect age and was accepted. His parents did not raise any objection so he remained.

In Moree we were subjected to a physical check by Dr. Hollingsworth (the local medical officer) before being cleared to proceed to Tamworth.

#### Tamworth Cup

After serving one year with the 35th Battalion, 8th Brigade pre-war Milita, consisting of the 18th, 35th,

36th and 30th Battalions, at the age of 20, on 27th June, 1940, was transferred to Tamworth Recruit Receiving Depot.

When we arrived at Tamworth Showground we were again subject to a rigid medical check by a panel of three doctors. We had to remove all our clothes and was inspected "inch-by-inch" which included looking between our toes. The medical check was so thorough that only three in every five men were accepted. Men rejected at this medical were eventually passed fit and many served overseas at a later date when there was some relaxation in the checks.

In the Milita the Australian Instructional Corps helped in our elementary training and it was a pleasant surprise to find them doing likewise at Tamworth camp, they were a good body of men and very efficient.

Here we were given the "old soldier blood and guts one-two". We were lined up and an officer said anyone who didn't have the guts to go through with our enlistment could speak up now and, pointing to the gate, he said we were at liberty to go free.

We treated this with the contempt it deserved.

In the few weeks I was at Tamworth I was issued with a uniform and equipment and carrying out squad drill, field signs and rifle drill. Camp life and elementary drill was not new to me and it was in no way interesting to have to repeat it.

Here we were vaccinated and sorry men it left us, nine out of ten men were effected. I remember one poor chap who could not put his arm through his shirt sleeve, it was so swollen. It was bitterly cold and on top of the vaccination, most had colds.

As there were mountains around Tamworth the sun took longer to rise above them and it was 10 am before any warmth came through. Even this was of little benefit if the cold winds were blowing; it was sure draughty in the showground stalls. Later the Manilla Road camp was constructed.

The fatigue duty of peeling potatoes was unreasonable for raw recruits, but the boys made the grade. Men detailed for this duty had to sit up into the night and well into the early hours of the morning, such a method was outdated and could have been avoided.

The food was good but I knew it would not last as, at my first Milita camp the food started out similar but became worse by degrees. Here we had plenty of pickles, bottles of tomato and Holbrook sauce and plenty of butter. I could not help recalling memories of Tamworth when we were in Malaya and the Q.M. Sergeant stood by the messroom door and put a "spot" of sauce on our plate as we passed.

In July, Colonel Varley (ex 35th Bn. Milita) came and picked out 369 of us to go to Wallgrove to form the 2/18th Battalion. The chosen men were mainly from the North and North West and New England Districts; Colonel Varley came from Inverell and was a stock and station agent in civilian life.

The change-over came on 28th July, 1940, when we left Tamworth camp, by train and arrived at Rooty Hill station the next morning.

#### Wallgrove Camp

After we had marched two miles from the station to the camp, we were quartered in tents and soon settled down in our new camp. Soon after the first batch of Sydney "Day Boys" joined us, making up our complete Battalion.

Meanwhile close by other Battalions were being formed, the 2/19th Bn. of men from the Riverina, and the 2/20th Bn. from north, Newcastle and Sydney. The three Battalions were to form the 22nd Brigade and part of the 8th Division.

We were first formed into Companies, then platoons and then sections and so the stage was set for commencement of our training.

What a pleasant surprise to see—in addition to Lt. Colonel Varley, Lt. D. Wilson, the adjutant RSM and most of the officers were experienced having served with the 18th, 33rd, 35th, 36th, Light Horse and other pre-war Milita Battalions.



This plus the fact that many of the troops had trained up to Brigade exercises since early 1939, resulting in the smooth blending and organisation of the Battalion.

The men of the 2/18th and other Battalions of the 22nd Brigade had cause to remember the long cold weeks spent at Wallgrove.

The nights, particularly, were bitter, and almost 80 per cent of the troops suffered from severe colds, influenza and laryngitis. In spite of the low temperatures, however, very little rain fell during the five weeks of occupation. Consequently, the camp area became dry as tinder and very dusty, and many of the men were affected with sore throats and acute pharyngitis.

Later in the year, at Ingleburn and Bathurst, the majority of the huts were scenes of activity long before reveille, but at Wallgrove the blankets were too snug to be given up a minute before the bugle sounded. Much was done, however, to make life in the camp pleasant. Various church societies established huts and tents in which concerts, cinema shows and other free entertainment were held nightly.

The camp was ideally-situated for individual and sectional training purposes. On 1st August the first training syllabus was issued, a syllabus of individual and elementary training to cover a period of three weeks commencing 5th August, 1940.

Owing to the fact that recruits had been training at RR Battalions and Day Boy centres for a varying period of from one to five weeks, and other periods upward to three months, a considerable difference in standard of efficiency was noticed. But, as a result of a sound syllabus, the issuing of text books to NCOs and instructors and good administrations — for which Major C. F. Assheton was largely responsible — an even level was soon reached and maintained from there on.

On 3rd August, the RMO, Capt. A. Barrett, took control of the influenza and laryngitis epidemic. In addition to compulsory gargle parades every morning, those men whose throats were effected were treated individually by RAP staff.

From time to time Brigadier Taylor carried out inspection of the training areas, and it was not long before he noticed a definite improvement in the troops. Lieut. Allan, 2nd Division, instructed three Companies in physical training exercises, as a preliminary to the instituting of a regular, daily PT period. Officers and NCOs received special tuition from Lieut. Allan to fit them for the task of instructing the troops.

In order that tents and lines might be kept in the neatest possible condition, a system of "tent competitions" was organised by different Companies. The desired effect was quickly achieved, and Brigadier C. E. Plant, Commander of a Brigade in Queensland, while on visit to Wallgrove, commented on the cleanliness and orderliness of the lines.

On 8th August, 600 rifles reached camp and were immediately issued to the troops. ANCO class was commenced under RSM J. Dixon, three men from each Company being selected. As all these nominees were instructors, the influence of the RSM showed to excellent effect when the "bull ring" was resumed at the end of the course.

When we were issued with our rifles some bright spark asked what would we do with our broom handles now. The stern answer was don't say it or your pay book will be minus £2/10/-. As we, the married men were on 2/- (20c) a day we did not pursue the matter.

The issuing of rifles created another problem, as mentioned before, we were quartered in tents with no floor boards so we laid our blankets on the dusty ground, using our packs, spare clothing or equipment for pillows. The tents were so crowded we had to "sleep" with our rifles and dig them out of the dust each morning and clean them for the morning parade and roll-call.

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NOW OPEN, MONDAY TO  
FRIDAY, FROM 10 am**

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Next we were introduced to the "bull ring", dismantling and assembling firearms to get to know your weapon, but we couldn't understand our instructor as he became very upset when, with a blank look on our faces, everything he did or said we said, "Why Sarge?" We never did find out what upset him.

On 9th August all troops received anti-typoid inoculation, the first of a series of four injections prescribed by the RMO. Assistance was given by the VADs, whose presence added a cheerful note to the unaccustomed scene in the mess hut, where the minor "operation" took place.

A tactical course was commenced by Major Dawkins, Brigade Major, on 12th August, officers attending from the 2/18th being Captains D. Okey and Gibson, Lieutenants Chisholm, Pringle, Schwenke, Loxton, Fuller, Richardson and Hence.

At this time training was somewhat disorganised by the absence of the officers at schools, and in addition to those just mentioned, Capt. Johnson and Lieuts. A. Gregg, J. Vernon and J. Carey began a course at Narellan.

The knowledge and experience gained by these officers more than compensated for their temporary absence from the camp.

Due to the activity of Mrs. A. L. Varley, a 2/18th Battalion Comfort Fund was inaugurated in Inverell, other towns in the North-West of NSW also co-operated and appointing representatives on the committee. On 19th August, Mrs. Varley met the wives of the officers of the 2/18th and formed a Sydney branch of the fund.

The second inoculations against typhoid was carried out on 16th August, 1940 and on the same day orders were received to vacate camp and move to Ingleburn. This was effected on 20th August in a most orderly manner. Lt. A. V. Toose was appointed 2 I/C of "D" Company and Lieut. J. Chisholm Commander of "B" Company.

#### Ingleburn Camp

The same day we marched from Ingleburn rail siding, up the hill to the camp. A greeting, "You'll be sorry" by men who had arrived

earlier was our introduction to Ingleburn. The 7th Division had previously left on their march to Bathurst so our Battalion occupied the lines vacated by the 2/13th Battalion.

Everyone has their own opinions about camps but to my mind Ingleburn was the best by the fact that the entertainment was better, there were picture shows, a large number of writing rooms, and good varied entertainment. Transport was good, there being a steam train at Ingleburn siding and four miles to Liverpool there was access to a good electric train service.

The Battalion quickly settled down to training in its new home. The day after occupation of Ingleburn, training began with rifle exercises, squad drill and general smartening up.

On 22nd August, band instruments to the value of nearly £1,000 were received and issued from Ordnance, and the next day the band made its first appearance at reveille, playing through the lines.

On Battalion parade the troops showed immediate improvement in their marching when the band struck up a stirring march.

As the next week was to terminate individual and elementary training, names were submitted for attendance at a potential officers' course at Duntroon, a Bren Carrier course at Caulfield (Victoria) and a MMG course at Randwick.

Brigade HQ staff arranged a demonstration platoon exercise depicting four different methods of attack by a platoon, attacking isolated resistance. This was carried out by a platoon from each of the three Battalions of the Brigade, under command of the three Battalion Commanders (2/18th, 2/19th and 2/20th) each taking one day.

The various exercises were explained to the assembled members per medium of a public address system. Lt. R. Griffin and his platoon (No. 13 Pl., C Coy.) represented the 2/18th and did a good job. The object was to show a wrong appreciation by a platoon commander, and to illustrate the disastrous results attending an advance in the open

without adequate covering fire or smoke, followed by (a) an attack with partial cover; (b) adequate natural cover and (c) artificial cover by smoke and covering fire. The exercise was conducted on the hills three miles from the camp, on 3rd September and proved one of the most impressive and instructive events in the entire Ingleburn training period.

Here we continued our training in a manner which brought praise from our CO. Many times our band's presence was noticable and appreciated as they would meet us and play us into camp, it only needs a band to strike up towards the end of a day manoeuvres or route march, when the men are weary and footsore, to put new life into them.

On 28th August training areas were allocated to various Companies for Section, Platoon and Company exercises, and, for the first time, the Battalion lunched in the field as a complete group.

Lt. F. Evans and two other ranks left about this time to attend a Carrier course at the Army School of Mechanisation at Caulfield (Vic.). Nominations were received for a Junior Leaders' course to commence at Narellan on 9th September. A miniature range was constructed by the pioneers platoon at Curran Creek, a mile or so from the camp, and was used for rifle and LMG practice. Lieut. G. Solomon was nominated for No. 3 Intelligence course, and duly attended as representative of the Battalion "I" section.

A Battalion concert party had been in process of formation for the previous few weeks and now it

was ready for appearances before the troops. The first concert was held in the YMCA hut and Padre K. Saunders and Pte. Bert Pikett, who had been responsible for the production, had reason to be pleased with the results of their efforts. It was amazing the talent which came to light at these concerts and we really looked forward to them.

Lieut. L. Thirgood attended a special anti-gas course at Ingleburn. On 20th September the entire Battalion was blood grouped and given an anti-tetanus serum injection, and the troops left camp on eight days accumulated leave with Lieut. A. Toose, whose promotion to captain was received on that day, remaining in camp in charge with a rear guard of 40 other ranks. Lieut. A. Hence departed to No. 20 Army School of Signallers at Casula and three members of the Signalling Section went to the Sydney Showground for special instruction.

The first issue of Motor Transport was received on 30th September and the Battalion received one sedan car and two 30 cwt. trucks. Before this we were using horse-drawn limbers.

I remember one day Sergeant James asked for two good horsemen to step forward, at the time we had a few good horsemen but no one volunteered at first. Finally, two would-be horsemen stepped forward and the Sergeant gave them a broom and "dust pan" and told them to clean up all the horse manure in the area.

Moral of the story — do not volunteer.

M. MULLENS.

(Continued next month)

## Members please note —

THE RECITING OF THE "ODE" WILL BE AT 8.00 pm

ON THE SCREENING OF FILMS, TUESDAY AND SUNDAY

AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN A PRODUCTION  
SHOW IS BEING STAGED.

R. T. THOMPSON, M.B.E., Sec./Manager.



The 1980/81 Major Singles have been completed with many close games and some very good Bowling. Same goes for the Minor Singles.

Congratulations to Mary Brennan who has won both the Major and Minor Singles. Mary is also the (Queen of the Green). Still to be played is the Pairs, Triples and Fours. I wish you all the best in these too, Mary.

#### Championship Singles

I. Ryan bye.  
 M. Brennan d. D. Bateup.  
 E. McNarmara bye.  
 M. French d. B. Stoneman.  
 S. Rengger d. M. Adams.  
 E. Friend d. E. Heness.  
 F. Gayton d. I. Hokin.  
 L. Kitchen d. V. Cook.  
 G. Campbell bye.  
 E. Hill d. A. Palmer.  
 D. Plummer bye.  
 P. Byrum d. E. Dickson.  
 V. Towers d. N. Hughan.  
 D. French d. M. Brown.  
 R. Purkis d. J. Mockler.  
 N. Sherlock d. M. Sajgo.  
 M. Brennan d. E. McNarmara.  
 S. Rengger d. L. Kitchen.

G. Campbell d. D. Plummer.  
 N. Sherlock d. D. French.  
 M. Brennan d. S. Rengger.  
 G. Campbell d. N. Sherlock.  
 M. Brennan d. G. Campbell.

Congratulations to Mary and commiseration to Gloria.

One of the big issues in Women's Lib is that women want to get out of the kitchen. My mother would never go along with that. There were 12 kids in our family and my mother's idea of liberation was to get into the kitchen and out of the bedroom.

#### Wednesday

The weather was in our favour today but I'm afraid Liverpool City proved too strong for us. Congratulations to Liverpool ladies.

Spider winner today was Ina Wise.  
 Raffle winner was Harold Kitchen.

#### Friday

Championship Pairs started today, seven games played. Umpire for the day was Nancy Sherlock.

Winners for the day were M. Adams and E. Young; V. Towers and F. Gayton; J. Ashby and L. Kitchen; D. French and M. Brennan; I. Hokin and E. Wallington; P. Byrum and G. Campbell; D. Plummer and R. Purkis.

# Birth of a Battalion

## PART 2

*Dedicated to the memory of  
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**The late Lt.-Colonel C. F. Assheton,  
CO, 2/20th Battalion.  
Formerly 2 IC of 2/18th Bn. AIF.**

The outbreak of World War II found Charles Assheton in command of a country Militia Battalion. Characteristically, once he was convinced that there was a job of work to be done, he dropped a step in rank and joined the 2/13th Battalion as a Company Commander. Later, when the 2/18th was formed, his old friend, Arthur Varley, offered him a job as 2 IC and thus began the partnership which helped to produce one of the finest battalions that ever left Australia.

Varley was the solid and thoughtful leader with the gift of being able to inspire profound confidence; yet

in many years he was a diffident and retiring man. Assheton on the other hand, was full of amazing energy and drive, with a flare for thoroughness and attention to detail which enabled the CO to concentrate on the training of his battalion without having to worry about daily administration upon which efficiency of a battalion so much depends.

Assheton in his work as 2 IC always retained a sense of humour. Though he poked into every nook and corner, he never pulled his punches when he found something wrong, yet his cheery nature and absolute fairness made it impossible for any but the most churlish to feel any lasting resentment.

As President of the officers' mess from its formation, he is entitled to much of the credit for the magnificent esprit de corps and good fellowship that always existed there. Charles told officers where they got off with the utmost frankness and then had a drink with them; and thanks to his wise and cheery guidance, the officers' mess was always a veritable home away from home.

In July, 1941, he left to take command of the 2/20th Battalion, and we felt we had lost one of the Battalion's outstanding personalities. We know from our friends in the 20th that Assheton won the same respect and affection in his new battalion that he had earned with us.

When the "Blue" started, he was in command of the 20th at Mersing and his unit was the first to contact the enemy in that area. He then took part in the enforced withdrawal to Singapore Island.

When the main attack on the Island came on 7-8th February the 22nd Brigade was fated to take the full brunt of it. The 20th put up a magnificent fight in the dark against hopeless odds and suffered severely.

Next morning, Assheton and his weary survivors had to fight their way out, and during this action he was hit while doing a gallant job helping to cover the withdrawal of his men. So died a brave, generous and lovable man.

Above was an extract from the final edition of our battalion magazine "Men May Smoke".

#### INGLEBURN CAMP

We were doing full-scale manoeuvres now and "A" Company will particularly remember the defence of the water pipeline, how Colonel Varley walked through our lines and "bayoneted" the sleeping men who were supposed to be watching for the approach of the "enemy".

The Colonel was a hard taskmaster and was pushing us to the hilt, in fact to the extent of being unreasonable. The Colonel was seen approaching but no one took any notice, we knew the point he was making but we did not care.

We had to "rough it" in the bush — pre-war — at times going without water in 115 to 120 degrees on the plains in drought times, wheeling cattle in a stampede, long hours in the saddle without food or sleep when our "wild cattle" broke and we had to round them up, pulling stock out of sucking, boggy, black mud, in heavy rain, day and night, extracting our wagonettes from mud up to the axles at times, living off the land when stranded between swollen rivers in 8 to 10 inches of rain in 2 hours, swimming flooded rivers when cut off from town, building jolly-polly up on the mud to find a dry place to sleep, sleeping in wet blankets when high winds wrecked our tent and flies and rain saturated our belongings, felling trees for posts and fencing in the blazing sun, selecting stockyards in the severe heat or extreme cold in winter, fighting bush fires in the simmering heat, dumping heavy bags of wheat for 10 to 12 hours a day and spending long hours on country road construction.

The shearing season was our "break" from these conditions each year when it was said that we "lined our kidneys with mutton fat" and had a change from rabbits.

Yes, from the tender age of 14 we weathered all this and more, but, at the time, the Colonel was pushing us beyond endurance so we said to hell with him and had a rest.

Naturally, the next day, the Colonel "roasted" "A" Coy., and when we mentioned that we knew it was him he said, "In future Colonel or no Colonel, you will take stricter precautions, especially at night." We assured him we would remember his words which I did on a manoeuvre in Malaya, but more about that when I come to it.

Colonel Varley was a good soldier and Commanding Officer and, no doubt thought time was short and was endeavouring to mould the battalion into shape in a hurry.

This was not the first time I had been involved in an incident where the Colonel was concerned. Mid-1939, while serving with the 35th Battalion, under Colonel Varley at Rutherford, we were subjected to an arduous training syllabus progressing from raw recruits to brigade exercises in three months. We were all keyed up and a little frayed and this caused a little resentment towards the "system".

No doubt we were wrong and looking for an excuse to show our displeasure so we declined to go on a manoeuvre because we were handed a "school wrapped sandwich lunch" which was to be our "field rations". Our excuse was that we objected being treated like school children.

What made the Colonel a good CO was that, although he was a tough demanding officer, he understood men and was prepared to compromise. He said if we moved out he would give each man a hot pie at dusk.

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It was bitterly cold at the time and our only protection was our cumbersome greatcoats. Knowing the Colonel's word was his bond, we moved out on a search and destroy mission as per battle conditions, the "enemy" being the 30th Bn. who had moved out ahead of us to take up a defensive position to await our attack.

All units were complete with horse-drawn limbers as we were training as per World War I, there being four battalions to a brigade and formed in fours, etc. Sure enough on dusk, along came a field kitchen and each man was given a hot meat pie and, as a bonus, a piece of fruit cake, so in appreciation we decided to excell ourselves for our Colonel.

Sergeant Hank Amos, later CSM of "B" Coy. 2/18th Bn., borrowed a horse and dressed as a boundary rider, located the unsuspecting 30th Bn. and surveyed their positions. On his information the 35th moved towards the forward dispositions of the 30th under cover of darkness, making sufficient noise to attract the attention of the 30th sentries.

A platoon was then left to continue to make a little noise, not too obvious, to give the 30th the impression that we had bivouacked and were preparing for a frontal attack at dawn. The rest of the 35th circled out wide, marching well into the night, to take up an attacking position at the rear of the 30th.

In the early hours of the morning we captured their Bn. HQ, their water and field kitchen limbers. The operation went like clockwork, as, by sunrise we had most of their dispositions covered by our rifles and machine guns.

Umpires, riding horses, surveyed the "battle area" and ruled that the 35th had successfully routed the superior numbered 30th and that our casualties were about 200.

There was a very satisfied Colonel Varley that night and an equally disappointed 30th Colonel.

Even in the Militia days, Colonel Varley's aim was to establish an efficient fighting force in the short time allotted.



22nd Brigade march through Sydney on 6th October, 1940.  
Major Arthur Davis, OC "A Coy" with Lieuts. George Warden  
and Gordon Richardson lead "A Company" in the march.

Word came through that the 22nd Brigade, support troops and some Air Force were to march through Sydney on Friday, 6th October, 1940, so we spent two days marching in sixes. This was short notice but the officers knew that when the men were called on they would "put on a good show".

On the appointed day we entrained at Ingleburn Railway Station, and it was not long before we were lined up for the march at Exhibition Park near Central. Before moving off we were given two lumps of sugar and a glass of water, then we were on the move — 6,000 strong.

From reports, the march was a success and the crowd spirit was marvellous. Brigadier Taylor was a proud man and as we passed him on the way back, he was saying, "Well done, boys."

We welcomed the end of the march as, despite the fact we changed the rifle position alternately from left shoulder to right at intervals during the march, there was many an aching arm caused by rifles at the slope with the added weight of the fixed bayonet. It is surprising how much difference there is in a rifle at the slope with and without a fixed bayonet.

From the time of the march through Sydney, the men of the 2nd Battalion seemed to take a new interest in their work and a greater pride in their unit. It may be safely said that there was not a member of the force who was not impressed by the display put up by the entire Brigade.

We continued section, platoon, company and battalion exercises, attacks and defensive dispositions, the fields around Ingleburn provided excellent grounds for these manoeuvres, with the heat at the time, and wearing those cursed steel hats, it was warm work. Having fair weather, I returned to camp looking like a boiled lobster.

The Battalion marched to Anzac Rifle Range near Liverpool, via the Cross Roads, where we sang Roll Out The Barrel as we passed the gate. We spent two days in rifle and LMG practice, grouping, application and rapid fire, at 100 yards, 200 yards, 300 yards and 500 yards. We quacked at the range.

It was here that my high spirited nature once again got me into trouble with Lt. Warden. Just on dusk I was ordered to shift some ammunition and equipment by a soldier I thought was a private. I told him what he could do with the equipment, etc., and he reported me to Lt. Warden who assured me I was addressing a Corporal and detailed me to shift the entire supplies on my own which occupied my time well into the night.

It appears that the Corporal had his stripes on a false armband and they had twisted around under his arm. This I pointed out to Lt. Warden but he was not sympathetic. He said it would teach me to make sure in future and not to be so hasty with smart remarks. He was right.

How many of us remember the unnecessary long parade ground assembly when the battalion stood in the hot sun at Ingleburn, waiting for the delayed arrival of Colonel Varley. RSM Johnny Dix called for silence as someone "whinged" out aloud, then the longer we stood there the more men joined in the angry "buzz" which developed into a "rumble" resulting in the RSM calling for more order in a bombastic manner which did not improve the already hostile situation.

The Colonel's arrival calmed the situation down and good sense prevailed as he summed the situation up quickly, he realised the men had been standing for an excessive period in the heat of the day and, as always, being the good officer he was, his address was brief and to the point and the men were dismissed in a minimum of time.

At Ingleburn, we remember that there was a shortage of our new colour patches and "Australias" for issue from the QM store — but they could be bought at the Army Canteen. Sometimes we would buy a packet of cigarettes from the canteen to find they had the Red Cross insignia on the flap; were they Red Cross issue or did the firm mark too many for the Red Cross and put them into general stock?

I remember one leave I had from Ingleburn when my city aunt took my wife and me to Manly. I carried a huge port with knives, forks, croc-



kery, plates, cups, etc.; boy was I loaded and at the same time this "pack horse" episode did little to improve my sense of humour.

As I passed two young chaps on the beach one said to the other, "Smell the gumleaves." I placed the port down and said, "Maybe you would like to feel a few branches on your jaw." They quickly apologised and said it was all in fun, but as I said before, my sense of humour was at a low ebb at the time — although I did see the funny side of it when I cooled off as we sure must have looked like old-time "bushies" as we had everything but the kitchen sink.

While at Ingleburn we were issued with fortnightly tickets, at concession rates, for train travel. One time we had upset our sergeant in some way and he was trying to prove a point and had instructed the Orderly Room not to issue the tickets to our platoon till after the transport had left for Liverpool as it would do us good to walk.

A few of us said there was no way we would walk, so we caught the transports and did not wait for our tickets. At Liverpool Railway Station we found barriers had been erected to check for tickets. This, no doubt, was the result of a phone message to the station master.

We politely asked the porter to remove the barriers as we had no fight with him, which he did and we boarded the train which was about to pull out. The next train would leave in one hour, so, not having time to buy a ticket, we boarded the train with the intention of paying at the gate at Central.

So far so good but we did not know that the MPs had been alerted at Central to apprehend and return to camp anyone without a concessional ticket. When we alighted at Central from the rear of the train, the first thing we saw was MPs at the gate and thought, so that's their game.

As ex-servicemen know, when on leave, we had numerous street photographs taken and at the same time we were given various coloured cards for reference to order copies. Knowing the colour of the current

fortnightly ticket was blue (a different colour was used each for night), I reached into my tunic pocket found a blue photographer's ticket, bent it over where the most writing showed, tore it off to about the size of the concessional ticket, held the "ticket" in the palm of my hand as low as possible, shortened my walk till there was a number of people going through the gate, and walked straight through.

Not so lucky were the other though, who were returned to camp. I heard no more of this incident and considered myself lucky. This was one time that our Orderly Room staff and Sergeant James would not have won a popularity contest.

We recall those hot summer days at Ingleburn when standard head gear was a steel helmet on exercise and the forage cap when on leave. Most men were vocal in wanting to wear the slouch hat on leave, as the forage cap was detested, but standing orders said we were to wear the cap. If one did not wear the cap he was not given a leave pass so to get around this we used to put our hat in our packs for the leave inspection and when away from camp we would produce our hat.

Nothing was gained by saying we had lost our forage cap or by burying it at the bottom of our kit bags. Lt. Warden would order a kit inspection and if that failed to find the cap we were issued with another one at our own expense. As the slouch hat was a symbol, we could not understand why we were forced to wear the British-style cap.

Maybe it was a disciplinary order and we "bucked it" so causing the Colonel to be firm and make us "line the line". It soon became obvious that we were switching to the hat when on leave and concealing it in our packs so Lt. Warden ordered all packs to be inspected on the leave inspection parade and anyone found with a hat in their pack had their leave cancelled, so that put a stop to that.

Later, the order was relaxed and we were allowed to wear our hat on leave, which was appreciated. There was an army or services name for the caps but this is not for publication.

lication. Maybe the Colonel relaxed the order when he was satisfied he had made his point.

We remember those eternal Emu parades with heads down and bottoms up when we could not leave a single match on the ground and the time we were forced to line up for a mess parade. As the mess parade was made compulsory we conformed but marched in one door and out the other and would not eat the food as the smell of the meat was evident even before we entered the mess hut.

In our hut there was the practical joker who used to wake us up in the middle of the night and ask if we would like to go to the toilet. Upon getting a negative reply he would tell us to go back to sleep. He would then get a positive reply in the shape of an army boot or the nearest object we could lay our hands on.

One chap reported to the RMO and when asked what the trouble was he said he was sore in the fetlock. The RMO inquired what he meant by that and the reply was, "You are a horse doctor, you should know." The result of that joke was minus £2/10/- in the pay book which really hurt more than any other punishment fatigue.

*On 6th November, 1940, we shifted to Bathurst.*

From Kelso, a siding just out of Bathurst, we experienced our first march with full pack. It was seven miles to the camp where we arrived at 8 pm. The following day we settled in and on the 8th the Brigade fell-in and marched seven miles to Bathurst. After lunch at the show-ground, we marched through the township then had an hour's leave. Such a number of soldiers in Bathurst was nothing new to the people as the 7th Division had just moved out for overseas.

After the leave we marched back to camp and it poured rain all the day back. We were slipping and sliding and landed back in camp like drowned rats with mud all over our clothes. In all we had marched 17 miles that day, the next day we recommenced our training programme.

### Organised Sport

The battalion was indeed fortunate in having as a sports officer, Lt. John Fuller of Headquarter Company. He was formerly a prominent member of Sydney University's First Grade Rugby Union XV.

He brought to the job the keenness and enthusiasm of a true sportsman. It was largely due to his efforts that we had been donated with three excellent sets of cricket equipment. Two of these came from the Lord Mayor's Fund and the other from that very fine organisation, the YMCA.

His association with Cranbrook School had been instrumental in procuring from them numerous bats, etc., for practice purposes, for which we were very grateful. Our sporting activities had to date been mainly confined to the summer game. The Battalion team had some most enjoyable games with various Bathurst sides.

Although they had not met with any initial success they had always given a good account of themselves and their sportsmanship was something which made the battalion very proud. Plenty of talent existed and with the facilities for organised practice the team developed into a formidable combination. The fielding, both on the ground and holding catches was little short of brilliant and the keenness of every player was a revelation.

Bouquets for best performance went to: Pte. W. (Bluey) Pidcock of Headquarter Company for a chanceless 45 against Eglington A Grade, one of Bathurst's strongest sides. A strong orthodox batsman with every shot in the book, "Blue" was on the way to a good score when he had the misfortune to be run out. An accurate medium-paced bowler and a first grade rugby league player for Balmain, "Blue" was unquestionably a fine all-rounder.

Pte. Jim Lillyman, C Coy, caused a sensation by clean bowling four of Eglington's best batsmen in his first over at a cost of only one run. A handy batsman, a fine fielder and possibly the keenest cricketer in the battalion, Jim was a definite asset.

Corporal Bob James (later our platoon sergeant), A Coy., for his capable captaincy and fine fast bowling. Bob had made a reputation in the North West at Narrabri with the "Blues", as a footballer, and at one time was in line for a trip to the "Old Dart". Everyone was sure Bob would get a trip somewhere, but don't ask where.

WO II Hutchinson for his persistent pursuit of the elusive bunny with a very ancient point 22. He kept his practice up as he was told the Japanese were just as elusive and nearly as fast.

His Excellency, Lord Wakehurst, Governor of NSW visited the camp on 19th November and two sergeants and 16 other ranks were selected from the 2/18th as part of a guard of honour. After an inspection of A Coy., huts, the Governor with Lt.-Col. Varley, was taken for a ride in a Bren Carrier by Lt. Fred Evans.

The party witnessed an attack staged by A Coy. in which Carriers and Mortars played important parts.

Divisional Commander, Major-General H. Gordon-Bennett, expressed his satisfaction at the conduct of the exercise.

On 20th November a concert was held in the Salvation Army Hall by the battalion concert party, in conjunction with Miss Jill Manners of Bathurst.

We were doing full-scale Brigade exercises by now, and wondering how much longer we would be kept in Australia, as we thought we had been here too long. Of those exercises, we shall not forget Arunta-Khan, Mendooran, Brawn's Hill and the Fish River stunts and many more. These exercises were extremely arduous and ran into days.

Leave to Bathurst, a very pretty place, was appreciated. At Machatti Park dozens tried to catch without success the peacocks which inhabited the park at that time. They used to escape up into the high trees which adorned the park. Our band, which had been working hard and was a credit to the battalion, received much applause when they gave recitals there.

While at Bathurst some of our exercises, extending over four days, embraced the entire brigade and were carried out as per war condition and using ADS, RAP, CCS, ambulances and base hospital.

For the exercise the camp was on base hospital. As per war condition some men were ruled out walking wounded, some stretcher cases to be evacuated from the battle area by ambulance while others were ruled killed in action. Those reported killed in action took no further part in the exercise but had to report back to camp where Coy. QM Sergeant Jones would allot camp fatigues.

The first day out at dusk, our section had casualties, including myself, and was told to wait for the ambulances which would transport us back to camp. Well, somehow I ended up in Bathurst and spent 3 days with my wife.

Returning to camp before the main body I was greeted by CQM Dick Jones who asked me many questions as to what happened but I stuck to my story that I was "wounded", then lost and ended up with a platoon of the 2/19th Bn.

He reluctantly accepted my story and allotted me duties to prepare meals for the returning troops. That was the only time I did such a thing but I did so with the knowledge that we would be going overseas in the near future. I admit I did cheat. As far as CQM Jones was concerned I am sure I did not fool him and I appreciated his kindness as he was well aware of my situation.

**NEXT: Bathurst continued**

**M. MULLENS.**

## PHONE NUMBERS FOR CLUB

727 5000

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# Birth of a Battalion

## PART 3

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

### BATHURST

We were subject to and accepted the Colonel's necessary strict discipline but there was always plenty of spirit in the men and, at times, like men in all other AIF units, we strayed and "bucked the system". Overall, in one way or another, the Colonel always found ways of curbing us whether it be confined to barracks, loss of privileges, or the way which really hurt — through the pay book, or know-how "old soldier" methods.

Some equipment began to arrive and a party was detailed to carry out the unloading at Kelso siding. They were expected back about midday. One o'clock came, two o'clock and no sign of the working detail so it was decided to investigate. I was standing at the door of our hut and saw men being brought back on stretchers with arms hanging loosely over the sides, others were supported by men on either side and half carrying, half dragging bodies along and I thought, "My God, there has been a serious accident." Running out to give assistance to these "accident" victims I was curtly told by the Officer of the Day to return to my barracks as he had the situation under control.

Well, what really happened was that some of the items to be off-loaded were beer and spirits destined for the Sergeants and Officers mess and the working detail had helped themselves and reduced the stocks by a considerable amount.

Naturally, strong disciplinary action was enforced and there were quick demotions and new promotions amongst the NCO personnel.

It was here that we ran foul of the Colonel as we wanted to hang our Field Service uniforms neatly on the wall at the head of each bed so they would not get any unnecessary creases in them which made them look drab when on leave.

The Colonel insisted that all FS uniforms were to be folded and placed on our folded straw palliasses and then the folded blankets placed on top of them to obscure them from view which resulted in the unwanted creases. Our platoon declined to conform and held out all day despite repeated requests. But the Colonel was an "old soldier" and was aware of our vulnerable points so he threatened to demote all NCOs who could not control their men so we reluctantly conceded as we had good NCOs and wished them no harm.

It was of interest to the 2/18th — and other battalions for that matter — to learn that a committee had been formed for the purpose of organising bigger and better entertainment. Under the guidance of Capt. A. Toose and Lieut. Fred Evans, something good in the way of concerts, revues and so on was organised. Funds raised by the efforts of the battalion workers were devoted to the 2/18th comforts.

Just prior to the Christmas leave, a dance was held at the Masonic Hall, Bathurst; not withstanding the torrents of rain which fell on that night in question — 17th December — the attendance was more than satisfactory. The women-folk particularly, rose to the occasion and the committee was able to make a substantial profit.

On 19th December, 1940, most embarked on Christmas leave and be-

This is another team which is battling to find form. It is also finding it very hard to field a full team each Saturday — if any person knows of boys who would like to play in this age group, would they please get in touch with me on 72 1773.

U/15 — a bye.

The U/16 boys — this team, I feel, did not play as well as they can and after scoring 85 runs went down to Merrylands RSL on the 1st innings. Merrylands scored 3-124. A lot of the boys in this side at this stage are still trying to find their form and it's hoped they do soon but on the brighter side, C Ward showed in this game he may be the answer this side has been looking for as an opening bat. Also D. Luckman batted very well, scoring 46; also M. Earl, 15. Bit unlucky having captain M. McLeod ill. Bowling honours to D. Rous, 1-19; M. Earl, 1-15, D. Luckman, 1-16.

Very pleasing to see many people coming into our Club at a young age to help out with the running of it. We now have a number of young scorers and also another gain in a

young lady to manage our U/14 team.

We are still looking for anyone interested in helping out with our U/15 team. This is a very good team of boys. They won their first game against Blacktown City who were last season's premiers. If any person is interested in helping out with managing this side, Alan Delamotte, their coach, would only be too grateful for their help.

After two rounds of competition, most teams have now got a few points up their sleeves. Points are as follows —

U/11: 20 pts.

U/12: 1 pt.

U/13: 14 pts.

U/14: 2 pts.

U/15: 7 pts. plus a bye.

U/16: 8 pts.

U/11 and U/13 teams have won both games.

I hope before this season's over more points are coming for all sides.

A. WARD.

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## ***Snack Bar Trading Hours***

**AS FROM 20th OCTOBER, 1980**

MONDAY to THURSDAY .....	12 midday to 2.00 pm 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm
FRIDAY .....	12 midday to 2.00 pm 4.30 pm to 10.00 pm
SATURDAY .....	12 midday to 2.00 pm 6.00 pm to 10.00 pm
SUNDAY .....	12 midday to 8.00 pm

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## **TO EX-SERVICE MEMBERS OF FAIRFIELD RSL MEMORIAL AND EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB LIMITED**

Limited copies of "Reveille" will be available, from time to time, at the Records Office.

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lieve me, we made the most of it as we had good reason to believe it would include our final leave. We were all keyed-up for nothing as it proved a false alarm. We went back to complete our 1914-18 trench system and erecting barbed wire entanglements. No sooner had we completed the full system then we were told to fill it in again as we were to embark for overseas in the near future.

On Friday, 3rd January, 1941, a battalion community concert was conducted at the Bathurst Masonic Hall, and for the first time the battalion stage setting of black tabs and wings were used, and proved most effective. Front curtains of black, with bands of green and purple (the 2/18th new colours) were being made and were in use for the next appearance of the concert party. (It might be mentioned that we were extremely grateful to the manufacture of "Caesarene" products for the donation of the material for the stage setting, and to Sydney Snow Ltd. for the stage front curtains).

The concert was of a high standard, and packed, appreciative audiences added many shillings to the battalion fund coffers. To radio 2GZ and 2BS, the "Western Times", the Bathurst VADs, the Red Cross Society, the Bathurst Municipal Council, the Western Stores and Edgleys Ltd., the Rev. Father Dunn, and all local stores, whose co-operation contributed so much towards the success of that evening went our sincere thanks.

An indication of the way in which the Bathurst people appreciated the show is the fact that the committee was asked to repeat it — which was done a short while later.

It is worthy to record that, in addition to the heavy rains that fell on the occasion of the Christmas dance, the concert party was again successful in enticing fluid from the clouds

by the bucketful on the night of the community concert. It was suggested, that, should there occur another dry spell in Bathurst, the townspeople petition the 2/18th to organise a dance or concert; results would be guaranteed.

### *Final Leave*

At last on 6th January, 1941, word was raised that Colonel Varley had received orders we were to be on the move. We were told we would be going on final leave on 18th January, and this time we left nothing undone — the thoughts of sailing made us tense, at the same time we were sad at the thoughts of leaving our wives, families and sweethearts. Thoughts of the coming adventure helped us bear up to this, to forget our disquieting thoughts but to go through such a parting more than once would be too much.

To avoid the possible crowding of normal passenger trains, troops embarking on final leave were instructed to travel by organised troop train. There were to be no exceptions. This was a problem as I had my wife and sister-in-law in Bathurst. My application for "compassionate" leave to travel by passenger train was of no avail and was told that anyone caught disobeying the order would have his leave cancelled.

Anticipating some would try to be crafty the platoon sergeant called our names separately. As it was night we had to pass under a light for identification and then on to the bus. Well up to here they had me bottled up. When the buses arrived at Kelso we were individually checked out by torchlight, formed up and began to move towards the troop train.

By order of disembarking from the bus I was positioned in the front rank and there was an officer in front, a sergeant either side and a sergeant at the rear. Well this was a pretty kettle of fish, they had me

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IF NOT — WHY NOT ASK YOUR SECRETARY OR  
PUBLICITY OFFICER WHY?

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euchred. I pretended my boot lace was undone and bent down to "tie" it so the column moved on which brought me to the rear. Then lady luck favoured me as one of the flank sergeants called the rear sergeants attention for a few seconds. I left the column and rolled into the roadside ditch, lay there till the column moved on and then made my way to Bathurst where I had to change my clothes and bath as that ditch sure was grubby.

The next night we arrived at Bathurst railway station by taxi and were greeted by a MP either side of the station entrance. Quickly I said to my wife, "Don't hesitate or look at the MPs and we may get away with it." Putting the suitcase on my shoulder I made for the entrance, nodded to the two MPs and passed through. So far so good. Then we were on the platform and two Army transport officers and a MP were checking a short distance away, talking and looking towards us, they then commenced to move in our direction and I thought this is it but when they were four feet away they smiled, passed and caught a chap a short distance away.

I considered myself very fortunate as they would be aware of standing orders, but we were newly-weds and this most likely showed which, I think, made them sympathetic for which I was most grateful.

When we arrived back from leave all was rush and bustle. Boots had to be branded with name and number, identification discs stamped, name, number, religion and blood group. Company and battalion stores had to be packed and marked, equipment checked, check to see all dental work was completed, adventure was afoot.

We had our field service uniforms, our greatcoats and all woollen clothes withdrawn. In place of these we were issued with tropical shorts, khaki shirts, athletic singlets and waterproof capes. Previously we had no idea of our destination, now we knew it was the tropics and guessed Singapore. The Bathurst people told us it definitely was Singapore and Intelligence traced the rumour back to Army Headquarters and an officer was reprimanded.

Our colour patch — an oval background with a similar shaped colour patch of black over green (old 33rd bat. colours) — was changed to an oval background, which was grey with a diamond purple over green (old 18th bat. colours) just before sailing.

I am not apologising but explaining that at times like this one sees men intoxicated, men who normally were moderate drinkers, so when one reads on further, these episodes were not the average normal behaviour.

We remember our last leave in Bathurst when we tried to drown our sorrows at the Knickabocker Hotel. There was a horseshoe bar and I leaned on the bar and asked the barman when was he going to serve me as he was busy running from one side of the bar to the other — was short staffed and becoming quite confused. When he had served me I would "down" my drink quickly then crawl along the floor to the other side and, standing there pound the bar for service. As this went on for some time one can imagine how intoxicated I became.

After this a group of us decided to take something from town back to camp and my allotted chore was a business agency sign plus the MP sign over the front of the police station.

I could vaguely remember taking the first sign down and remember the lights and two MP trucks outside the police station. I "came to" when we returned to camp when someone shook me and said we were "home" then blackout again till the next morning.

The next morning we were cruelly disturbed by the booming voice of Sergeant James who told us to be on parade quick smart as the Colonel had a few words to say. We soon saw what had upset our Colonel as there were plants in pots down the path leading to his headquarters and the Business Agency sign and the MP sign were on the walls of his hut. What we thought was a term of endearment for our Colonel sure riled him.

All items were returned to Bathurst in good order per medium of

one of our transports for which we were pleased as we did not want to damage the plants, etc.

"A" Company had a pre-embarkation party at the camp where there was ample quantity of amber fluid plus some amusing games. One starred Captain Tom Johnstone in a type of bull fight. We took some settling down after and were still merry at lights out, when Lieut. George Warden, the officer of the day, came in to check our hut for AWL, etc. He switched on the lights and walked about four beds down when the man nearest the door crept around and switched off the lights. A blanket was thrown over the Lt. and he was carried to the shower room where all showers were turned on, the blanket whipped off and the Lt. pushed under the showers, then everyone raced back to the hut and into bed.

A few minutes later the door opened, the light switched on, and there dripping wet was Lt. Warden with his tropical uniform clinging to him. Loud snores was the order of the night and everyone had his blankets pulled wet over his head. He said, "What ——— did this to me?" Heads came from under the blankets, all innocent and said, "Did what, sir?" "Okay," he said, "seeing this is a special occasion I will overlook it this time but don't try it again." As officer of the day, Lt. Warden was at least satisfied the men's showers were working.

Previous to this, on 5th January, four avenues of pinus insignis were planted to commemorate the 2/18th Battalion's stay in Bathurst.

Little time was lost preparing for the evacuation of Glanmire, whose

wonderful gumtrees, cool nights and crisp mornings were soon to become a fond memory.

Memories are still vivid of the many rehearsals carried out by all companies, and the frequent marches to the embussing area and systematic imaginary boarding of the "ghost" trains and ferries which became boring to say the last. However, when the last hours for leaving came, the full value of these exercises were realised. All credit goes to Major C. F. Assheton for the unqualified success of the vast movement which was carried out without a hitch.

The last impressions of Bathurst camp will stay in our minds for the rest of our lives. The men's personal gear was placed in long lines bordering the main camp road. Most of the troops settled themselves down beside their kit bags, packs, rifles and equipment, for a few hours sleep before the order to march was given. Coffee and sandwiches were issued about 0030 hours and the troops ordered to stand by. The night was clear, mild and perfectly still. Occasionally an officer moved among the men to see if all was well. A violinist, who put every ounce of feeling into his playing, added a touch of soulful realism that no stage play could so effectively portray.

Suddenly a gleaming shaft of light appeared in the distance, followed by another, and another. The next moment the long convoy of MT had reached the lines, and in quick time every truck was filled. Each man, with his embarkation number on his steel hat, knew exactly where he had to go, and there was no jostling or confusion.

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## Notice to Members

### TO ALL MEMBERS

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**YOU MUST NOTIFY DESK IMMEDIATELY YOU CHANGE  
YOUR ADDRESS  
THIS IS FOR YOUR BENEFIT**

R. T. Thompson, M.B.E., Secretary/Manager.

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It was a most impressive sight as the endless line of headlights wound its way through the camp. The same orderly control was evident in the entraining movement at Kelso, followed later in the morning by the detraining and marching on board the ferries that rhythmically rumbled their familiar way from Darling Harbour across the blue, sparkling waters to the colossal troopship which had been the admiration of every soldier since her initial visit to Sydney.

Now the real adventure really began: The 2/18th had done its elementary training, passed the growing pain period and now had, at last, become a fighting unit.

While Bathurst is fresh in our minds let us put the clock forward from 31st January, 1941 to 15th August, 1970 when a dedication service was held and was as follows —

#### **EIGHTH DIVISION MEMORIAL DEDICATION AND REUNION**

**at Bathurst on Saturday, 15th August, 1970 for Members who Served in Malaya, Timor, Amboina and Rabaul**

Members of the 8th Division assembled in George Street to March and pay homage to Fallen Comrades.

Marshal for the March was Mr. Fred Barry, Vice-President of the RSL Sub-Branch (7th Div.).

Order of the March was as follows: Bathurst RSL Band, Parade CO, Unit Commanders and Knights, Nurses then the main body of approximately 300 strong.

The column moved off at 1500 hrs., halted and faced the City War Memorial where Lt.-Col. Merrett laid a wreath. The march then continued to the City Hall where the Dedication Service was to take place.

Bathurst CMF carried out the honours and mounted guard at the Memorial and their military bearing and the way they carried out their duties left nothing to be desired.

Dedication Officials were — Brig. Sir Frederick Galleghan, DSO, OBE, ISO, ED; Capt. Sir Adrian Curlewis, CBE; Capt. D. Pickford, ADC; Lt.-Col. J. W. Wright, E.D.; Dr. C. R. Richards, MBE, ED; Lt.-Col. R. F.

Oaks; Capt. J. W. Bennett; Padres Ussher, Sexton and Cunningham; Mayor J. Matthews, Bathurst, Dr. J. H. Flak, Mitchell College of Advanced Education; Mr. N. Paul, a staunch organiser for this Dedication; Col. Anderson, VC (apology because of severe illness).

Order of Ceremony: Acknowledgements, Capt. J. Bennett.

Further apologies were read from Lady Gordon Bennett, 2/4 Machine Gunners who were holding a reunion in Perth, Lt.-Col. Swartz, MHR, Brigadiers Broadbent and Thompson, Mr. C. Cutler, MLA.

Oration and Unveiling: Brig. Galleghan. Brig. Galleghan spoke of the forming of the 8th Div. and of the training carried out at Bathurst which resulted in the people of Bathurst "adopting" the boys of this Division. Acts of kindness shown to members of the 8th by the people of Bathurst were so numerous that it would be unfair to try to pinpoint one particular case.



**Brigadier Sir Frederick Galleghan unveiling the Memorial.**

He spoke of the 8th in war where the casualty rate of AIF Malaya was 6,564 killed in action, died of wounds or died whilst POW out of a total strength 17,182 making deaths over 38%. Java deaths over 27%, Timor deaths over 33% and Ambon over 62%. He said the price was high but we all remember we fought for God, King and Country and all that could be hoped that these men did not die in vain.

He spoke of the "Broken 8th" as we were never allowed to fight as a complete Division but rather as individual battalions. The 22nd and 27th Brigade was in Malaya where this applied and the 23rd Brigade was scattered through the islands of Timor and Amboin and Rabaul. No reflection can be cast on General Bennett for this was out of his control.

He said the 8th was a well trained fighting unit and this is what played a big part to carry them through the dark POW days, of sacrifices made while POW, of the dedicated band of Medical Officers, of Medical Orderlies and last but not least of the wonderful band of nurses who are dear to every soldiers' heart.

Respects were paid to Comrades who had passed away since the war and of a recent death of a former member of the 8th, Sir Wilfred Kent Hughes.

On a lighter side he said he did not mind being referred to as Black Jack now because, since the war one "B" has been dropped by persons when he was under discussion and for this he was grateful.

He said no Division has been honoured more by a Council than the Eighth as when we were looking for a position for the Monument never for one moment would have selected the spot which was given to us because we did not think it would ever be handed over for a Memorial.

The fact that this spot was given to the Eighth Division will always be remembered as being unique in a place of prominence and honour.

Brig. Galleghan said the 300 attending the dedication possibly could have been doubled only for drought conditions as a lot of the Eighth were country people from North, North West, West and Riverina and it was quite obvious that by the show of faces that they were not present.

Brig. Galleghan then unveiled the Monument after which the three Padres who were attached to the Eighth in turn carried out the dedication of the Memorial Monument.

A special prayer written for all was said by all for those who did not return.

After the Last Post, The Ode, Wreath Laying by a member of the Eighth Division, Reveille and the National Anthem, wreaths were laid by representatives of the 6th, 7th and 9th Divisions.

Co-operation from these three divisions and RSL Clubs towards the Eighth at Dubbo, Tamworth, Bathurst and wherever we have met has always been outstanding.



## Members please note —

THE RECITING OF THE "ODE" WILL BE AT 8.00 pm

ON THE SCREENING OF FILMS, TUESDAY AND SUNDAY

AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN A PRODUCTION

SHOW IS BEING STAGED.

R. T. THOMPSON, M.B.E., Sec./Manager.



This is true comradeship which always results in time of war — where you have to depend on good teamwork and true mates.

As we stood before this Memorial our thoughts also included our departed respected General Gordon Bennett and members of the 8th who survived the horrors of POW camps and since passed away, who were not with us for the unveiling of this fitting Memorial Monument.

At the invitation of the Mayor all adjourned to the City Hall for tea and biscuits and it was here that the Mayor spoke of the binding tie Bathurst people had with the 8th as so many of its units had been trained in the district. He said the Council was unanimous that the Memorial Monument would not be put in a "corner" and possibly overlooked rather than the Monument would take place of honour in the middle of the City, and the middle of the pathway leading to the War Memorial City Hall where people would pause, look and remember the men of the 8th Division.

Response was made by Mr. R. Anderson, MLA, who extended deep appreciation to the Mayor, Aldermen and the people of Bathurst who he said, did not leave a stone unturned to make this fitting dedicated Memorial the success it was.

So concluded the Dedication of the Memorial Monument which was the main reason for this assembly of members of the 8th and to honour our Fallen Comrades.

In the evening all members and wives returned to the Bathurst RSL where a smorgasbord dinner was served.

Appropriately the entertainers were former 8th Div. Concert Party members and POW and turned on a show equal to the best. They were Messrs. Boardman, Sid Piddington, Stevens, "Bill" Williams (ex-RAF who attached himself to the 8th) and the evergreen Slim De Grey.

As a matter of interest Dr. Flak, who designed the Monument, gave his interpretation of the Make up of the Monument as follows:

A beautifully machined piece of granite taken from the district where the 8th trained, weighing two ton, approximately 7 feet high and shaped on one side to represent a warrior's blade, a figure 8 was carved at the top of the granite and then the top of the stone was broken and so breaking off the top piece of the figure to symbolise the "Broken Eighth."

An appropriate Cross was then added near the figure 8. The Monument including lighting cost \$1,730, which was covered by donations within and outside the Division.

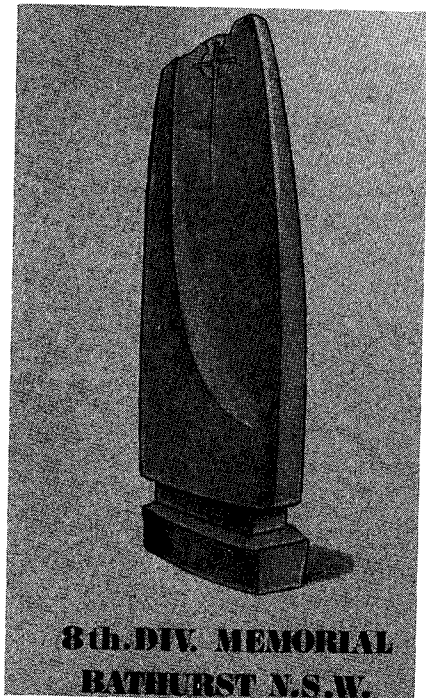
At the foot of the Monument is a plaque with the following inscription

1939 — 1945

From this district where most of its units assembled and trained for battle, AIF Malaya and the 8th Division went to long years of tribulation in Malaya and Southern Asia.

In battle courageous, in captivity its Spirit remained unbroken.

Dated 15th August, 1970.



On Sunday a large number of the 8th went out along the Lime Kilns Road to the Old Camp Site which now, as is known, does not exist, and like Greta, is once more a pastoral area where cattle and sheep peacefully graze.

Here individual homage was paid at the two Memorials at the entrance gate to the old camp site.

Close to the gate is the Memorial to the 9th Div. and inscribed on a plaque is: —

Dedicated to Members of the 9th Australian Division

1939 — 1945

The plaque is set in stonework which is set out in the "T" shape of the 9th Div. colour patch.

Opposite there is a Memorial to the 2/30th Bn. 8th Div. and the inscription reads: —

They went away from here — 28th July, 1941.

In Memory of Members of the  
2/30 Bn. AIF Who Did Not  
Return.

The latch on the gate of the surrounds is a welded piece of pipe work in the shape of "The Eggs are Cooked" the shape of the 8th Div. colour patch.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

M. MULLENS.

NEXT: EMBARKATION

## R.S.L. SUB-BRANCH

Any person who has been appointed, enlisted or posted for service in the Armed Forces may apply for Service Membership of the City of Fairfield RSL Sub-Branch.

All enquiries to Records Office or the Hon. Secretary, R. T. Thompson, M.B.E.



### CHANGE IN TRADING TIMES



TOP FLOOR TRADING HOURS  
HAVE BEEN EXTENDED ON THURSDAYS

#### NEW TIMES

BAR CLOSURES .....	12 Midnight
CLUB CLEARED .....	12.30 am

R. T. Thompson, M.B.E., Secretary/Manager



Advanced training has resumed at Fairfield Pool where the swimmers are bravely "taking the plunge" in water that is far from warm. At least some relief from the coldness is experienced when Mr. Hart leads the group in exercises after the swimming session. It won't be too much longer when the swimmers will prefer to do the exercises first, then dive into the pool to cool off!

Our first Carnival will be held at Granville Pool on Saturday, 25th October in an unheated pool which will come as something of a surprise to those who were expecting warm water. Perhaps the coach forgot to warn them?

Dot and Reg Sherlock are having a games-barbecue night on Saturday, 15th November at 16 Ace Ave., Fairfield — the proceeds being shared by Softball and Swimming. Let's hope that everyone wins on the night or at least goes home with some money because the Learn-to-Swim Registrations commence the next morning at Fairfield Pool from 9 am. Learn-to-Swim free, but you have to pay to enter the pool.

Incidentally, I hope everyone knows that they can save some money when they attend regularly at Fairfield Pool. Adults can purchase a monthly ticket at the start of the month for \$3 instead of paying 60c each time they enter the pool. Similarly, children can purchase a book of 10 tickets for 75c instead of paying 20c entry each time.

Christmas Party this year will be on 29th November at the Fred Galton Hall for which an admission fee of \$1 per head entitles you to enjoy a sumptuous feast (well at least a smorgasbord and a great time).

The Swimming Club was due to play the Softball Club in the 10 Pin

Bowling series being contested by the various Youth Club Auxiliaries on Sunday, 19th October. The result of this match was a win to swimming by forfeit.

Sunday, 19th October was the date our raffle was drawn for the lucky winner of an arab pony valued at \$800. Many boys and girls waited anxiously hoping that they could become the proud owners of a pony, but, unfortunately for them there could be only one winner who was Mrs. Yalda from Green Valley — green ticket E94.

Our sincerest thanks to Mr. Makepeace, who very generously donated the pony.

The next monthly meeting will be held on Sunday, 22nd November at Fairfield Pool commencing at 10 am. You are welcome to come along and find out what our Club will be doing this season.

That's all for this month — "keep on splashin'".

BRIAN HARRISON.

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#### PHONE NUMBERS FOR CLUB

727 5000

727 5677

727 5999

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# Birth of a Battalion

## PART 4

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

### Embarkation

And thus we boarded our large, magnificent transport vessel, the "Queen Mary" on 1st February, 1941. The loading and allotments to cabins took place like clockwork. Even though most of the troops had, on previous occasions, stood on the shores of Sydney Harbour and gazed at the mighty hulk swinging slowly in the tide, the vastness of this great troopship left us spell-bound as we walked along deck after deck.

We were issued with meal tickets and moved to our quarters. Capt. Toose, Capt. Topfer and Lt. Griffin had been responsible for embarkation and loading arrangements, and whether it was by sheer good fortune or due to the foresight of these officers, the 2/18th Bn. certainly had some of the best situated quarters on the ship, being B and C decks, with many of the men occupying porthole cabins.

In peacetime our cabin held two people, but now there were eight of us. In each cabin there were hot and cold baths, two wash basins, a writing desk and a fan. The water for bathing was brackish, special salt water soap being used, as it was not possible to carry enough fresh water for the 6,500 troops on board.

Other units, not so fortunate, found themselves "way down in the very bowels of the ships" and for them the romance of the remarkable voyage was lost.

Throughout the day, and until sailing time, small launches, large

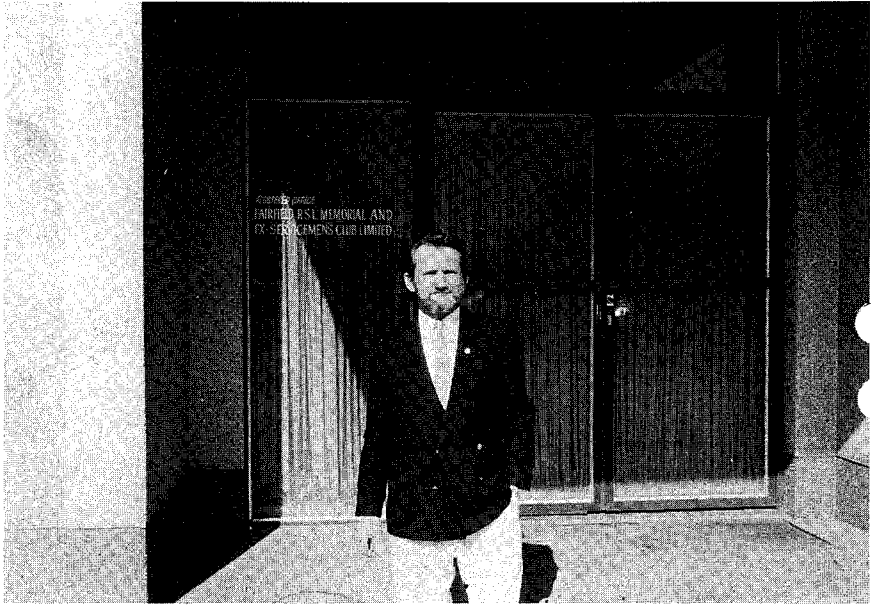
launches, tiny sailing ships and stately yachts circled the "Mary" to pay their last respects to the men who were about to leave the land of their birth for no more definite destination than "abroad".

Some were seeking their relatives, but Navy patrol boats kept most of the boats away. Some men wrote last-minute letters and threw them overboard, in tins, hoping they would be picked up and forwarded to their folks. I threw one over and a kind person forwarded it to my wife but I made sure that I did not mention our destination. We realised the Navy had to take action as some put our destination, which was thoughtless and unwise.

More troops joined the "Mary" on 2nd February and embarkation of all troops was completed by 1,100 hours on 3rd February and preparation was soon made for the training of the troops during the voyage.

The first meal was something of a revelation — 6,500 troops being catered for in four sittings in the enormous dining room. However, the catering for this large number was well organised and there was never any congestion, and, as the days passed by it became a matter of wonderment that not only was the food of excellent quality but there was also variety.

The food was served in a first class manner and sufficient fresh stores were maintained for the entire duration of the voyage to serve this great body of troops three meals a day. Four distinct messes were conducted: Officers, Warrant Officers



**Flashback: Rudy before he went north.**



**Flashback: Our days at Woodville.**

and Sergeants, Lance-Sergeants and men, and the ruling was unanimous that army food had never been better — or never ever would be — as luxurious as this. We could have done with some of this food in the first month in Malaya, but I will deal with that when I come to it.

In the evenings all ranks — from the O.C. to the most insignificant O.R., promenaded the decks for the last glimpse of the twinkling lights of Sydney — a fairyland impression that many of us remembered as we lay awake in our barracks later in Malaya — thinking, thinking and wondering.

Almost at the crack of dawn all troops were on deck and once again the fleet of harbour craft put out from shore. At 0900 hours, all units paraded on the sun deck for an inspection by the Governor-General, who came aboard at 0.930 hours and shook hands with all officers as he moved down the ranks, round the ship and wished the troops — "Good luck and God speed".

The morning seemed like an Eternity, the strain of being so near and yet so far away from friends and loved ones was very trying for everyone, and it was hoped the liner would soon be under way.

On the first day I had a look around the ship, a magnificent product of modern engineering. There was a swimming pool, a cinema and a very large games deck. In peacetime she was a different ship to the one I saw, however.

### The "Queen Mary"

The "Queen Mary", a ship of 12 decks, one of them the promenade deck, is 750 feet long, equal to the overall length of the "Mauretania", is 1,019½ feet long overall both sides. The Queen Mary's waterline length, 1,004 feet, was longer than any other ship — five times the length of the "Britannia", the first Cunarder. From the keel to the top of the superstructure was 135 feet, to the top of the forward funnel 180 feet, to the masthead 234 feet. This mighty ship topped the scale at about 81,235 tons and displaced about 76,390 tons of water.

This great bulk did not impede her speed though, for in August, 1936, she broke Eastbound and Westbound trans-Atlantic records. She traversed the distance between Ambrose light vessel, just outside New York, and Bishop's Rock off the coast of England in three days 23 hours and 57 minutes; an average speed of 36.63 knots.

The "Queen Mary" was not built for mass transport even though her main restaurant was 118 feet wide and stretched from side to side of the vessel, but for swift economic operation with a passenger complement permitted a singular amount of space for each person. She usually carried about 1,995 passengers in three classes.

Her horsepower rated at approximately 200,000. The turbines which supplied the power obtained the steam for 24 enormous boilers heated by 200 oil fuel burners. Incidentally, those turbines contained 257,000 hand-fitted blades. The engines of this giant liner were cushioned similarly to those in a modern automobile.

The liner had the latest navigation improvements. She was fitted with a complete double set of steering controls and the latest Sperry Gyro-pilot. The Officers on the bridge were supplied with an uninterrupted view of the ship owing to the bridge projecting 12 feet on either side of the ship. These officers on the open bridge were afforded ample protection by a novel screen of high pressure air thrown up by a coping carved in a manner of an aeroplane wing. The transmitting and receiving equipment was made more powerful than any previous ship. Ship-to-shore telephone was available, not only from the booths in the main hall, but from the bedside telephones of many state rooms, and regular radio programmes from both America and European stations could be picked up and distributed through 32 loud speakers at will.

The facilities for sport was remarkable for the total deck space allotted for this promenading was about 112,000 feet, more than twice the area of an American football field. The swimming pool was very



modern, done in coloured tiles with the accents of green and red. It had two diving boards and a shute with the latest automatic anti-splash device. Round about ran an observer's balcony with tables for refreshments and at the left was the entrance to the therapeutic baths. The promenade deck was enclosed with glass which permitted the full enjoyment of the sun and tonic salt air, giving the ocean view with none of the wind occasioned by the liner's great speed. It extended round the entire deck — almost one-third of a mile.

Should we have taken a walk around the "Queen Mary", pre-war, and looked into various rooms, we would have seen something like this:

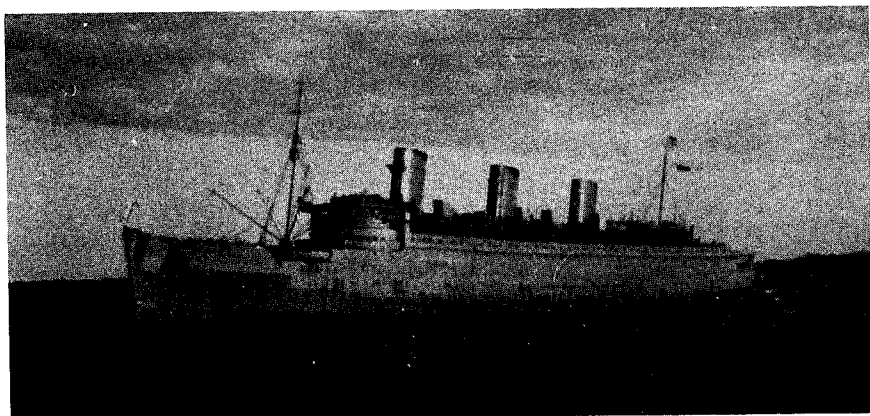
A huge restaurant, a magnificent room, 160 feet long by 118 feet wide and extending through three decks was able to accommodate the entire first-class complement in one sitting. Under the main bridge, the observation cocktail lounge commanded a wonderful "ahead" view of the ocean. Besides this there was a charming verandah grill looking aft towards the sea which proved one of the most popular rendezvous on the Seven Seas. The windows, flanked by star-spangled crimson curtains, revealed a magnificent view of the ship's foaming wake during the day. The sunken dance floor was dead level and the glass balustrade around it was all illuminated at night by shifting coloured lights. The dance floor only faintly suggested the

sprightly grace of Anne Zinkeisen's panel on the wall of gold gleaming through silver. We would have seen beautifully furnished spacious air-conditioned lounges laid out with lounges, rugs, decorations and paintings.

Speaking of paintings, we would have been seen in the main restaurant from a point near the forward and admirably displayed Phillip Connands large decorative panel. The subject was England, and in it could be seen a variety of typical English scenes and activities amusingly linked together. We would have seen in a library with pigskin walls, deep pile carpets and chairs of soft brown leather, 1,700 books displayed behind disappearing glass panels.

The drawing room was dignified, but graceful with its cream painted walls and rugs of warm blue. Then there was the writing alcove appropriately simple, quiet and well-lit. What is this? A slippery dip with a pirate's cave beneath the piano? A sentry box, wild west shack, a miniature aquariums, a wooden cinema theatre to be operated by children, and a girl's doll house completely furnished; yes, this was the children's playroom, charmingly decorated by George Ramon.

The large metal carvings by John Skeaing were done in mild Houdrees Mahogany against a silver background. A most convenient rendezvous was the main foyer on C deck. Four elevators descended directly to



"Queen Mary" in wartime.

it, two banking on either side. In the centre was the swimming pool entrance and on the left the entrance to the Main Restaurant.

Then there were the galleries. A long gallery called "Peacock Alley" adjoined the tea dance room, just between the Smoke Room and the Main Lounge. It was a natural meeting place made especially glamorous when brilliant evening gowns glowed against the golden background of Betule wood in a direct light from several pylons. On the opposite side of the ship was a smaller, quieter rendezvous which like wise adjoined the tea dance room.

Thus we would have found the "Queen Mary". She had 421 cabin class suites and rooms, almost all with a private bath; 300 tourist class state rooms, most of which had a private bath, and 214 third-class cabins, all with hot and cold running water. There were also 25 public rooms on 9 decks, easily accessible by 21 electric elevators and a shopping centre that some say was the "Queen Mary's" interpretation of Bond Street, London, at sea.

William McFee, the noted American marine engineer, said of the "Queen Mary": "There is no concession as far as I can see, to the passing whims of the day in her general layout. The idea is not to knock your eye out with a freak contraption, but to build a working, worthy successor to the first great lady of the sea, who held the Blue Riband for 22 years. The "Mauretania" (scrapped and a new "Mauretania" now takes its place) does not come up to the "Queen Mary" in size or quality though "Queen Mary" designs follow the traditions of her ancestry, which are safety, comfort and sea kindness, regular arrivals and departures, and speed, in the order named. Her streamlining, we may mention, is all under water, where it will do her the most good.

I have forgotten one thing, that I recall, my impressions of her model in the yard at Clydebank, the model from which she was made. I mean her beauty, the justness of her proportions conceal her immense size. What strikes you is the loveliness of her presence, and a feeling that she will do her job nobly."

## We sail

That same afternoon, Wednesday, 4th February, 1941, at 1315 hours the mighty turbines began to revolve, and the anchor chains slowly coiled around their winches. A great cheer went up as the mammoth troopship moved down the harbour and from thousands of throats came coo-ees and calls of farewell, and with the band playing Aloha, small craft followed us out of the Heads as far as possible.

We were under way at last. We will always remember that day, of the thoughts that arose in the minds of those of us who stayed on the stern and watched the land we so dearly loved, disappear from view. There were some, including myself, who remained hours after darkness had fallen, to turn with a deep sigh and make our way to our cabins when it was time to turn in.

'Thoughts arose in our minds, irrepressible thoughts — when again would we see Sydney Heads? Only those who have been through this experience know what these lads had to endure. We may have sung or laughed but at the same time our hearts were full and heavy. Our Colonel remarked that even among the tough grim faces of these men from the bush, and the volunteers from the ranks of society whose training had taught them that it was "Infra Dig" to show their inner feelings, there was many a wet cheek and sad hearts.

Words such as these mean but little to those who have not participated in the sad gaiety of farewelling a troopship. But to the soldier, his wife, sweetheart and family, it requires more than mere words to express the deep fullness of their innermost emotions.

Had it been a pleasure cruise, we would not have minded facing the facts such as they would have been, but we had to face the hard fact that there were many among us who would never see Australian soil again, and the ones we loved so dearly. So the sigh we uttered as we turned in that night was a prayer.

Gradually the "Mary" increased speed and took up her position in one of the most imposing convoys that ever left Australia and the open sea lay ahead, dull with mist and rain, enshrouded in mystery.

At 0930 hours next morning, 5th February, a report was spread that the O.C. troops had received an alarming radio message. A raider had been sighted under full steam no more than 39 miles from the convoy but the prowling enemy was given the slip even though the raider claimed to have "sunk" the "Mary".

The same morning we commenced a training course with lectures on various weapons, foreign countries, their diseases and Fifth Column. Bayonet work was a standard daily practice. These exercises and lectures were in themselves good, for to an extent they took our minds off home and our loved ones. There was the usual lifeboat drill, so, should we be attacked we would go to our appointed places beside the lifeboats in an orderly manner.

I remember looking over the side. All I saw was water and the "Aquitania" and "Nieuw Amsterdam", both ships destined for the Middle East.

Training stores, cinema films and recreation gear were distributed to units, and everything was done, within the limitations of the great ship, to make the voyage a pleasant one. A ship's daily newspaper was instituted, and on 8th February the first number of the "X-Press" as it was called, was distributed. The Editor of the 2/18th Battalion's magazine was given the editorial chair.

As there were 30 different units on board, contributions to the newspaper were extensive and peculiar, and by the time the H.T.Q.X. reached its destination an interesting budget of material had been accumulated. The 2/18th Battalion Concert Party and the 2/18th Bn. band performed excellently on several occasions for the entertainment of the Officer's mess and the troops and the cinema shows helped fill in the evenings. Wet canteens for all ranks

were kept busy after parade hours in the afternoons and evenings.

We had been joined by the "Mauretania" with troops from Melbourne bound for the Middle East. The two ships, the "Queen Mary" and "Aquitania" steamed abreast, the "Nieuw Amsterdam" and the "Mauretania" falling in the wake of the former ships, with the escort "HMAS Canberra" laying about half a mile in front of us. The approximate tonnage of these four troopships were as follows:

H.T.Q.X. "Queen Mary" 81,235 tons.

H.M.T. "Aquitania" 45,647 tons.

H.M.T. "Nieuw Amsterdam" 36,287 tons.

H.M.T. "Mauretania" 34,000 tons.

What a magnificent sight these four great ships made. The "Queen Mary" is at present, moored permanently at Long Beach, California, USA as a tourist attraction.

Owing to the large body of men on the ship, we took it in turns to come up on deck for fresh air and bayonet work. So far our trip had been good, the rough weather often experienced in crossing the Great Australian Bight did not eventuate, the Bight being as calm as a lake. Coming home on the "Katoomba" we were to feel the full fury of the Bight and what a frightening experience for a land lubber.

From time to time Colonel Varley released a bulletin for publication in our Bn. magazine, "Men May Smoke". Following is one such bulletin.

#### Our prestige

"Since our last issue, our surroundings have changed. From the peaceful, rural atmosphere of Bathurst to a ship at sea, with our own rich land behind us, a land you will learn to appreciate more fully, after comparison with other countries. In our more solemn moments our thoughts fly back home to all those who, with cheers and smiles, gave us such a wonderful send off. We are conscious of the hardship and loneliness imposed upon them, which is harder

than our task, with our days so full. "They also serve who sit at home and wait.

"I appreciate the efforts and goodwill of all ranks to fit into our present conditions. It has been difficult to fill in your time and apportion your training and recreational areas, with the limited space available. However it is evident that all appreciate these difficulties, and the conduct of our troops is in keeping with our record on the land, one of which we are becoming proud of and hope to maintain in the sterner days ahead.

"In the immediate future, I urge you the necessity of rigid personal discipline, particularly in respect to matters of health and prestige of the white man living among coloured races.

"The ravages of sickness and disease can put more men out of action than an enemy and do it much quicker, therefore it is imperative that we all carry out instructions on health matters. If this is done we need not worry.

"The right treatment of coloured races by British people has had a big influence on the expansion of our Empire. Never undermine this prestige. We are Australian Ambassadors and by our deeds our country shall be judged."

A. L. Varley,  
Lt.-Col., 2/18th Bn.

### Fremantle

We dropped anchor at Fremantle on 10th February, but owing to the shallow waters the "Queen Mary" and the "Aquitania" were unable to dock and had to lay out in the harbour. Some sick men were put ashore, thus delaying their trip overseas.

Fresh supplies were loaded and troops on other ships had shore leave. Here we received our first batch of mail — mail day is a wonderful event in the life of a soldier. The weather was very warm, a state that was accentuated by the stationary positions of the ships, and the fine swimming pools of the "Mary" were very much in demand.

### Goodbye Australia

On 12th February, 1941, we once again watched the Australian coastline slowly disappear and we had one long last look.

I have included a poem, written by a member of our unit in "Men May Smoke", which I think is appropriate to the occasion:—

#### A Soldier's Farewell

Farewell, dear Australia, the land of our birth

Farewell to the loved ones, our home and our hearth,

No more sweet wattle, all laden with gold —

For one glimpse of its beauty, we'd love to behold

Now sails the big transport for overseas,  
Three cheers for Australia, the land of the free

If e'er we return to our bright sunny shores

'Twill be when our fighting is needed no more

Farewell dear Australia, it may be for a while —

It may be forever, our dear sunny Isle  
No matter, our loved land, wherever we be,

We'll fight for our honour and liberty

Then cheer for us, pray for us, help us to win,

For our home and our country, for kith and kin,

Goodbye dear Australia, until we return,  
To the land of the Emu, the Wattle and Fern.

M. C. Tobin.

Then followed more days at sea with lectures, physical training and daily events, bayonet work.

The sea is indeed a majestic sight. We were lucky as the calmness of the sea was unbelievable, now and then a slight breeze caused ripples. But we knew this same placid sea could be one of fury, the water whipped into towering waves almost in a twinkling.

Fortunately we did not strike these conditions on this occasion which we did not mind. The waters were full of life. One day as I leaned over the rail, I noticed some sharks cruising by — another day porpoises and flying fish that propel themselves out of the water and travel a distance out of the water.

In spite of a small breeze, caused by the ship's momentum, the atmosphere became hotter and more humid and, as the sea was so placid, sea sickness was negligible. We felt the heat at night in the cabins as we were not allowed to open portholes for security reasons.

My bunk was not in the right position to get any benefit from the table fan, but there were two cold water units in the hall which were very popular and there was always a queue.

One hot night I arose at 3 am and crept down to the tap but found many more had the same idea. I had to queue up for over half an hour. To aggravate the situation someone was caught smoking on deck and, because a light can be seen miles at sea, the open deck was declared out of bounds to all troops after dark.

Air raid warnings and life boat drill were regular daily routines during the voyage, and an interesting ack-ack exercise was carried out one afternoon during which Colonel Varley distinguished himself by "pop-ping off" several balloon targets

with a service rifle as soon as they were released into the air from the masthead of the ship.

The Vickers gunners of the Bn. showed themselves experts and very few balloons escaped their accurate fire. Some of the troops found their below-decks quarters uncomfortable, owing to the heat, particularly at night for as soon as retreat was sounded, the convoy blacked out by closing all portholes and deck windows. Nevertheless, it was to their credit that they maintained their cheerful disposition that existed throughout the duration of the voyage.

**Next — We leave the convoy**

M. MULLENS.

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#### PHONE NUMBERS FOR CLUB

727 5000

727 5677

727 5999

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## List of Doctors

- \*W. J. FERGUSON, 27 Smart Street, Fairfield 2165.
- JOHN ZORBAS, 56 Hamilton Road, Fairfield 2165.
- D. B. SHENSTONE, 56 Hamilton Road, Fairfield 2165.
- IAN MACLACHLAN, 265 The Boulevarde, Fairfield Heights 2165.
- G. A. LANG, 122 Railway Parade, Canley Vale 2166.
- J. G. RIGNEY, 2 Alan Street, Fairfield 2165.
- I. L. HARASYMCZUK, 63 Gipps St., Smithfield. Also 381 Hamilton Road, Fairfield West.
- RAMAL SINGH, 4A Dale Street, Fairfield 2165.
- B. F. STEVEN-BONIECKI, 144 Wattle Avenue, Carramar 2163.
- JULIAN MARCO, 193 Hamilton Road, Fairfield 2165.
- MICHAEL COLJA, 174 The Boulevarde, Fairfield 2165 (72 1862).
- Also: 36 Station Street, Fairfield 2165.
- Also: 349 Cabramatta Road, Cabramatta 2166 (602 8292).
- Y. C. YEUNG, 13 William Street, Fairfield 2165.
- Also: Cnr. Palmerston Road and Warrumbungle Street, Fairfield West 2165.
- \*L. P. BLASHKI, 940 Woodville Road, Villawood 2163.

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 5)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

## We Leave the Convoy

As we neared Cocos Island, on 14th February, 1941, the "Queen Mary" circled the convoy, all cheered, flags were dipped and we broke away. It was Singapore for sure now.

While with the convoy, this giant ship had kept the speed of the slowest ship, the "Aquitania". Now she bounded forward as though she was glad to be free — she streaked through the water at full speed. We remember how, in 1936 she broke the record of the Eastward and Westward crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, with an average speed of 36.63 knots per hour, and we reminded ourselves that even though she was large, the "Queen Mary" was fast.

Within two days from the time we left the convoy, land was sighted on the morning of 18th February, 1941, and early in the forenoon the G.O.C. of the 8th Division, Major-General Gordon Bennett and Brigadier Taylor, boarded the "Queen Mary" from a launch as she glided slowly through the calm waters separating Singapore Island from the Malayan Mainland.

We passed numerous islands but our first view of the tropics was the Mainland. The troops, who had packed every inch of the deck rails and portholes from early morning, gazed in wonder at the ocean going junks of the Malay fishermen and absorbed every aspect of the tropical vegetation. Mangroves grew thickly down to the water's edge.

There were banana plantations, coconut trees, tall timber, patches of bamboo, frail little houses, some built over the water. Some thick matted undergrowth greeted our eyes and I wondered if there was any open country at all. There were native fishing sampans laying along the shoreline and little cultivated squares cut out of the jungle. Our question re open country was answered the next day when we travelled to our initial camp on the Malayan Mainland. We were prepared for the heat to a certain extent as it had been stifling with high humidity for days. We lined the rails and watched the panorama glide by, not missing a thing.

## The Landing

At 1530 hours the great ship pulled into her berth right up to the wharf — and here was Singapore Naval Base — a name that had been headlined in the newspapers of the world for the last decade or more — reputed to be the most heavily fortified outpost of the British Empire.

Garrisoned by troops from Britain, India and Malaya — and now this first contingent of Australian troops (that is such a large body) ever to set foot in a tropic land. No wonder we were agog with excitement, no wonder we conjured up visions of what we imagined to be behind those solid, confidence-inspiring barrack buildings and Naval workshops which formed the foundations of the Base.

So renowned had the Naval Base become that people were led to believe that because of its strength,

# YOUR HELP IS WANTED

TO HELP WITH CRUSHING — 8.00 am to 10.00 am  
SATURDAYS AND MONDAYS

so are your

**BOTTLES**

and

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**THE YOUTH CLUB NEED THEM  
FOR THEIR BUILDING FUND**

**DEPOSIT BOTTLES AND CANS IN BINS  
PROVIDED AT REAR OF CLUB  
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- THE CHILD YOU HELP MAY BE YOUR OWN

**ENQUIRIES — 727 7920**

Singapore was impregnable. We learnt, much to our sorrow, that more than a mere Naval Base is needed to protect a country; ships to man the Base, modern anti-aircraft guns to protect the base; planes to defend such a place and to form a protective screen for Naval and passing vessels, all these are needed — especially in a place like Malaya, where ships have to sail close to the shore. If all these factors had existed, those two great ships which were so vital to the defence of Malaya, sunk within an hour of engaging the enemy, would have played a vital part in sweeping the seas and gaining more time in the Malayan campaign. The ships I refer to were the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse".

Taking nearly 20 years to build, the Base cost £60,000,000 (Sterling) and is situated on the north coast of the island. The anchorage was so great that a fleet could lay there in perfect safety from the elements and the water so deep that the "Queen Mary" could dock at the wharf. As was known the "Queen Mary" and the "Queen Elizabeth" had to lay out in the stream when they visited Sydney as the water at our docks was not deep enough.

The floating dock, then pride of the Base, with accommodation for a 45,000 ton battleship, was towed all the way from England, in sec-

tions, a distance of some 8,000 miles. In addition to this, the anchorage contained a floating dock for repairs of smaller ships and a great graving dock built to hold the "Queen Elizabeth". One could see the great cranes able to lift an entire gun turret from a battleship; workshops fitted with the latest machinery and a most powerful transmitting station, at that time, one of the best in the world. The thousands of workmen were not forgotten, there were modern dwellings where these men and their families were housed.

It was the pride of the East — was it a fulfilment of the dreams of Stamford Raffles who bought Singapore in 1819?

British soldiers, a British military band and a host of officials greeted us to the tune of "Roll Out The Barrel". Australians who heard the broadcast will remember it for the rumour had been circulated that a German raider had "sunk" the "Queen Mary".

This was one reason our landing was broadcast plus the fact we were used for "sabre rattling" propaganda which earned us the unwarranted name of "Menzies Glamour Boys" in some quarters, which really struck a sore point. We would have preferred to have gone to the Middle East, the allotment of the 8th Div. was not our choice and we strongly resented the publicity.

## R.S.L. Car Badges

THESE BADGES ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO ALL  
FINANCIAL SUB-BRANCH MEMBERS.

NOW ON SALE AT THE RECORDS OFFICE — \$10.00 EACH.

HOURS OF TRADING — 8.00 am to 4.30 pm.

WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY, INCLUSIVE.

A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS GIFT.





**2/18th Battalion Advance Party.**

Trust our boys, they were up to tricks before they were off the boat. They heated pennies, with a cigarette lighter, on the rail of the top deck, then called catch and flipped them off. A high ranking official caught one, dropped it, then picked it up with his handkerchief. Amid cheers he smiled and put the penny in his pocket. The Military policemen, Red-caps, as they are called received a rousing welcome also, but not cheers. This initial antagonism was to last throughout our stay between the British MP and the AIF.

The British troops resented us also because of our propaganda role as they were pushed into the back-ground. Little wonder, because some British troops had spent 10 to 15 years in the Far East and being permanent troops, and they did not receive any publicity.

The following extracts are from "The Malay Mail" and other Malay papers had similar accounts of our arrival which added more fuel to the fire and did little to endear us to the British.

Incidentally, as far as the AIF being equipped to the last button was concerned, it was good imagination

as when we landed, and up to the declaration of war with Japan, all we had was a rifle and bayonet not to mention our steel hats to fall back on in an emergency.

To follow, extracts from Malay papers.

#### THE MALAY MAIL

Thursday, 20th Feb., 1941.

Aust. Forces are our Guest of Honor  
Another Link Between Singapore and  
The Commonwealth

Force Equipped to Last Button and  
Trained in all Arts of War

H. E. The Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas welcomed Major-General Gordon Bennett and the Australian Imperial Forces who arrived in Malaya on Wednesday in a broadcast from the Singapore station last night.

"Yesterday I was privileged to be present at an historic event," said His Excellency, "the arrival of the Australian Imperial Forces for the defence of Malaya. Never before have large forces of Dominion troops landed in this country. It was one more proof of the unity of the Empire, one more recognition of the

fact that we all stand or fall together. The soldiers of the Australian Commonwealth joined the soldiers from Britain and India, with our Malays, our own volunteers, in the common cause; one more link forged in the chain that unites Australia with Singapore; and on this link are written the words 'For Freedom'.

"As we stood by the water side and watched those great ships steaming slowly up to the moorings, we marveled once more at the work of the Royal Navy and the Mercantile Marine who are winning this war for us just as certainly as they won the last. It is by our command of the sea that the Empire is defended and the enemy is being slowly and surely throttled.

#### Fighting Fit

"And now the men on board could be clearly seen. Thousands of them, and everyone of them bronzed and lean and fighting fit. Soon we were shaking hands with some of the officers and mingling with the men. We were told of a voyage without incident — the Royal Navy again, we were told of a force equipped down to the last button and trained in all arts of war, a force of fighting men who have but one desire, to get at the foe and stamp him out, as their kith and kin have stamped out Mussolini in Africa.

"Of course these Australians are not all going to stay in Singapore. By no means. Many of them are going up country, indeed have already gone. Where they have gone I cannot of course tell you. But I can tell you this! they are here solely to defend this country. They are not here to

attack any one. Their arrival need cause no anxiety to any of our neighbours, with whom we are on most friendly terms. We don't wish to quarrel with anybody, but as the acting Prime Minister of Australia said three days ago, we don't like aggression and we don't like aggressors and if we are attacked, then we shall fight and I would remind you that the motto of the Commonwealth is 'Advance Australia'.

#### A Fighting Commander

"In command of this fine Force is Major-General H. G. Bennett, one of the most distinguished soldiers that Australia has ever produced. Indeed he was a Major-General in the last war before he was 30 years old. A fighting man in command of a fighting force. We are proud to have him and his men with us here. We welcome them gladly and wholeheartedly. They are our guests of honour. They are away from home in a strange country; let us make them feel at home, let us give them a share in our daily lives. Let us see to it that every one of them takes away many happy memories of his time in Malaya.

"And now here is Major-General H. G. Bennett himself to speak to you."

Major-General Bennett, who followed His Excellency, said:

"It gives me very much pleasure to tell the people of Australia that all of our ships have arrived safely — thanks to the protection of our efficient and effective British Navy. Our men are all well and happy and looking forward with keenness to what lies ahead of them.

## FAIRFIELD RSL YOUTH CLUB

### Notice to all Members

The Annual General Meeting of the Fairfield RSL Youth Club will be held on  
TUESDAY, 17th FEBRUARY, 1981 at 8 pm  
in the Bowlers Lounge.

D. SHERLOCK, Hon. Secretary.

"H.E. the Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, has given us an official welcome to Malaya. On behalf of the formations of the AIF that have just arrived, I thank him.

#### Kindness and Hospitality

"Ever since our first party of Australians arrived here we have received nothing but kindness and hospitality. The civil authorities throughout Malaya have co-operated willingly by placing schools and hospitals at our disposal for the accommodation of our troops. Officers and men from some of the most famous British regiments have worked hard to prepare billets and camps for our reception. Australians in the community here have come forward to help in the formation of clubs and hostels not only in Singapore itself, but also in towns far away on the mainland.

"We appreciate these kindnesses. The Governor has referred to the people of Malaya as our hosts. We will be and are pleased to be their guests. In this connection I speak not only for our soldiers but also for the Australian Army Nursing Service — a service of which we in Australia are very proud. That pride is one I am sure the people of Malaya will also feel when they have seen them at work.

"We are here, however, on a serious business — the business of the defence of this country.

"Australians regard Singapore as an outpost of Australia. We feel that in helping to defend this country we are defending Australia.

"I can say in all seriousness that our men are as efficient and fit a lot as have ever left Australia. And we have the added advantage of being better equipped than the earlier troops to leave our country, for our people at home have made great strides in the development of our war industries.

"Our men have been trained as storm troops, and I can safely say if they are called on to defend this outpost of Australia, they will fight as their fathers did in Gallipoli, France and Palestine, and as their brothers have recently done in Libya.

"To the people of Malaya I say that your war is our war. Should any enemy come this way, Australia will be there."

#### THE MALAY MAIL

Thursday, 20th February, 1941

#### A Warning to Aggressors

The arrival in Malaya of an Australian Imperial Force numbering many thousands of men, with full equipment and an elaborate supply organisation, is another indication which cannot fail to be heartening to those all over the world who believe in the defence of freedom. Its immediate significance is apparent in the light of the political developments of the past few days and sudden increase of the tension in the Far East towards the end of last week over supposed Japanese intentions. The tension has relaxed again almost as rapidly as it suddenly arose, but Japan remains today just as much as ever the bogeyman of the Orient.

The peace of the Pacific rests in the hands of the leaders of Nippon, but it is solely because there is growing evidence that though the hands be the hands of Nippon the voice is really the voice of Berlin that the doubts and fears of the present exist.

The AIF in Malaya is just another of the solid realities which may serve to dissuade the Japanese fire brands from the adventures into the South Seas which are said to be under contemplation in Tokyo. For Malaya the AIF spells increased security. What is the present strength of the regular forces stationed in Malaya we are not in a position to state and do not propose to try to guess, but we may be confident that their numbers are such as to render it a very difficult and dangerous mission indeed for an enemy to attempt to take the country.

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**THE CLUB CAR PARKS ARE  
NOW OPEN, MONDAY TO  
FRIDAY, FROM 10 am**

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We have never subscribed to the point of view that it is only a matter of time before this country becomes embroiled in the war, but we welcome the arrival of the Australian troops as a further measure of insurance against any such contingency.

It is a measure of the scale on which the Commonwealth of Australia is co-operating with the rest of the Empire in the waging of this great struggle against world enslavement that the AIF comes to Malaya, just as their brothers in arms have gone to in the Middle East, with ample equipment and of the most modern design. When the present war broke out, Australia was able to throw into the war effort an industrial organisation vastly superior to that which she controlled in 1918.

#### MALAY MAIL

Thursday, 20th February, 1941

Malays Grateful to Troops  
From Australia and India

"The coming of the Australian Imperial Forces, equipped with the latest weapons, and with all units such as artillery, engineers, etc., has enormously increased the confidence of the people and put an end to any fears," says an editorial in the Singapore Malay newspapers, Utusan Melayu.

After referring to the arrival of the troops, and the splendid reception given to them, the paper continues:

"Our Australian visitors should know at once that the Malay race

of all classes, from the Rajas in the Istanas to the humblest, are absolutely unanimous and spontaneous in the welcome, as expressed by Sir Shenton Thomas in his radio speech. This was already evident from the manner in which members of the Malay Royal Navy greeted and fraternised with the Australians on their arrival at the Naval Base.

"Their hearty handshakes, their cheery smiles, showed their sincere friendliness and goodwill towards the Australian troops, and their unity of purpose.

"These Australian youths should consider Malaya as their own, for the Malays, indeed all the inhabitants of Malaya and the people of Australia are as one in their willingness, if necessary to sacrifice their lives for the love of freedom.

"Major-General Bennett said that the people of Australia considered Singapore to be their first line of defence, and the defence of this country as the defence of their own. The Malays are most grateful for these words; and their thanks go also to India, who had previously sent her troops here to defend what is recognised as the gateway to India."

Referring to the Governor's statement that troops are in Malaya not to attack anyone, but for the purpose of defence, the Utusan Melayu says that this should be taken as a clear indication of Malaya's preparedness to resist any attempt at invasion.

## Members please note —

THE RECITING OF THE "ODE" WILL BE AT 8.00 pm

ON THE SCREENING OF FILMS, TUESDAY AND SUNDAY

AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN A PRODUCTION

SHOW IS BEING STAGED.

R. T. THOMPSON, M.B.E., Sec./Manager.

The coming of the Australians should not be construed as meaning that war is expected here, but as ensuring protection against any threats; and for that reason the arrival of the Australians should afford the peace of mind.

"However," the paper continues: "If it is willed that our country should be engaged in active warfare, it is not inevitable that the battles will be fought on Malayan soil just because of the enormous number of troops and the vast quantities of equipment now brought here. These troops need not wait for the enemy to reach these shores; they may meet him on the way.

"It is not inevitable that the enemy will reach Malaya. We say this in order that the Malays need have no worries other than those of everyday life, though at the same time the Malays should not neglect to do their share, however small and insignificant, if war should come."

When we arrived in Malaya the people were in a grip of fear of an invasion by Japan and all this paper propaganda was for their benefit and as a deterrent to the would-be aggressor, so I think it had some merit. Although we had been well trained in Australia in conventional warfare, here we had to master the new technique of jungle warfare and for this, we were far from being the well equipped troops for jungle warfare as written in the previous accounts of our arrival in Malaya.

In the 10 months we were in Malaya our arms and equipment did not alter to conform with this new environment where as the invading Japanese were equipped with the latest arms, equipment and field rations suitable to jungle warfare conditions.

As far as being equipped down to the last button was concerned, later we were most likely to be down to our last button as Malaya was low on the priority list as far as arms equipment, and even clothes were concerned.

The following extract from the Malay Mail re our Air Force once again shows how the Allies "rattled the sabres" and once again used paper propaganda which was far from

the truth to our certain knowledge. To us this report was also a joke. When war was declared with Japan, the only quality in our Air Force was the pilots who fought above themselves in obsolescent planes. The Allies were caught unaware by the superior Zeke (Zero) plus the fact that the Japanese pilots were battle experienced and their planes greatly outnumbered our planes.

#### THE MALAY MAIL

Thursday, 20th February, 1941

Air Reinforcements as Well

A communique from GHQ Far East in Singapore, issued last night stated that powerful air reinforcements comprising modern bombers, twin engine fighters and single-engine fighters have arrived in Malaya and are "now stationed in various areas of strategic importance".

It is understood that these air reinforcements, the majority of which have just arrived in Malaya, have made possible a considerable alteration in the dispositions of the Air strength in the Far East.

No details are naturally available of these dispositions but in view of recent tension in the Far East, they are bound to be of great importance.

Since Air Chief Marshall Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, C-in-C Far East arrived in Singapore last year, there has been an almost constant stream of Airmen and Air Force equipment, including modern aircraft, arriving.

As a result of the arrival of the latest air reinforcements, the balance of air power in the Far Eastern area is now rapidly swinging in favour of Great Britain.

Although war had not touched Malaya we were to learn that we had to exist under war conditions as we had a General who demanded "hard work" and perfection. We

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#### PHONE NUMBERS FOR CLUB

727 5000

727 5677

727 5999

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were to carry out arduous jungle training with limited time off for leave till the Colonel was satisfied we were a well trained jungle fighting force.

Our shipboard lectures told us that, in the jungle, we would encounter malaria, dengue, enteritis, snake bite, dysentery, hookworm, yellow fever, berri berri, cholera, ringworm, sandfly fever, venereal disease, Singapore ear, Dhobies Itch and quite a number of skin diseases of which a lot was unknown to local and army doctors.

There were more but that is an indication of what we were up against in this unknown land. The most common to be encountered was malaria and venereal disease, the latter very prevalent. Beware of mosquitoes and women was our warning

but we were to find out that bitterness and frustration at being stationed in a peacetime country was to be our main enemy.

We had trained hard in Australia, with thoughts in mind of joining the other Divisions in the Middle East, it was a let down to be "dumped" here.

The army was only a stop-gap measure for us and we were to find this garrison duty did not fit in with our "get on with the job" attitude whereas the British permanent forces had adopted it as a career and so treated it as normal procedure. In view of this, they could settle down to garrison duty and "retire at their end of tour of duty."

Next — so here was Malaya.

## PIONEER LOUNGE ...

Have you been to the Club's Pioneer Lounge — the best Lounge in the Club. Pleasant Pioneer decore for you and your friends. The Lounge is directly up the front stairs. Open Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday from 4.30 pm.

## THE HORSLEY DEN ...

And if you don't wish to go upstairs we have "The Horsley Den" Cocktail Bar — at the rear entrance to the Club. Open from 6.00 pm (Friday-Saturday), 3.30 pm (Sunday).

# Netball News

Hello, everyone.

First of all I would take this opportunity to thank all of the members and visitors of the Club, who supported our raffle in December. The 1st prize of an electric barbecue was won by Mr. A. Peterson and 2nd prize of a hair dryer was won by Mr. Luddenham. Once again thank you very much for your support, the Netball girls are appreciative of your assistance.

The last registration day for the 1981 season was held on Saturday, 7th February, and I would like to wish all of the girls the best of luck for the coming season and I trust that you will all play the game in a

manner which will bring credit on yourselves and the Fairfield RSL Youth Club.

Some coaches and managers are still required and if you are interested in one of these positions please contact one of your Committee members.

One of our main problems last year was a shortage of qualified umpires, so any person interested in umpiring Netball games, be you player, mum or dad, again please contact one of your Committee members.

Bye for now.

SUE TOWLE,  
Publicity Officer.



FAIRFIELD RSL YOUTH CLUB

## **Junior Discos**

Fairfield RSL Youth Club will be holding JUNIOR DISCOS every Second Friday night from 27th February, 1981 at

The Fred Galton Hall from 7.30 pm till 10.30 pm for Youth Club Members — aged 7 years to 16 years.

**ADMISSION: \$1 per person — plus ID Card**

The Canteen operates at each Disco.

**Discos will be well supervised — NO SMOKING ALLOWED  
NO LIQUOR ALLOWED**

**FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES RING 727 7920**

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 6)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

## Malaya

So here was Malaya. It was still, hot and humid, was far different from anything the troops had been used to, even in New South Wales or Queensland. Anticipation of a day or so leave in that strange, mystic place, Singapore seething with Far Eastern activity, teeming with cosmopolitan life and exuding strange and wonderful odours, was soon banished by the announcement that all troops would be sent immediately to their bases in different parts of Malaya.

By 1600 hours on 18th February, 1941, disembarkation from the "Queen Mary" was in full swing, and each man was filled with pent-up excitement as he marched down the gangway, laden with his kit bag, pack, rifle and other equipment. About a quarter of a mile away was the railway siding and to this the troops were moved in order of their disposal.

By the time the 2/18 Battalion were allotted their carriages it was on dusk. A few people were there to see us off, among them a pretty blonde English girl, whom we engaged in conversation. During our talk she said, "I am glad you Aussies are going up country." I asked her why she said that and she replied, "Oh, I was told that you Aussies would wreck Singapore." Later we were to discover that this fifth column talk was all over the country. Just after that the train pulled out and we were unable to question her any more re the source, but we were annoyed and felt like living up to

this reputation and wreck something, but instead we decided to prove all these detrimental rumours false. This decided we settled down and made ourselves as comfortable as possible for the 200-mile trip to our barracks.

After leaving Singapore the train travelled along the narrow gauge Federated Malay States railway. We were so intrigued with this strange country that we could not sleep properly. This was helped by the uncomfortable carriages, and at the crack of dawn all heads were out the windows taking in the countryside. There were rubber plantations with the early morning "tappers" doing their rounds, women working knee-deep in Paddy (rice) fields. We saw more stretches of cleared land now and the greenness of the countryside fascinated us as we had come from an Australian summer where the great majority of Australia was sunburnt and browned off.



*British and Malay Servicemen farewell us as we move off for our initial camp in Malaya.*



We are also glad to see Merv Cottle back on deck after his heart attack.

Trevor Henderson has increased the size of his family. His wife presented him with another daughter recently.

Congratulations to both of you — this gives Ron and Nonie another grandchild to spoil.

Mac Small tells me the Committee duty roster is not being studied and adhered to.

While on this subject, several complaints have been heard criticizing the new "Chook Wheel". The Committee would welcome any alternate suggestion to this method. Submit your suggestion in writing to Mac for discussion at the next Committee Meeting.

Kev Noble loves these raffles. He won the meat raffle two weeks running and in the meantime won the staff raffle.

I noticed Bruce Dixon coaching his son Bruce Jnr. in the finer points of the game. It son carries on the fine tradition of dad, we have won a very good member.

Thursday Afternoon Bowls are falling off again although the green is playing well and good trophies are available.

Yours in Bowls.

D.F.C.



Happy honeymoon, Steve.



*Now listen to what I want . . .*

#### March

The Pennant Season is nearly over and our two sides have acquitted themselves very well. There are only one or two points difference between the first four. I will give you a run-down on the cards at a later date.

Club games are in progress and appear to be going smoothly.

Ron Adams is back with us again after his stay in hospital, and Merv Cottle is back playing Bowls as good as ever. Great to have you fellows back.

All for now.

Yours in Bowls,

D.F.C.

~~~~~  
To Barry and Sharyne Mills — congratulations on your first wedding anniversary, 22nd February, 1981.  
~~~~~

All along the way the natives were giving us the "thumbs-up" which amused all. We thought, "don't they learn the Australian ways quickly?" so we returned the thumbs-up with vigour, and the more we did it the more they did it. We were to learn later that their thumbs-up was No. 1 or very good and we were thankful they did not know our version at the time as we had to win the natives over, not insult them.

The Motor Transport was left behind, and stayed on board the "Queen Mary" for the night. The next morning they were taken to the Naval Depot about a mile away, and were billeted there in order that they might be at hand to take delivery of all the unit's military vehicles, recondition them and convoy them to the Battalion Headquarters.

Lieut. A. Crago was the O.C. of the "Road" party, and the exacting job of checking up on every vehicle was carried out by him with his "Afghans" in a most efficient manner. At this stage a tribute was paid to the Commander of the Naval Base, his Officers, Petty Officers and A.B's who so wholeheartedly took the diggers into their fine barracks and treated them as honoured guests for nearly three weeks. The wonderful swimming pool, excellent sporting grounds, comfortable messes and quarters will always remain a happy memory in the hearts of the M.T's. When they rejoined the Battalion these facilities would also be a happy memory as these were not supplied at Port Dickson.

In the meantime, the main body of the Battalion arrived at Bagan Pinang on the west coast at 0752 hours of 19th February. Major C. Assheton led the party to the barracks at Port Dickson where the troops were to be billeted. Excess baggage was left to the care of the Royal Indian A.S.C. unit. Arrangements for accommodation had been well organised by personnel of the Manchester Regiment, and the 2/18th men were soon viewing their first Malayan home with discerning eyes.

Crammed on the "Mary" with a limited amount of exercise, jammed

on a train for one night plus, approximately 20 hours without food, and then asked to march five miles in a little over an hour carrying a full pack, was a little much, but we did it nevertheless. Because of the high humidity, when we reached camp, we were not just wet with perspiration — but dripping with it. There was a rumour that Colonel Varley bet an English Officer that we could do it, if that was so he won the bet.

While we were standing waiting to be dismissed, feeling more like dogs than humans, a chap near me asked a native when winter fell. The native looked blank for a while, then replied with a broad grin, "Winter now". A feeling of dismay passed over us, this was noticed too by our grinning friend who seemed to understand our inner thoughts; the incident was a joke for some time. But the climate was no joke, always steamy and humid, even when raining — it never let up. We had no use for blankets, salt was put in our water bottles as a lot of salt used to leave the body in the perspiration which never seemed to cease oozing out.

#### Port Dickson — Our First Camp Abroad

Port Dickson, which was not developed when we were there in 1941, is a very popular sea side resort



Port Dickson — "A" Company going on guard and picket duty led by Sgt. Bob James and Cpl. George Legett. Note the fold-up shorts.

today. It is on the West Coast and faces the Straits of Malacca with its 11 miles of beaches shaded by Casuarina and Banyan trees. Port Dickson is two hour's drive from Kuala Lumpur, approximately six hours from Singapore and an hour's drive from the pretty town of Seremban with its lovely lake-gardens, and today, its magnificent new white Mosque and the quaint Negeri houses with their gable horn-shaped roofs which my wife and I had the pleasure of seeing again in 1974.

At Port Dickson we saw trees that indicated plenty of shade, trees which we were soon to recognise as rubber trees; there was also a large grove of coconut trees — to add more shelter from the sun during training periods. Then there were numbers of long, two-storey concrete buildings with tiled roofs and a few long low thatched huts. The former were divided into cubicles each accommodating four men, and containing also, showers, latrines and store rooms. The thatched huts were used as mess rooms, and were made of "attap" or fronds of the Pandanus Palms. "A" Company was allotted their quarters and for the remainder of the first day we rested. We were to find out that these "glamorous" quarters were not the general camps we were to experience later, as, true to Army procedure they became worse by degrees.

Next morning, a Battalion parade was held on the sports ground, which was part of the barrack's attributes. The C.O., Lt. Col. Varley addressed the troops and made reference to the conduct that would be expected of the Australian troops in this country. He referred particularly to the smart drill of the Malay Regiments, and asked us, in our own work, to make every effort to uphold the traditions of the A.I.F.

There was no question about it, the Malays were first class parade ground soldiers. We would often watch them at their drill, each one springing to attention and marching, with their arm flung high, as if the King himself was reviewing the parade. But, to us there was a difference, they were professional

soldiers and parade ground soldiering was more in their keeping; we were war time soldiers.

The barracks were five miles from the township of Port Dickson and 25 miles from Seremban, our closest-largest town in the State of Negri Sembilan (means nine states) The artillery (2/10th. Field Regiment from Queensland), the A.S.C. (supply column), and the 2/10th. Australian General Hospital, were quartered at Malacca. The Casualty Clearing Station was at Kajang and the 8th Division Signals was at Kuala Lumpur. The 2/19th Battalion was stationed at Seremban and the 2/20th Battalion was half a mile from the 2/18th, at the Haig Lines.

We soon settled down and began route marches to acclimatize ourselves. On our few stays in camp there was a rest period or a siesta as it was called, between 2.00 pm and 4.00 pm as that was classed as the "heat of the day". However, we were on the move most times so saw few siestas.

There was an abundance of bananas and pineapples to be obtained at the canteen, but very few in our mess huts. A large quantity of these fruit were consumed and washed down with Anchor and Tiger beer also bought at the canteen. I can only recall two free bottles of beer in my service and one of these was donated by a rich Chinese, but that story will be told later.

In this rest period we were at first surprised to see natives asleep on footpaths, in doorways or any other flat surface. But the thing that puzzled us most was the absence of women in the villages we passed through, there were plenty of men and children, but no women. Looking up at the balconies, I often saw a half-open door and caught a glimpse of someone peering out. We thought surely that they have seen an Australian before, then, we remembered what the English girl had told us the day we landed and this, plus what the Malays told us of a rumour, spread by white people and Fifth Column, which was always prevalent in Malaya, that the Australians would snatch the native

women in the streets, carry them into the jungle and molest them. An Australian could clear a village by simply walking down the street. Even women collecting latex on the rubber plantations would drop their buckets and run if an Australian approached them.

This was highly amusing for a while, then it became depressing to see fear in these people and the women fleeing before us. We were in Port Dickson a short time and, by just being ourselves, proved these rumours false and I say, without fear of contradiction, that when the natives got to know us, we became the most popular troops in Malaya.

The population of Malaya in 1941 consisted of approximately 21,000 English, 4,700 Scots, 1500 Irish, 1,000 Australians, 330 New Zealanders and 100 Canadians. Other nationalities such as Dutch, Germans, French, Belgians, Spanish, Jews, Arabs and more, made up the miscellaneous population totalling about 19,700 people.

The entire population of Singapore and Malaya in 1941, 5,229,246 were classified as follows:

Chinese 2,220,244; Indians 743,553; Aborigines 30,000; Japanese 7,951; Malaysians 2,210,868; British 28,630; Eurasians 18,300; Miscellaneous 19,700.

As one can see by these figures a large Chinese Army could have been formed to fight the common enemy but the British were reluctant to arm them. If the Chinese were formed into a large well-armed force, it was possible they would take over Malaya from within if the expected invasion by Japan did not eventuate.

It took years to prove the wisdom of this decision but this was realised when members of the Security Forces, during the Emergency, staged a 12-year struggle against militant Communism which ended in 1960. Many troops assisted in the Emergency, including Australians.

Originally Malaya was approximately 75% jungle but a large area of the jungle country was claimed and

cleared for plantations (rubber), and rice fields or paddy fields as the locals call them. The narrowest part of Malaya near the Thailand border, is 100 miles wide and the widest part about 200 miles across. From the Thailand border to the most southerly tip of Malaya measures some 450 miles and in that 450 miles of jungle roam many different types of animals; tigers, bison, tapairs, elephants and deer, plus an abundance of snakes. One notices the absence of lions in Malaya, these animals are mostly found in Africa and adjacent lands. The elephants, at times, gave trouble, there being a stampede in Perak with the loss of lives just before we landed in Malaya in 1941. For those who saw the film "Bring 'Em Back Alive" and remember its famous scenes, it is of interest to note that, Frank Buck made it in the jungles of Johore.

In 1876, Henry Wickham, an English traveller, brought 70,000 seeds of the rubber tree to England from Brazil and germinated them in the Kew gardens. The seedlings were then transplanted in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and later Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies. These areas produce over 2,000,000 ton a year and since World War II, production has increased in Latin America and Africa.

Rubber trees in Malaya are plentiful having first been brought into the country in 1880, they supplied, at the time of our visit in 1941, about 50% of the world's supply. The rubber trees are planted in rows approximately 15 feet apart.

These trees do not go on yielding latex indefinitely. From time to time, trees are brought from the nursery and replanted, and, in about seven years, this tree begins its work of giving latex when it is "tapped". The lives of the trees vary, sometimes to 15 years old — others may see their 25th birthday. One tree produces 3 to 5 lb. of latex annually. The bark is pared away with a paring knife to embrace half the circumference of the tree (all the way round would ring bark the tree and kill it) in a downward angle in the early morning. The white latex

drips into a "trough" at the end of pared section which allows it to drip into a "cup" attached to the tree and the latex is gathered, in buckets, in the forenoon.

The latex is taken to the factory, it is then sieved for processing, placed in a solution in frames and co-agulated to a content of 70% rubber, then put through a roller and rolled into sheets, then cut to about the size of a standard door mat. These sheets are placed on a drying rack for a time, then wheeled into a smoke house and left there for ten days. Here the sheets are freed of any final moisture. This is necessary otherwise the sheets would sweat and become mouldy. When the sheets enter the smoke house they are white and when they come out they have changed colour to a dark, smoky colour. The finished sheets are then pressed into bales in a press similar to a wool press, and are ready for export to various countries where the sheets can be converted back to ordinary consistency by adding water.

The rather interesting people of Malaya were very colourful when dressed in their national dress. In 1941 this consisted of long white trousers, white shirt with a coloured sarong around the waist, a little round hat with a tang of Turkey about it, and worn with an air of bravado by some. We witnessed a March on Empire Day and believe me, at that time, it was a sight one does not forget. The Malays, years ago, were a warlike people, some were pirates giving no quarter and asking none, but this has changed as the majority of them would now side step a fight, and they did not like hard work. From lovers of war they turned to lovers of sport and excel in it. They are courteous and well-mannered and many hold Government positions.

At the time the Chinese, speaking specifically, did not dress as well as the Malays, and could be found in nearly every industry. The higher class Chinese, however, dressed well, and among that class I saw some real Eastern beauties. One of the greatest contrasts here was noticed

when one strolled past the rich Chinese dwellings then proceeded to Chinatown where there was filth and poverty. Some appeared to live "on the smell of an oily rag".

Later, when stationed at Mersing, I went for a ride on one of our transports taking waste from our mess huts to the piggeries. The drums were emptied off the back of the truck and Chinese, young and old, male and female, walked among the scraps in barefeet collecting bits of discarded meat, bread soaked in tea and soup, and laying them on a bag to dry for future consumption. Some of the children could not stay their hunger until we had gone, but stood in this terrible filth eating this pig food in a ravenous manner. These were deprived children to say the least.

Those Chinese in a better financial position had a variety of food, their tables were usually laden with 10 to 15 different bowls of food. Some of the dishes were rice, chicken, shark fins, various dishes of hot curry, sweet and sour pork, fish, prawns, sausages and many more items of food. Bread and butter or the usual cup of tea was not served but in place of tea there was iced water and various beverages.

The Eurasians, a mixture of white and various native races were, in 1941, an outcast race rejected by the whites and spurned by the native population. The girls were neat and pretty with fine features and olive complexion, their black wavy hair falling down to their shoulders. The men were well dressed and many worked in Government positions. Eurasians furnished their homes European style and their dress was European but they adhered to their native food. They spoke excellent English, were fond of sport and many joined the Malay Volunteer Corps and held Command positions and attended various Christian Churches.

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**THE CLUB CAR PARKS ARE  
NOW OPEN, MONDAY TO  
FRIDAY, FROM 10 am**

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*A group of Sakais in the Pahang Jungle.*

In 1941 a strange primitive tribe of Malays, called the Sakais, lived in small settlements in the Pahang jungle. They were timid but wise to every aspect of jungle life. They moved through the jungle with the ease and swiftness of the wild animals along a maze of unmapped tracks known only to themselves.

They lopped the tops of bamboo clumps off at various heights in different areas and the wind "whistled" as it passed over the openings, the staggered heights giving off a different whistling sound. The location of each note was known to the wandering tribesmen so they knew exactly where they were, a "musical landmark".

The Sakais hunted with the deadly silent blowpipe and dart and could hit a target at an unbelievable distance. The blowpipe was made of hollow bamboo measuring up to 10 feet long and the dart was made of hardwood about 9 inches long with a cone-shaped hush at the "blowing end". The dart was placed in the blowpipe with a piece of moss jammed behind it to stop the wind from escaping; the operator filled his lungs and cheeks full of wind and gave a sharp puff to propel the dart on its way.

They were experts at living off the land knowing which plants could be eaten, which plants contained drinking water and the habits of the animals and general jungle know how. Selected groups of A.I.F. were instructed by the Sakais in all these matters plus the making of rafts from bamboo using vines as binding ropes. They were shown how to make eating utensils out of bamboo and how to make off-the-ground bamboo beds so snakes could pass under and at the same time keep the body off the perpetually wet ground.

Knowledge gained from the Sakais, by our "Guerilla" forces, was successfully employed behind the Japanese lines later in which our men outmatched the Japanese in bushcraft. The Sakais also showed the A.I.F. how to handle elephants but the opportunity to use them did not arise in the Malayan Campaign.

The Tamils, natives of India, were the coolies and as such did not dress as well as other natives in Malaya at the time. Quite a number of men wore sarongs only, the women wearing the same but with a portion thrown over their shoulders to cover their breasts.

When we first arrived in Malaya, we were puzzled by the red splashes on the footpaths and even in low class cafes, but soon saw the reason why. The men had the nasty habit of unceasingly chewing the red betelnut and spitting the red coloured fluid wherever it suited them. This was not evident in 1974 and, no doubt, was part of the big post war "clean up".

The Tamil women also chewed betelnut and were fond of decking their thin bodies with trinkets of all sorts, including necklaces and earrings. I saw one woman, evidently a little above her sisters in class, with ornaments about her head, hands and feet and even her toes. These women, with all their regalia, do their share of work, many being employed in the rubber industry.

Necessity forces white people to live well as it does in all tropical countries. European women did little work for, in 1941, cheap labour enabled a person to employ a chauffeur, cook, nurse and house maid for approximately £8-0-0 sterling a month — remarkable I hear you say. Managers of rubber plantations were employed under contract. An example, a manager under a five-year contract was entitled to five months' leave to whichever country he desired at the end of five years.

Then subsequent contracts would be shortened to three years at a salary of \$800.00 (Straits currency) per month plus a rent-free bungalow and usually he would receive a 10% bonus. Thus his actual income was approximately £1,300 (Sterling) annually. His liability for tax was £78-0-0 (Sterling), about 6 per cent of his earnings.

This may not sound much on present day standards but my pre-war wage was ten shillings a week at 14. Then worked for up to two pounds seventeen just before the war (five dollars seventy). Permanent residents did not carry much money with them but rather used a charge account. These days it is a way of life and the accepted procedure everywhere.

At the age of nine, European children, for those who could afford it, were generally sent to boarding schools in England, Australia or New Zealand in the main because of the unhealthy climate. A white child, reared in the tropics, was often inclined to become listless and resistance may break down as the tropics does sap the energy from one's body.

**Next — We begin training for jungle warfare.**

## ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE

**SATURDAY MORNING, 4.30 am  
25th APRIL, 1981**

**FALL IN AT MEMORIAL CLUB DALE STREET — 4.15 a.m.**

**FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANYONE WHO WISHES  
TO LAY A WREATH AT THE DAWN SERVICE**

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 7)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

## **We begin Training for Jungle Warfare**

After a few days of route marches the Colonel decided we were "acclimatized" enough now and on the 22nd February, 1941, four days after our arrival in Malaya, active training was commenced and the troops had their first real taste of the jungle. As time wore on this sort of thing became ordinary routine, and hacking a pathway through the dense jungle with a parang (long heavy bladed knife) was the natural thing to do when manoeuvres demanded a short cut.

The jungle was all we had been led to expect. Very straight, tall trees, not unlike in some ways our mountain ash, shorter and more widely spreading trees with large broad leaves, here and there a myriad rooted banyan, innumerable vines hanging like ropes from the top most branches — and below all, thick tough creepers and ferns of all types; this was part of our happy training ground.

For the first few weeks we were very highly amused at the antics of the monkeys, which thickly inhabited the jungle. They were surprisingly tame, and many of them were caught and taken back to the barracks as pets. After some time, however, the craze wore off, and the diminutive simians were released to their natural environment.

On 26th February, 1941, the G.O.C. British Forces, Major General Bond, visited the camp and a guard of honour, with Capt. Gibson as Guard Commander, was provided. After the inspection, the G.O.C. compli-

mented the guard on its smartness and then visited the troops in the training area.

Two days later, Lt. Col. Varley called on His Highness, Yang di Pertuan Besar, the native ruler of the State of Negri Sembilan, in the precincts of which the battalion was stationed.

The jungle was so large and silent that it made us curious, it was a new challenge and we were keen to conquer it. There was no land mark to follow in the jungle. We had to rely on compasses. At times we would face the fact of being lost temporarily for it was necessary to detour or skirt around such obstacles as thick unpenetrable jungle, swamps and fallen trees but our compasses helped us to pick up our bearings again on the other side of these obstructions.

There were two types of jungle in Malaya, Primary and Secondary. Primary or "utan" is untouched and varies in thickness from tall large trees, with thick undergrowth (in central areas) to thick scrub with occasional tall trees.

Secondary (Belucha also Lalang) is usually jungle that has been cut out and has started to grow again. This proves to be the worst type to go through, as large creepers and dense bracken cover the remains of fallen trees, forming not an impossible but a difficult obstacle.

Getting to know the jungle was no easy matter, but as most of us were bushmen (it was a little taller and thicker than the bush we were used



### Ballroom

Under 10 Years Class Taught: 3rd: Jeffrey Roffe and Tracey Cempa.

Under 10 Years Advanced Class Taught: 1st: Sharon and Marthese Sammut.

Under 14 Years Boy and Over 14 Years Girl: Reaching the finals were Jeffrey Roffe and partner, Christine De Fraine and partner and Libby Cocchietto and partner.

Over 14 Years All Girls: 3rd: Debbie and Susan Morris. Sue Clifford and Libby Cocchietto reached the finals.

Over 14 Years Advanced Class Taught: Kyla-Anne Hardiman and Brian Kelly.

Under 16 Years Class Taught: 2nd: Steve Slavik and Christine De Fraine. 3rd: Deidre Shaw and John Sammut.

Under 14 Years Progressive Teams: 3rd: Fairfield Boys and Girls.

Under 18 Years Grade 'A': 3rd: Susan and Debbie Morris.

Over 14 Years Disco: 2nd: Linda Shaw.

Something I almost forgot. The Anzac March was a great success with a good attendance from the Dancing section. The Ceremony at Memorial was a very moving Service, with the laying of the wreaths. Our Club donates a book to an underprivileged school and this was put on the Memorial by Jeffrey Roffe and Pauline Cempa, and their parents should have been very proud of them on doing such a good job.

That's all except to say that I hope all the girls and boys have a happy May holidays.

Your Publicity Officer,

CHERIE MORRIS.

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## Junior Cricket Report

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The Presentation for Junior Cricket will be held at 7.30 pm on 29th May in the Bini Shell at Fairvale High School. All those wishing to attend will be most welcome.

During the recess one of our old players and now a Manager of our U15 team, David Harding, had a serious injury while playing that wild man's sport — Rugby. David suffered a dislocated hip and spent three weeks in the Nepean District Hospital where, he tells me, the treatment that he received from the nursing staff was fantastic.

I am pleased to say David is back on the mend once more and has hung up the boots for all time.

In the last report I placed in the Field thanking people for their help during the season I left out one very important member. This young lady this season became the scorer for our U13 team and although new to

the position, did a very fine job. Her name is Natalie Callender. Her grandmother Mrs. Clark, is one of the Junior Cricket Club's supporters, and we are proud to have her in our midst.

On a light note to finish off — the word's around we may soon have another cricketer in our midst, Rosemary and Jack's young son. They tell me the way he is eating and growing it will not be long before he's up and about on the cricket field.

Yours in Sport.

A. WARD.

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**Access to the Barber Shop and Ladies Hairdressing Salon can only be made through the Back Foyer.**

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to), it did not concern us to a great extent. When we had to cut our way through the jungle with a "parang", ten minutes cutting was enough for one man so we took it in turns. At other times we would have to wade through stinking swamps where the water was black and slimy, and the sun never penetrated the thick undergrowth, vines and trees.

These swamps were a nightmare, one minute slipping on a slimy log and the next plunging into a deep hole and coming up covered with slush from head to foot and smelling as though we were part of the rotten decay. Then our equipment would become caught up in creepers and vines, or someone, not thinking, would let a palm-like tree limb swing back, its long spikes digging into our face, arms and chest, at times drawing blood. Once I was sure the chap in front of me did this thoughtless act on purpose but I did not say a word.

My opportunity came next day when I got ahead of him and came across a hornet's nest on a limb of a tree and, pulling it well back, I let it fly which sure made him duck for cover. Whether this act was unchristian or not, it served the purpose as he was more careful after that and peace reigned. Then there were leeches to annoy us by their unwelcome habit of attaching themselves to any part of the exposed body. The only way to deal with them was to place the hot tip of a cigarette on them and then they would fall off.

Then there were centipedes, small scorpions and large ones up to 5" long. These scorpions were not deadly, but could cause much pain. There were also numerous snakes.

On manoeuvres we saw many different types of countryside. We had heard about rubber trees — now we were seeing them with a vengeance, and so many that everything we saw looked like a rubber tree. When the young trees were brought from the nursery and planted in their rows, gambier was planted among them. This was a tangled vine and, eventually the product was used in the leather industry. When the rubber trees mature, the

vines are cut out, for, where it was a protection for the young trees, it now becomes a hindrance.



*Corporal Headly Crapp, Pte. Harry Cutmore and Pte. Sid Sutton on manoeuvres.*

Manoeuvring through the gambier was very strenuous work indeed. Because of its tangled nature, we had to lift our feet high which was O.K. for a while, but when one became tired, legs started to ache and drag. We tripped over quite a lot. Some men received minor injuries through the tangled gambier, especially those carrying brens and the cumbersome "Bouys" anti-tank rifle.

Once while on manoeuvres we received word that "enemy" tanks were coming up the road. I had the anti-tank rifle and was running to take a position when I tripped in those cursed vines and went head first into the ditch where I intended to take up my position. Fortunately my rifle was pointed in the right direction, but my arm was pinned under me. I was trying to untangle myself when I heard a voice behind me say, "A good position, that tank is wiped out." It was Colonel Varley and a British officer who were acting as "umpires". Naturally I did not mention my mishap.

At times we would leave the jungle and the rubber trees and come out onto the paddi (rice fields). These fields were usually under water and we would sink deep into the mud when it became necessary to cross them, but this did not often happen for the fields were open and as the going was slow, we made sitting targets. These fields were tilled in a primitive manner. A wooden plough and water buffaloes were used in place of modern



*Preparing a paddy field.*

equipment. It was absolutely impossible to keep ones clothes clean or dry in this country. Walking distances could be doubled, by that I mean 10 miles in Malaya was the equivalent to 20 miles in Australia.

Water was plentiful in the jungle, although water that was crystal clear was not necessarily drinking water. A special apparatus was provided to test the water from which one could suffer dysentery and other strange complaints. Even though two wells could be 15 feet apart, the water in one could be fit for drinking while the second one may not be. Even water at the camp had to be treated before use as drinking water.

We remember the "mad 500" (yards) when we had to hurdle obstacles, bayonet dummies, fire from the hip on the run and throw ourselves down in the lying load rapid fire position. One says, "so what?" but the catch was we had to wear respirators and from time to time we had to put our fingers under the chin fitting to let the water (sweat) pour out plus the fact that the lenses used to fog up with the body steam and so obscured our vision. Boy it was hot work. We were thankful when we were allowed to discard our respirators.

There was a husband and wife team, employed by the American Life Magazine, doing an article on the AIF in Malaya and, as we had

been in the jungle for some time and had not seen a white woman close up in that time, she appeared beautiful. Maybe she was.

Our part in this propaganda exercise was to defend a bridge, so we were concealed in the surrounding jungle. About this time the woman walked in front of our positions and some "unknown" called charge and we leapt forward with fixed bayonets and yelling and coo-eeing, well you have never seen a woman run so fast towards her husband. As much as the Sergeant tried he never did find out who called charge.

But down to serious business, we could sense the urgency in the air so, without question settled down to intensive jungle training and as time went by this system became a strict routine.

We were pushed to the hilt by our General through Colonel Varley who was not concerned how popular he was. The main aim was an efficient jungle trained fighting force of which the Colonel said: "One day it may save your life." We wouldn't be normal if we didn't grumble but we knew our Colonel to be a soldier of the highest quality who had a job to do.

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**THE CLUB CAR PARKS ARE  
NOW OPEN, MONDAY TO  
FRIDAY, FROM 10 am**

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I really cannot understand how we managed to stand up to the first month in Malaya as the training was arduous and the food atrocious. The AIF in Malaya was the first *large body* of Australian troops to go to a tropical land and was low on the priority list as far as food, clothes and equipment was concerned.

How many of us remember the tinned butter on issue? One period when opened it was a sickly yellow, was rank, had a sickly odour and turned our stomachs; the butter was inedible so we relied on bread, butter and jam, when we could get butter. The Indian cereal was, in my opinion, the closest thing I have seen to "bulls wool" which is used to pack crockery. It was coarse, hard to chew and became wedged in the spaces in our teeth. We were served with what was called spinach, well I called it stinging nettle, with a considerable quantity of sand instead of salt, it was so gritty.

Then there was the meat, did I say meat? It looked like a dog had been sick on the plate and the sight of it made me feel ill even though I had lived on rough but wholesome food in the bush pre-war. No wonder we fell back on bread and jam.

The C.Q.M. stood by the mess door with a bottle of sauce and "rationed" a dob of the contents on each man's plate as he passed when the occasion for its use arose. If the sauce did not flow we missed out as the line had to keep on moving. The cookhouse personnel could not be blamed as they could only work with the food allowed to them.

Rumblings were slowly building up in the camp but we were tolerant with our immediate Commanding Officers to a degree as we knew they could do little to rectify the situation. We were "guinea pigs" in a strange environment. We were totally unprepared for such conditions.

One day, when Lieut. McLaughlin (later Captain) entered the mess as officer of the day, he asked us were there any complaints and he received the full fury of the men. When he said the food was OK he

was invited to sit down and join us in a meal of this "food", which he did. There were British troops in our mess at the time and they were amazed that troops could talk to an officer like that and that the officer would accept the invitation and eat with the men but that was the type of officers we had, men right down to their woollen socks. I might add that this was not our normal behaviour but, at the time, the situation was at a flash point and this Lieut. McLaughlin realised in his wisdom and so overlooked the incident.

After a month the food improved and the resentment towards the situation died a natural death.

When going on manoeuvres we went out in what we stood up in, and that was a shirt, a pair of tropical shorts. These were folded up and attached by buttons to make a shorts appearance by day. At night the shorts were unbuttoned, let down and tucked into the long socks as a protection against the malaria mosquito, giving a knickabocker appearance, but a little more baggy.

We wore half putties around the lower part of our socks and covering the top of our boots. On our back we carried a pack if marching or a havasack if in battle dress. In the havasack we carried a groundsheet, our mess equipment, a towel and shaving gear. Most happened to "forget" the shaving gear.

On top of our havasack we carried a gas cape. We were also issued with a jar of anti-malarial cream (by the way what was quinine) which stung my skin. I used to apply the cream at the compulsory parade then wipe it off at the first given opportunity. A green net was draped over our steel helmets and hung down to the shoulders, as a further guard against malaria. As these nets were dark green they obscured our vision, needless to say we disposed of them as soon as possible. We were also issued with a pair of elbow length material gloves. These were also cumbersome and not popular. Lack of quinine led to some cases of malaria despite all these precautions, although the A.I.F. had the lowest casualty rate, as far as malaria was concerned, of any body of troops stationed in Malaya.

Our shorts were not presentable, in my opinion, for leave and I preferred to wear our long trousers issue but they were far from being ideal as they were not as cool as shorts and we still had to wear our sweat stained hats, some with holes in them.

When we bivouaced in the evenings we would always form a perimeter defence with all trucks inside and the men's "beds" laid out so if attacked at night, we would be guarded on all sides. There were never any relaxed periods; our training was always carried out on actual war lines.

the nets but in peace time we were ordered to do so to avoid malaria. I cannot remember one time that I was cold. Even wearing the waterproof cape in rain our clothes and bodies were soaked with perspiration from the steamy heat.

The people now were quite friendly and those in more affluent circumstances, some wealthy Chinese and comfortably situated Tamils and Malays, did a great deal to entertain our troops in their homes. For the lucky few, the rubber planters and other Europeans played their part in making the spare time of the troops enjoyable. When I say few it must be remembered the troops, by far, outnumbered the white population so these avenues were limited.

A very pleasant day was spent by the C.O. and twenty officers, who were invited by Yang di Pertuan Besar to visit his Palace.

On 12th March, 1941, came the soldier's dream, a large surface mail arrived from Australia, and much excitement was caused by the distribution of thousands of letters and home comfort parcels among the troops.

**TO EX-SERVICE MEMBERS OF CITY OF FAIRFIELD RSL  
MEMORIAL AND EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB LIMITED**

Limited copies of "Reveille" will be available, from time to time, at the Records Office.



Air Chief Marshal Robert Brooke-Popham, Commander-in-Chief Far East, visited the Battalion and watched Companies in their training. He stated he was most impressed by the standard and efficiency attained.



*Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham.*

We commenced a combined exercise in March which was carried out in the Mersing-Kluang area embracing British, Indian and Australian troops. Our Brigade, the 22nd (2/18th, 2/19th and 2/20th Bns. plus support troops) took up a position near Kluang. The ultimate battle station for the A.I.F. was to be Mersing as the Malayan Command considered this the most likely invasion point should Japan enter the war, with its ideal landing beach. Much to our sorrow we now know that the Japanese chose to ignore this strongly defended area, which they were well aware of, and advance down the Malayan peninsula and land at different parts of the 450 miles of coastline in such a manner that the A.I.F. at Mersing would be forced to withdraw or be cut off and disposed of at will.

The progress of this exercise was, no doubt, relayed "ball by ball" back to Japan by their very efficient intelligence system which existed in Malaya prior to and after the declaration of war.

Normal heavy rain drenched us day and night as we lay on our ground sheets wet to the bone. When on sentry duty we stood under the dripping trees, which broke some of the volume of the rain, and we carried our rifles, muzzles towards the ground so water would not run down the barrel.

We realised that we must learn to fight the country before we could fight the enemy. We found we were carrying too much equipment for fast movement which is essential in jungle warfare.

Even at this early stage we found the normal long range weapons were valueless, and that the short-range tommy-gun and the bayonet were the ideal weapons. We all had a bayonet but there was only one Thompson machine gun to each platoon and even this was controlled by the platoon sergeant.

Our text books applied to open country warfare but one glance showed these books were useless in this thick jungle so, unlike the British, the A.I.F. discarded them as it was a whole new "ball game", we had to start from scratch. Heavy equipment bogged down to the axle once it left the sealed roads.

We were to find out later that the Japanese had been planning the invasion of Malaya for years and had studied and trained in the art of jungle warfare so were suitably clothed and equipped for this theatre down to the last button. When war broke out we were still not equipped for the conditions although the British had been in the tropics for numerous years.

In the opinion of General Bennett and my own humble opinion we had mastered the arts of jungle warfare by the declaration of war but we lacked the essential armaments and were to be denied the chance to put this hard-earned experience into practice by the Malayan Command till it was too late and the situation hopeless.

We found the jungle was a maze of tracks, some running for miles and the jungle was silent except for monkeys chattering and screeching as they swung from tree to tree.

Squirrels ran up and down trees as though their life depended on it which, according to the law of the jungle, would be so. There were locusts and beautiful strange birds which squawked in the tree tops. They did not seem to be disturbed by the "intruders". There were magnificently-coloured butterflies, some of which grew to a very large size.

What made the atmosphere all the more humid was the lack of a breeze among the tall cedar trees which soared high over us as straight as a gun barrel. Now and then we would come across timber cutters in this thick jungle with their water buffaloes hauling cut logs to a cleared area for transport to the mills.

We were pleased when this exercise was over and we returned to Port Dickson to have our first decent wash for days. On short exercises we travelled by foot but seeing that a great distance was involved we returned to camp the Royal way, by motor transport.

According to all officers this State-wide manoeuvre was a success. The A.I.F. moved from place to place rapidly by motor transport so giving the impression that there were twice as many A.I.F. troops in the country. I do believe there was a hint of propaganda in this exercise.

The first range practice in Malaya commenced on 28th March, 1941, and all Companies in order, proceeded six miles along the coast to a very pretty bay in which the range was situated. Here we were allowed to relax a little between shoots. We went swimming and had a night on the beach. It was a welcome interlude combined with the more serious

matter of marksmanship practices. Under the rigid training and tropical conditions this was one of the ways in which Colonel Varley tried to make the existence of the Battalion as congenial as possible.

Major A. Davis, Captain C. B. O'Brian, and Captain John Edgely left on 30th March to take up posts with the British Loyal Regiment and Captain Andrews and other British officers of that unit joined the 2/18th Bn. This temporary exchange was made in order that something might be learnt of the operations of neighbouring units.

One day, while on a route march, we were having our ten-minute-in-the-hour spell when our Company C.O., Capt. Tom Johnstone, called me over to where he and Capt. Andrews were resting. Capt. Johnstone, who hailed from Armidale, had been telling Capt. Andrews how we marked lambs in Australia and he wouldn't believe it, so Capt. Johnstone asked me to confirm the method, which I did. I told Capt. Andrews the lamb was placed on the stockyard rail, his tail was cut off and he was marked with a sharp penknife, then some men pulled out the testicles with their teeth as they held the lamb in one hand and the knife in the other.

These days methods are not so crude. I added a little to make him more squeamish when I told him that, if their mouth became too full they swallowed some and, although I had never actually seen it, some old timers used to fry them and eat them like brains. Capt. Johnstone was having a ball by just watching the sickly expression on Capt. Andrews' face.

Next — Port Dickson continued.

## Members please note —

THE RECITING OF THE "ODE" WILL BE AT 8.00 pm

ON THE SCREENING OF FILMS, TUESDAY AND SUNDAY  
AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN A PRODUCTION  
SHOW IS BEING STAGED.

R. T. THOMPSON, M.B.E., Sec./Manager.

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 8)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

---

## Port Dickson

As I mentioned before, Colonel Varley was a hard taskmaster demanding arduous jungle training, so we thought if we could not beat him we would join him, so we named one of our route march/manoeuvre areas "Varley's Loop or Varley's Race Course", much to the amusement of the Colonel.

British officers, on an exchange basis, were amazed at the endurance tests as carried out in our training programme and that we still retained our sense of humour. They said in comparison with the British troops training syllabus, our training was more active and we appeared tireless. When they became tired and could not stand the pace, when on manoeuvres, they rode in the Company transport, which was quite often. I am positive they were pleased when the time came to return to their unit so they could settle down to their more "relaxed" way of life. Likewise Sergeant James was pleased to see us 'rabble' after he had spent a spell with the Loyal Regiment where the privates would not do anything without a direct order — there being no initiative as was found in the AIF.

The British officers were intrigued at our training such as attack, ambush guerilla tactics, destroying tanks and clearing road blocks. These tactics were used, with great success when the AIF first contacted the Japanese so even at this early stage our training was up to date for this kind of warfare.

Despite this solid training and the ever present strict discipline there was plenty of spirit among the men. There was no trouble getting "spud barbers" as there was always someone on punishment detail including yours truly. We deserved all we got as above all an army is run on discipline, this we were always aware of. Incidentally we named our Platoon Sergeant "Tater" James.

The first Battalion concert in Malaya was held on 7th April. A large stage was erected and the curtains and stage settings, which had been presented to the unit in Australia, were most effective. The construction of the stage was carried out by Tamil labourers, under the direction of the Stage Manager. The normal yabbering of the Tamils in which everyone appeared to be giving orders seemed to be a case of one part work and three parts talk.

As the natives could not understand English and the Stage Manager's Tamil was confined to a vocabulary of three words, the S.M. was on the verge of nervous prostration when the stage was finally completed, five minutes before the curtain was due to rise. As a result of a lot of effort and dedication the "artists" put on a top show which was appreciated by the troops.

## I visit Malacca

Early in April I was granted weekend leave to visit Malacca, which was large and different from other Malayan cities. At one time



## CLUB BY-LAWS RELATING TO POKER MACHINE PLAYERS

1. Only coins of legal tender are to be used to play poker machines, i.e. Australian 5c, 10c, 20c coins.
2. Only one coin at a time to be placed in a machine, unless otherwise stated on machine. The handle is to be pulled straight through in one forward motion without undue force or jerking.
3. Players are to wait for cycle of machine to be completed before inserting another coin.
4. If poker machine is able to be operated without inserting a coin it is the player's responsibility to report the malfunction.
5. If a poker machine overpays or pays on a non-winning combination it is the player's responsibility to report the malfunction.
6. Legal proceedings may be instituted against any person who is observed using any foreign object on, in or near any poker machine which is used to intend the machine to malfunction.
7. Intentional tilting, rocking or in any way damaging any poker machine in this Club is strictly prohibited.
8. Failure to report any malfunction of a poker machine in this Club may result in legal proceedings being instituted against the player/s.
9. No jackpots will be paid to any person who has inserted a second coin or pulled a jackpot off.
10. No jackpot or winning combination will be paid to a player after closing time has been announced.
11. Any member violating these poker machine rules may be liable to suspension or legal action.
12. Any visitor violating these poker machine rules may be asked to leave the Club and he and the member who signed in the visitor may be liable to legal action.
13. Any jackpot of \$200.00 may at the discretion of the Duty Manager be paid by cash. All super jackpots will be paid by cheque to the winner on personal appointment within 24 hours or during office hours.
14. The Club reserves the right for poker machine staff to "PULL OFF" every jackpot, short pay or machine refill.
15. Any visitor playing poker machine may be asked to prove his/her identity to Club staff.
16. This Club reserves the right to refuse payment to ANY person, member or visitor, who is not abiding by any of the abovementioned rules.
17. The Club also reserves the right to refuse any person, member or visitor, the right to play poker machines in this Club.
18. It shall be the responsibility of members to ensure that their guests abide by these rules.

SECRETARY/MANAGER.

there had been a Portuguese settlement a short distance away and the ruins of an old fort were in evidence.

An historical city, Malacca has been aptly described as the "City of Dreams" and above all places in Malaya it boasted a history that runs unbroken to the 14th century. First founded as a Kingdom by a Malay nobleman, Malacca became, for a time, the greatest city in South East Asia. Legend says that "a cat took a whole year to cover all the roof tiles". A famous market, it exported gold, ivory, tin, spices and silks.

In 1511, Malacca fell to the Portuguese under Alfonso d'Albuquerque. Over a period of 130 years Portugal made it into one of the mightiest fortresses in the Orient, ringing it with walls and raising Palaces and Churches.

The Dutch came in 1641 and stormed it after a fierce and bitter siege. They held Malacca for a century and a half, adding their own style of architecture with such buildings as Christ Church, the Stadthuys and the sturdy houses of the merchants in Heeren Street. In 1824 the Dutch exchanged Malacca for the British settlement of Bencoolen in Sumatra.

All round Malacca there is the story of the centuries as, apart from the Dutch and Portuguese occupations, there is Malaya's oldest Mosque and the first Temple built on the peninsula by the Chinese — the pioneer seafarers and merchants who came to trade and stayed to become a distinctive part of a community of many races.

Malacca's quaint charm, her narrow streets, picturesque buildings, mixed population and the marks of its history under five flags provide a store of memories of one's visit to that city. Malacca was the original Capital of the ancient Malay kingdom. In a time, before Columbus discovered America, a Ming Emperor had set up China's first trade arrangements with Malacca. After that visit, trade grew and eventually Chinese settled in Malacca and spread throughout Malaya.

The oldest Temple in present day Malaysia is the Cheng Hoon Teng whose ceremonial mast rises high over the rooves of century-old houses in narrow Temple Street. Behind Poh San Teng Temple there is a large hill called Bukit China (Chinese Hill); some of the oldest relics are found on the hill which, together with Bukit Gedong and Bukit Tempurong, forms one of the largest burial grounds outside China, more than 160 acres. Still intact and in good condition are the graves of many early Chinese notables.

Remains of St. Paul's Church, one of the more famous churches left by the Portuguese, still stands on Presidency Hill. First built as a Chapel in 1521, and dedicated to Our Lady of Grace, it was later used by Francis Xavier during his visit to Malacca. The Saint was buried there before his remains were removed to Goa in 1554. Goa is that little sliver of land down the coast from Bombay and belonged to Portugal till 1961. Renamed several times, the church was finally named St. Pauls when Malacca fell to the Dutch and was used by them until 1753 when they moved into a new church and made St. Pauls a burial ground for notables.

As mentioned before, the Dutch left their architectural mark in the Christ Church built in 1753, which now stands in excellent repair. On the centre of the island marble altar is a brilliant painting of "The Last Supper" and draped from the altar and pulpit is a heavy brocade cloth. Old tombstones are laid in the floor and a fine collection of antique silver vessels bearing the Dutch Coat-of-Arms are on display. Today Christ Church is an Anglican Church.

Adding to still another architectural face to Malacca is the 150-year-old Tranquerah Mosque of typical Sumatran design which also provides a link to British rule in the area. In the Mosque is the tomb of the Sultan of Johore who signed the cession of the Island of Singapore to Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819.

Malacca museum is housed in a 200 year Dutch building and, through its exhibits, one can trace the State's

history from the ancient Malay Kingdom, through Portuguese, Dutch rule and British occupation, to its present position as a state of Malaysia.

After seeing all the historical places, visiting cafes, Temples, Mosques and Churches, collecting many photographs, we returned to Port Dickson knowledgeable but weary.

My wife and I visited Malacca in 1974 when we stayed at Shah's Beach Motel (House of Daggers) Tenjong Keling, a lovely spot with their quaint units and a swimming pool in between, the surf being just outside the rear fence.

I shall never forget the day I visited Malacca in 1941; every native boy called "Hullo Joe" and I am sure I yelled it in my sleep that night. The 2/10th Field Regiment R.A.A. named their magazine "Hullo Joe", which was appropriate as they were stationed in Malacca.

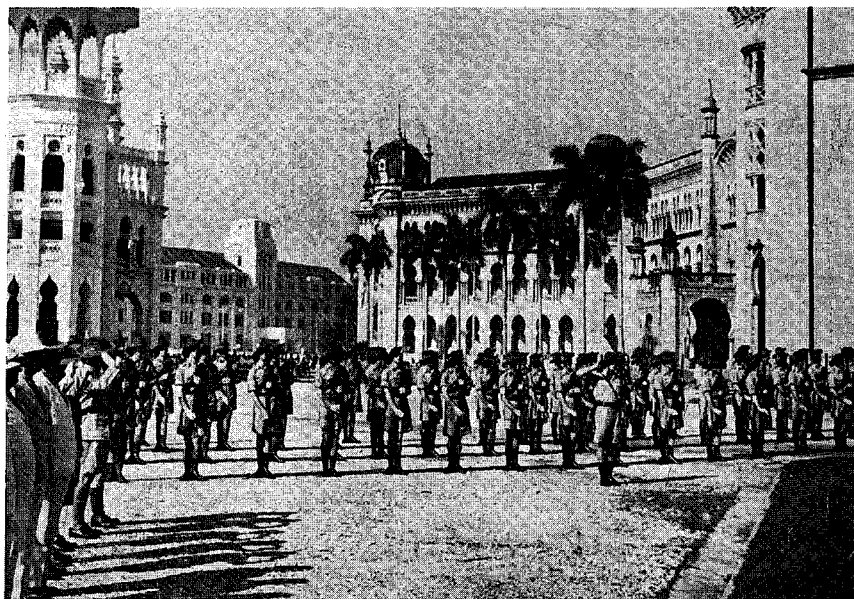
Malacca boasted one of the most modern hospitals, but I seemed to pass this by noticing that, in this city there were horse-drawn carts. One may ask why this struck me as strange? Well, horse-drawn carts were an uncommon sight in Malaya at that time. Water buffalo and Indian oxen, with a hump over the shoulder blades, were used to a great extent. Apart from drawing carts, these domesticated animals were used to haul logs and to plow the rice (paddi) fields.

A wild buffalo is a dangerous animal which, when wounded, was known to circle a hunter and gore him. I passed one in a street in Seremban and he tried to gore me. It was the matter of a fraction of an inch between escape and injury; the water buffalo appeared to have a dislike for Europeans.

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The Records Office is open from Tuesday to Saturday, inclusive between 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

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*Anzac Day at Kuala Lumpur, 25th April, 1941.  
Note the bandoliers as worn by the 8th Division Signallers. The Infantry Battalions did not wear this equipment but wore the standard webbing and pouches.*

On 26th April, the 2/18th held a sports meeting on the playing fields attached to the barracks. Some very promising efforts resulted. The most sensational of all was the runaway win of Lt. Col. Varley, in the 75-yard Officers Handicap. The Colonel actually won the handicap for age event by more than his handicap from the placegetters.

"A" Company gained the day with 89 points, from "C" Company and "Don" Company tied with 45 points. Next came "H.Q." Company with 34 points, "B" Company with 10 points and Reinforcement Company in last with four points.

Notable performances were the victories of: Pte. Pearce and Karl Von Schill in the high jump (5' 4½"); Pte. Smith in the Discus throw (73' 10½"); Lt. John Fuller, shot putt (33' 8"); Cpl. Powell 220 yards; Pte. Sharp 880 yards; Pte. Muldoon, javelin throw (124'); Lance Sergeant Sam Brown 440 and Sergeants 100 yards; Pte. W. J. Law, 100 yards, 120 yard hurdle and broad jump; Pte. H. Noaks, hammer throw; and Pte. R. J. Trimmingham, mile (in 5 mins. 20 sec.).

### **We move to Seremban**

On first landing in Malaya we heard from many sources that we would see action within a fortnight, but it was all rumour. However, had we seen action it would not have surprised us, but we would have found ourselves in a hopeless mess for we had less equipment than we had when war was declared — then it was next to nothing.

But we did have word that there was to be an uprising among the Tamil Indians who, in the main, worked on rubber plantations as coolies. This uprising was to take place about Easter time and was to extend throughout the Malayan peninsula and was expected to result in much loss of life and havoc to property.

We were officially told to stand to; as we were armed with bayonets only we would, to coin a phrase, be able to see the whites of their eyes at least. The trouble was squashed but not before a few natives were

killed by native police and officials. Actually Easter has no bearing on the Tamil religion.

I had visited Seremban on two occasions previously, but the town had no interest for me at that time. Then we received word that we were to replace the 2/20th Battalion then quartered in Seremban. They were to take our place at the Malay barracks. Incidentally, the Malay barracks and the Haig lines are still in present day existence. So, after three months of constant jungle training, we were to have a "rest" period.

We arrived at Seremban on the 5th May, 1941, and were quartered at St. Paul's Convent School in the town. Here we commenced Test of Elementary Training, dismantling and assembling various weapons using the blindfold method, rifle drill, lectures, squad drill and a few route marches to keep our hand in. Although we were camped in the middle of the town, general leave terminated at 10.15 pm each night, Saturday and Sunday included. However, if we had a written invitation from a civilian, by producing it at the orderly room, we were allowed late leave. One chap, with a clean record, was given 14 days detention for being AWL only half an hour.

White people were few and far between considering the number of troops, and we were never lucky enough to be invited to a white person's house. We talked to white women in the Clubs and they advised us not to mix with the natives, but when one is in a strange country it was a great break to visit a private home. We were also advised not to ride with or accept lifts from the natives. I admit this had its points but when car after car, white people driving, passed us without offering to pick us up, we naturally turned to the native driven vehicles as no sane man will walk five miles when going on leave when he could get a lift.

We did not expect the white people to shower us with good times, but, if they did not want us to "break down conditions" between the whites and natives they should have helped keep them intact by helping us when possible.

Regarding visiting native homes, at last we turned to a nice Malay family in Seremban, the Rozario family. The husband, who was a government employee, wrote invitations for us to extend our leave to visit his home. His wife, in her forties, was a trained nurse who had no need to work, but her urge to help others took her to the hospital to help others not so fortunate; in her own way she was a wonderful woman. These people were affectionately known to all Australians as Aunt Kate and Tony. It was just wonderful, being so far from home, to escape army life and to be accepted into a private home even for a few hours.

In recognition of her service to Australians, after the war, the RSL sponsored Aunt Kate to come to Australia for specialist treatment and she stayed and was most welcome with the AIF men she had befriended in Malaya. It was fulfilling that we could return the true friendship we found in Malaya.

Seremban was picturesquely situated in a hollow between lush hills and there was a lovely lake fringed by trees and graced by ornamental shrubs in a peaceful setting. In 1974 my wife and I visited Seremban and the lake was further beautified by the planting of more shrubs, extensive landscaping and a magnificent large white Mosque had been built on the shores.

In 1941 the streets of Seremban were clean by Eastern standards but the fish market had a thousand smells and not one the same. Dried fish and other items of food hung in full view in open fronted shops.

Japanese shops were much in evidence. For instance, there was a Japanese Association in Kuala Lumpur which had a membership of 400 which included officials, businessmen from all walks of life, photographers, call girls etc. They all worked for Japan as a source of information.

Seremban was no different as here there were businessmen, barbers, photographers, call girls and each was a source to channel information back to Japan. As the Japanese cut our hair (male or female) they would innocently bring up topics which were in fact questions and if we were evasive they were well trained enough not to pursue the line of "questioning" but would smile and continue to cut hair. We had been around in the bush from an early age and had an idea when we were being pumped so were always on guard about questions we thought were a security risk no matter how minute.

Most non-European hotels were, in fact, houses of ill fame and among the "ladies" were attractive Japanese girls who spoke and understood English very well so gaining information from time to time. These hotels were out of bounds to the troops and controlled by Town pickets.

The photographers, in the main, were Japanese and were also out of bounds as it is surprising how much information can be gained by a snap taken in a certain area.

Yes, the Japanese planned the invasion of Malaya very well using these people to collate information which gave them a complete picture of every defence position, the number of troops and an important item such as the fighting capabilities of these troops and their Commanders, ships, planes and types of armaments on the Malayan Mainland and Singapore Island.

There were other sections of the population who were not partial to the British such as many Indians. Frequently we would walk into an Indian shop and find them listening to a broadcast from Germany. They would ignore us for a while then reluctantly come and serve us when we called for attention. They said nothing but we could sense a hidden animosity.

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**Access to the Barber Shop and Ladies Hairdressing Salon can only be made through the Back Foyer.**

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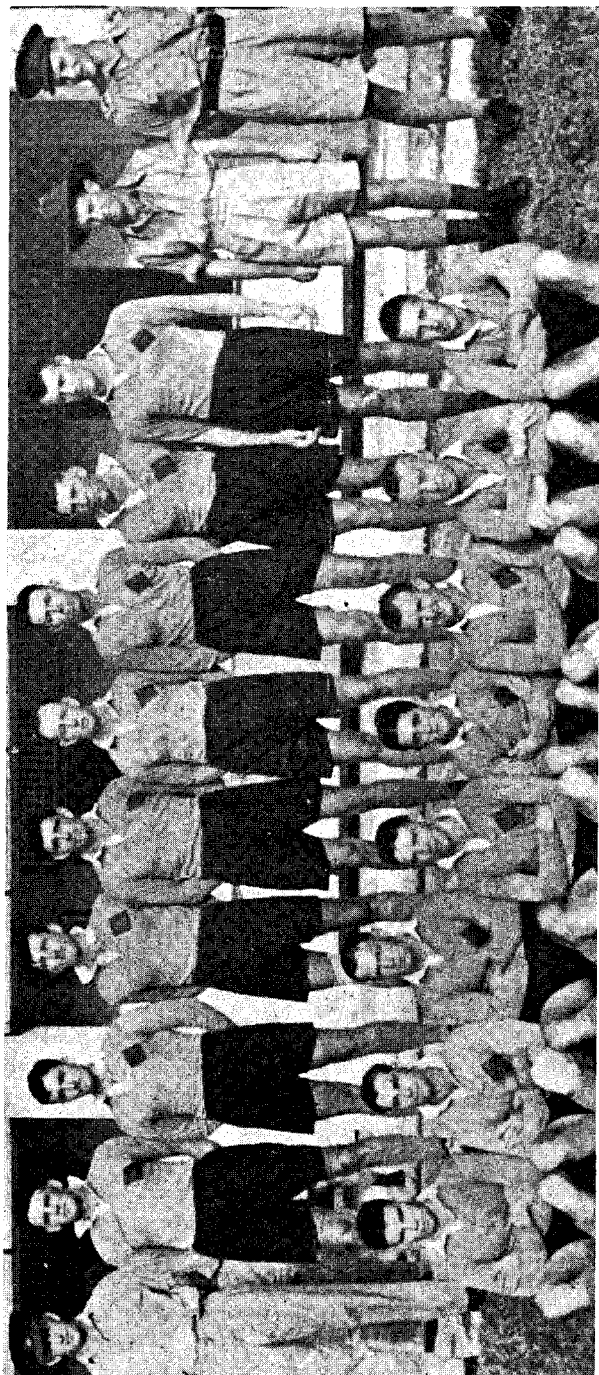


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**PHONE NUMBERS FOR CLUB**  
727 5000  
727 5677  
727 5999

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# BATTALION IN SPORT



The 2/18th Bn. Rugby Union team which met the Field Artillery on Saturday, May 17, 1941. From left to right, standing: C.S.M., A. D. Freeman (Committee), Sgt. R. James, Lt. Barnes, Pte. J. Scott, Pte. R. O'Dea, Lt. R. Cohen, Pte. V. McTaggart, Pte. S. B. Frewin, Lt. J. Fuller, Pte. R. J. Binns, Lt. L. Sulman (Committee). Sitting: Pte. W. J. Law, Pte. R. Cummings, Pte. J. Delaney, Pte. J. Smith, Pte. A. Graham, Pte. J. F. Sharpe, Pte. W. J. Pidcock, Cpl. W. M. Pearce.

Unfortunately the AIF in Malaya was front page news because of a "sabre rattling" propaganda aimed at discouraging further expansion by Japan. For this reason we were receiving unwanted publicity in Australia (Adele Smith), America (Life Magazine) and England (London Illustrated News) and were still recovering from the unwarranted, hurtful publicity we had received at our initial landing.

Now, two months later, we were to be the victims of further glamorising at the hands of Adele Smith, writing for an Australian magazine and newspaper. To say we were annoyed at these untrue reports would be an understatement, we were furious.

Adele Smith gave glowing reports of us having good times, on tiger hunts using elephants, dancing with taxi dancers and in all living it up. This caused resentment in some quarters and caused serious rifts between some soldier husbands and wives in Australia and for this Adele Smith was the most detested woman as far as the 8th Division was concerned.

About the time the newspaper reached Malaya, Betty Bryant (star of 40,000 Horsemen) paid us a visit with regrettable results. During a film she came on stage and was mistaken for Adele Smith. She was soundly booed much to her amazement. The mistake was quickly rectified and the booes turned to cheers.

In reference to the untrue statements by Adele Smith and the initial fearful, distrustful attitude of the civilian population towards us, Colonel Varley issued the following bulletin in the Fourth Edition of "Men May Smoke" dated 30/5/41:

"Our welcome to Malaya by Government officials was most cordial. We met with unexpected surprise when we saw evidence of fear and distrust displayed by women and children of the native races. Reports have reached us that a warning to them was spread prior to our arrival. It is now gratifying to see women and children going about their work and the children congregating on the roadside, cheering

and saluting and gesticulating with thumbs up whenever the troops pass. As I envisaged in the last issue of M.M.S., "By our deeds we will be known" and already these people have made a judgement and greater confidence and friendliness are being displayed.

Our opportunities for entertainment and enjoyment are very limited, and the use of what is available has been restricted out of necessity for us all to keenly study the new tactical jungle problems.

It is therefore with amusement and disgust that we read in the Australian papers now coming to hand, of the wonderful times the AIF is having in this country, thereby giving our people a very wrong impression.

To those in Australia whom this magazine will reach, I refuse the statements referred to and can say that the men of the Battalion are working harder than they did in Australia. No leave has been granted except to nearby towns, and then only for a few hours' duration. Even then facilities for transport are not available, few go far from the Battalion lines.

To those at home I would also add that the general overall health of the Battalion is good. Your letters are keenly anticipated and received, and judging from the huge bags of outward mail from the men, you should be getting your share. Our love for our country and those left behind by all of us, is perhaps more earnestly realised by each member of the Battalion."

To add to our unhappy state of mind caused by distrust by the civilian population, we were hacking pathways through the jungle which was a mass of tangled growth and interlacing vines. Overhead vegetation was so thick only shafts of light penetrated. Our bodies covered with Dhobies Itch, were constantly wet by perspiration or rain and mosquitoes came at us like squadrons of planes. Although there were no flies, except sand flies on the beaches, there were thousands of slimy snails. Some were bitten by the numerous scorpions and we were covered by blood-suck-

ing leaches. We had to dodge tigers and members of the snake family such as Cobras, Pythons, King Cobras (hamadryads), the deadly-poisonous krait and the non-poisonous emerald green tree snake. Millions of red ants seemed to delight in nipping us in the most awkward places or in trying to share our bully beef and "dog biscuits". Marching 15 to 20 miles a day we were on the alert all the time for ambush. If fired on we had to eliminate the road block and to destroy the tanks. We were enduring all these things and more, so is there any wonder we were annoyed at these adverse reports.

So irrespective of the "glamour" reports by Adele Smith, our gay

times were as above and our "glamorous hostess" was the jungle.

One bright feature was that the natives had accepted us which made life a little more bearable and, by now, the AIF was thumbs up (No. 1 or very -good) with them. When marching through a town some of us would sit a child on our packs and the child would feel 10 feet tall, proudly waving to his parents as we passed. We were very fond of the children. I believe it was through the children that we won back the confidence of the native population; children are the same the world over — they only change in adulthood.

Next — Seremban continued.

## EZI-WINNA

*Every Wednesday is a sight to see  
With the Club full to capacity,  
Mums, Dads and neighbours too,  
All enjoying this special "Do",*

*Ezi-Winna is surely great,  
For those who wish to participate,  
You can win prizes — one, two or more,  
For having the ticket with the right score,*

*The wheels spin, the numbers go round,  
You'd be lucky to hear a sound,  
Speculation is high, excitement great,  
Hoping you'll win or your "mate",  
So come, play the game of renown,  
EZI-WINNA the best in town.*

## Members please note —

THE RECITING OF THE "ODE" WILL BE AT 8.00 pm

ON THE SCREENING OF FILMS, TUESDAY AND SUNDAY  
AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN A PRODUCTION  
SHOW IS BEING STAGED.

R. T. THOMPSON, M.B.E., Sec./Manager.



# Youth Club Report

The last month has been rather quiet with summer sport and presentations all completed. All of the winter sports are well under way.

I would like to congratulate the new Committee of the Swimming Club for the 1981-82 season.

The Softball Club is to hold its AGM on 7th July at 8 pm in the Fred Galton Hall. Everyone interested in playing Softball next summer and parents — please turn up and make this meeting a success.

As you know every year the Youth Club enters a girl in the City of Fairfield Charity Queen Competition. If there is any girl in any section of the Youth Club, or perhaps a sister of a Rugby or Soccer player who is interested in helping the Youth Club and charity as well, she can contact Mrs. Sherlock at the RSL Club.

At the Youth Club meeting Mr. Bob Conway thanked the Youth Club Committee for nominating him for the RSL Certificate of Appreciation which he received on Anzac Day.

Congratulations also go to our Youth Club Superintendent, Mr. John Burgess, who has just passed his First Aid Certificate, Grade A with Distinction. Mr. Burgess was once a member of the Mountain Rescue Group in Scotland and decided to renew his First Aid knowledge after 20 years.

The Youth Club is attempting to form an Activities Committee. Anyone who has any ideas or is interested in helping the fund-raising side of our Club is most welcome. The first call for a meeting brought forward only two people. This was very disappointing considering there are over 1500 children in the Youth Club. Please mums and dads, help us to help your kids.

Remember people, many hands make light work, and I can assure you, you will make friends. The next

Activities Meeting will be in the Pioneer Bar at 7.30 on 16th June. The Youth Club Meeting will follow at 8.00 pm in the Bowlers Lounge. Supper is provided free.

It was delightful to receive a letter of thanks from David Newman, winner of the Junior Citizenship Award. Boys and girls of this calibre are truly our future citizens. David's letter is published elsewhere in this magazine.

The Annual Fairfield RSL Ballroom Dancing Competition is to be held on 5th July at 10.30 am in the Bini Shell at Fairvale High School. This dancing is beautiful to see and a credit to the children who participate, so for something different to do, come and have a look.

Following is our Treasurer's Report for the month:

## No. 1 Account:

Credit Balance as at 21-4-81	\$1912.97
Income to 19-5-81	\$2144.70
	<u>\$4057.67</u>
Expenditure to 19-5-81	\$2231.69
Credit Balance as at 19-5-81	<u>\$1825.98</u>

## Building Fund:

Donations during the April-May period of the Youth Club Building Fund — with thanks to:

W. Taylor	\$5.00
Fairfield Legacy Widows	\$300.00
Fairfield RSL Mem. Club	\$4400.00
Fairfield Women's Aux.	\$100.00
Boy Scouts. 1st F'ield Hts.	\$30.00
RSL Central Council of	
Women's Auxiliaries	\$70.00
	<u>\$4905.00</u>

## Credit Balance — Flexi

Account as at 19-5-81	<u>\$18,008.22</u>
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Yours in Sport.

Publicity Officer.

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 9)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

Seremban continued . . .

For the first time we saw real Eastern beauty. There was a Chinese girl waiting outside a bank while her husband was transacting business. Her features and figure, in her skin-tight Shanghai-cut dress, were eye-catching. Her hair was shoulder length and was black, shiny and wavy. Every Aussie who passed turned to have a second look and no wonder it was a case of look but do not touch. During our stay in Seremban we soon became used to this Eastern beauty.

There were cabarets too, with their taxi dancers working on a percentage of their earnings, the balance going to the cabaret owner. As I said before, conflicting reports came back to Australia about the taxi dancers and our boys. In the main they were false. For men who liked to dance, that was their only way of participating, because few men knew a woman they could take as a partner. It was no different to an overseas man's wife attending a dance in Australia and dancing with different partners. Immediately the cabaret closed the girls were whisked away in waiting rickshaws by elderly women.

An "Oriental Garden" had been opened in March by the Seremban Rotary Club for the entertainment of His Majesty's forces. The building and all equipment were donated by the Club, and in addition to the troops being able to obtain food and drinks at low costs, dances were held there periodically. The beer garden was for all ages, beer and soft drinks were served at the fam-

ily table with food. Around the garden setting were various games such as darts, knock-ems, skittles, hoopla and many other games for all ages; it was indeed an excellent place to take a family as it was strictly controlled and there were no disturbances. These facilities were an eye-opener to us in 1941 as, although it is an accepted condition these days, they did not exist in Australia at that time.

Another striking feature was the Padangs (sports fields) which were lush green. There were padangs all over Seremban as the natives went in for sport in a big way. They really put their heart and soul into it. These evergreen grounds were kept from browning off by the constant rainfall.

In May a Brigade sports meeting was held and the 2/18th, after putting up a good show, ran second to the 2/19th Bn.

Our Battalion excelled in tennis, Ptes. G. Plunkett and Breakspear winning the Open Malay Championship at Kuala Lumpur.

An interesting game of Rugby saw the 2/10th Artillery victorious over the 2/18th by 11 points to seven in an evenly contested match. It was an interstate match as far as the spectators were concerned as the 2/18th hailed from NSW and the Artillery from Queensland.

While we were watching this interesting "interstate" match, Betty Bryant paid our Bn. another visit. At lunch time she lined up with "Don" Company and was issued with a set of eating utensils, and joined

# Women's Auxiliary



NO MEETING this month, but a little news on Friday, 29th May — we went to Paddy's Markets at Flemington and had a very profitable day. Thanks to the Club for the bus. John Carter won one of our raffles and also a lucky seat prize.

Last month I told you Rene Purkis was in hospital. She is out now but has to wear a brace for a while. She had a very nice homecoming — some lousy so-and-so had taken her coloured TV, radiator and transistor.

Olive Elphick spent just over a week in Liverpool Hospital, but is out now — take things easy Olive. Audrey Carroll goes in on Monday 22nd to Westmead — all the best Audrey.

May Griffin's husband is allowed out at weekends and so is Carla Montgomery's daughter — so it won't be long before both will be out of hospital for good.

Hospital Visits: L. Wheatley, T. Hale.

Thanks to: A. Carroll, B. Cottle and O. Elphick for handbags and

jewellery for the psychiatric patients.

"Benjamin Franklin may have discovered electricity, but it was the man who invented the meter who made the money."

Till next month.

DAPHNE SEDDON  
Publicity Officer



George and Rene Smith —  
fifty happy years.

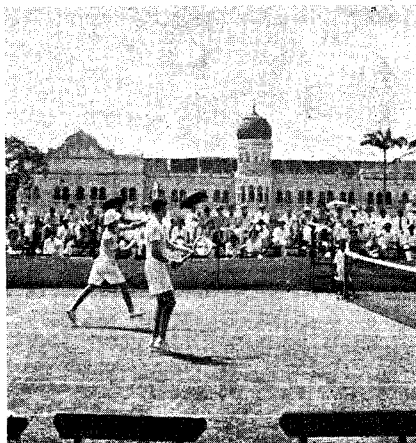


Auxiliary ladies, Audrey, Lorna and Shirley getting ready to refresh the young marchers on Commemoration Sunday.

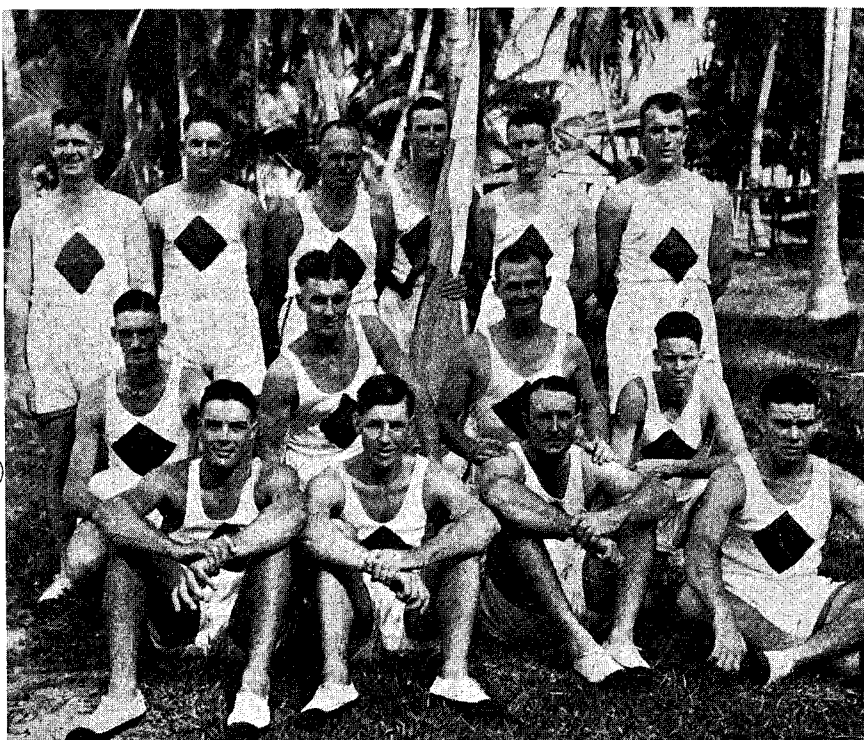
them in a meal. Colonel Varley and some of the boys had their photographs taken with her, and, this time she received a warm welcome.

We had heard of the Malay "running amok" and our Malay friends explained the whole procedure to us. As I explained before, the Malay was a mild, patient man with a great love of his family and home but when he "runs amok" it is merely a Malay way of suicide and not an attempt of mass murder. Where most Europeans kill themselves only, Malays, fed up with life, are determined to end it all for as many people as they could while about it.

In view of the arduous jungle training we had been subjected to over the past three months, Seremban was to allow us a tapering off period, which included sports fix-



G. Plunkett and Breakspear winning Malay Championship at Kuala Lumpur 1941.



The 2/18th Bn. Athletic Team competing in the 22nd Int. Bde. Sports. Left to right, back row: Pte. T. A. Muldoon, L./Sgt. S. A. Brown, Pte. J. T. Butler, L/Cpl. D. W. Powell, Pte. R. Merchant, Lt. J. Fuller. Centre row: Pte. C. von Schill, Pte. R. J. Trimmingham, Pte. J. F. Sharpe, Pte. P. F. Saunders. Front row: Pte. R. Seymour, Pte. R. Rushbourne, Pte. L. Macnamara, Pte. W. J. Law.

tures which we were denied at Port Dickson owing to our training syllabus.

We were still subject to all duties and went back to the "bull ring", dismantling and assembling weapons and general smartening up in our drill, not to forget the ever present route marches to keep us in trim.

It was here that we silently did not agree with our Colonel; he tried to make us parade ground soldiers. Although we liked to watch and outwardly admired precision marching and rifle drill by the Permanent Forces, this was not for us. We were here to train for jungle warfare, not for show. We preferred to be sent back to jungle training but the Colonel was also firm so for a full week we were taken to a nearby padang and drilled, marched Company in line and all the goodies which goes with parade ground marching and drill.

When marching Company in line it was a matter of course to hear C.S.M. Freeman call out that the line had a belly in it and looked like a pregnant woman. We wouldn't concede so the Colonel kept us at it until our clothes were saturated with perspiration and our feet ached then, at last, the Colonel conceded we were not "parade ground soldiers".

But our Colonel was a good officer and not the type to give in and I believe he staged a guard competition among the Companies, with a four-day leave incentive, in an endeavour to prove the men could excel in parade ground drill if they tried.

The various guards put on an excellent show in which points were awarded after careful deliberation. Honours went to "B" Company which gained first and second place. 11 platoon under Sergeant King received the coveted prize, and 10 platoon under Sergeant M. Perring, was one point behind. The R.S.M. (John Dixon) could not fault the equipment packs, rifles and believe it or not, the drill.

Colonel Varley was beaming at the troops and visitors who came to watch as much as to say, they

can do it if they want to. The magic words were four days leave in Singapore.

We did not intend to be disrespectful to our Colonel re parade ground drill but it was our firm opinion there was too much "spit and polish" among the troops stationed in Malaya and not enough action in view of the existing circumstances at the time. Deep down I think Col. Varley agreed with this but he had a Command and was under orders.

We frequented the open air eating houses and I was amazed how the waiter accepted orders and passed them on to the kitchen. He moved from one table to another and did not write down the orders but called them in a sing song manner for the cook to hear and prepare. After taking all the orders he would bring them back with uncanny accuracy.

While on picket duty we were sometimes called upon to enter and inspect dubious or opium smoking establishments in case an Australian strayed. They were dirty compared with our standards and were dark with "bodies" everywhere — at times we would have to step over people on the floor. Loud sucking noises could be heard as the natives drew on their "pipes" some of which passed through water. I was given a small piece of "dope", which looked like plug tobacco, which the natives said was to be rolled in the tobacco when rolling a cigarette. They watched me as I rolled a cigarette but I "palmed" the dope, completed the cigarette and smoked it. The natives were highly amused and watched for after effects. Naturally there was none. They couldn't understand and were disappointed.

Although we had been in Malaya for some time this was our first contact with the jinrickshaws. The pullers wore pointed straw hats and were poor, lean, hungry men with bulging calf muscles and protruding veins in the legs. In fact we felt sorry for them and felt like putting them in the rickshaws and pulling them ourselves, but that was the only life they knew. A ride in a rickshaw was a novelty for a while but this soon wore off. It was a sign of strength to have two big

men in a rickshaw, to us it was brawn and no brains. Some Chinese pullers appeared to be doped. Their life span was short but they made good money according to Malayan standards. When requiring a puller to proceed one said "Piggy" and to stop "Pung".

In 1941 Malaya and Singapore had the old oriental charm of numerous rickshaws which were a landmark. The cost of a fare was 25 cents (9 pence) a mile. Today the rickshaw has all but vanished and in these modern times transport is by fast taxi cabs and wide roads replace the narrow streets. If one can find a rickshaw these days the puller will not budge under a few dollars. In Penang there is the tricycle.

I saw one rickshaw race in 1941 and it caused quite a stir. Some of our chaps, a little merry, placed the pullers in their rickshaws, and taking their places in the shafts, went racing down the street yelling and cooeing. The natives were holding onto their hats and also yelling, but more in fright. Not quite the right thing to do but the boys made sure no harm came to the rickshaws as they realised this was their livelihood.

In those days a puller would follow one for long distances calling out "rickshaw" or "do you want No. 1 girl" even when he was told we were not interested. One day I saw a big Australian in this position and the puller persisted in following him. At last with patience exhausted, he walked to the back of the rickshaw and picked it up. They both took off down the street carrying the rickshaw, one can imagine the scene. Their persistence was all part of their trade but we had to watch these people as they had more points than a porcupine and would exploit us if they could; we had to be kind but firm.

It is in these countries that one sees the most contrasts. One day I saw a rich Chinese woman's funeral. Proceeding the hearse was a covered-in cart with some of the woman's personal belongings plus a photograph of the deceased. On each side of the photograph stood statues of slaves which were to be buried with the woman in case she needed

them. The hearse was done up in the most expensive manner and behind it came 20 women, dressed in black, sobbing and wailing loudly and clearly. In response to my inquiry I was informed that these women were professional mourners; the more they cried the more they were paid. Behind these mourners came a great body of Chinese carrying 100 wreaths. When the funeral reached the cemetery crackers were let off to frighten away the evil spirits. At times money is left in the grave and food is left in case the woman becomes hungry or needs money. After the burial all and sundry returned to the husband's dwelling and a great feast was had by all.

On the other hand I witnessed a coolie funeral which consisted of a rough timber coffin on a rickety two-wheeled barrow with a man and a woman in attendance, quite a contrast.

Malaya is a country of many nationalities so by this fact there are many different religions and their religious culture and places of worship were always a respectful interest to the digger. Before we could enter a Mosque or Temple we had to remove our boots which is still the custom of today. The Chinese Temples in the cities and large towns were well worth seeing and were done out expensively.

I had seen some of the natives' religious ceremonies while at Port Dickson from a distance, but now I was to see them close up. The Hindu ceremony is known as Thaipusam when Gods are displayed and "devotees" specially selected to undergo, from my book, "trial by torture" religious rituals. These rituals include having spikes driven through the protruding tongue and then another spike driven through the cheeks. Large bow-like contraptions are placed on their heads and stabilised by ropes running from the bow with fish hooks at the end which are attached to the body. Some had "reins" attached to the body by fish hooks and a sharp tug to the left or right would govern the direction of travel, the skin stretching away from the body as the pressure was applied to the reins.



The devotee appeared to be in a trance and was oblivious to pain. When he looked like fainting he was given a substance to bring him to, but he could not be relieved of pain or be replaced till his commitments had been fulfilled.

I made it my business to get close to these people to see if I could detect a fake — it was no fake. In these days of advanced media, such as television, people now see these happenings but in those days to us it was intriguing.

Then there were the fire walkers who showed no effect as they trod their way over red hot coals in bare feet. We could get within touching distance of the religious Devotees but the heat from the red hot coals kept us a little further back.

With respect to some people's opinions and considering that one believes nothing of what one hears and half of what one sees, the participants appeared genuine.

Not all natives kept to their old customs as the Catholic Church and the Church of England were always well attended. These included well-dressed Eurasians, Chinese, Tamils and other natives. Chinese women would shuffle into the church, slide into their seat and slip off their sandals while the priest delivered the sermon in the native tongue, then in English.

Following are extracts from "Men May Smoke" June, 1941.

#### **Battalion makes history**

"On Sunday, 15th June, 1941, members of the Battalion unofficially formed a Guard of Honour around the Host in the Corpus Christi procession through the streets of Seremban where we were in barracks at the time. It is understood that their participation in such a ceremony was unique in the annals of the AIF.

Led by Major O'Brien, of "B" Company and accompanied by fellow officers, Lieut. Wilmshurst, Captain O'Loughlan and Lieut. Simmons, about 150 men of the Battalion marched on either side of the Canopy, which covered the Host on its journey from the fine Church of the Visitation to the grounds of the Convent, where Benediction was held.

The Battalion band took part at their presence and playing made the ceremony all the more imposing.

The route of the procession was lined by hundreds of townspeople and the prestige of the AIF, already high in Seremban, must have been greatly enhanced by the respectful bearing of the troops taking part.

Two Australian Redemptorist priests, Rev. Fathers Carroll and Cosgrove, warmly praised the exemplary bearing of the troops. Together with the Parish Priest they personally expressed their appreciation to Colonel Varley.

To those taking part, the occasion was one of memorable significance.

The long procession of altar boys (principally Chinese and Indian), Children of Mary of various races, school boys and school girls and finally, some hundreds of parishioners representing practically every race in the district, followed the Host with a devotedness that was particularly impressive even to those who were not members of the Catholic Church.

The presence of the men of the AIF in this important religious gathering proclaimed to all that they had pledged themselves to uphold all ideals of Christianity against the evils of Nazism."

#### Letter of Appreciation

Following the Battalion's participation in the Corpus Christi procession a letter addressed to Major C. F. Assheton, was received from the Parish Priest of the Church of the Visitation — it read:

"I wish to convey to you my sincere appreciation for the kind permission you gave to the soldiers and band of the Battalion to attend the Corpus Christi procession at my church. The boys behaved very well and were an example to all. The band played marvellously and greatly enhanced the beauty of the service. Please convey my thanks and appreciation to all officers and ranks who attended."

#### My impressions of the Aussies

By a Tamil Teacher at the Government School at Port Dickson

"These bonny band of men who have come from far off Australia to fight for us and to die if it need be, are the right type, capable of fulfilling the sacred task entrusted in them. With such men in our midst we are sure of marching to victory. By their arrival the sense of peace and security has once again been established.

Their manly bearing, cheerful disposition and the will to be one of the country have won all of us to their sides. Talk of the Australians and everyone has a good word for them.

We meet them everywhere, happily engaged in studying the lives, customs, manners and occupations of the different races that they meet.

The markets, the stalls, the hawkers, the eating shops and coffee shops have all roused their interest and they have tasted all the foods and drinks sold in the town. In a word they have adapted themselves to the country.

These people are not tongue tied, reserved or high brow. They are untarnished men of sterling qualities with whom we have communed freely and have been treated alike. An evening spent with them is worth one's while, for you will know more of their country, life, customs, manners, and a host of other things that one can never read in books.

They love children and in return the children have taken a great liking to these men in uniform. Wherever the Australians are, we see school boys among them actively discussing topics of common interest. This behaviour to the children shows that their heart is good and young.

It is indeed a blessing to have such men to fight for the cause of justice and freedom. Further, we are convinced that they will sell their blood dearly for our welfare.

In conclusion I would like to add that we should show our gratitude to these men and treat them as honourable guests. Above all we must seek to strengthen the bonds of comradeship between the peoples of the two countries. Opportunity knocks but once at our door and it is our duty to seize it by the forelock."

R.M.K.

Quite a contrast to the reception we received from the native population upon arrival in Malaya because of false, unfounded rumours by fifth column and idle chatter of some of the white people re our conduct towards the native population.

We did not try to prove ourselves, there was nothing to prove, but rather we remembered the words of our Colonel, "By our deeds we will be known." Beyond all doubt, the AIF became the most popular troops in Malaya by just being ourselves.

As I said before, even on leave at times it could become boring and we welcomed a diversion. We were



watching a soccer match on a Padang and nearby was a road running up hill. A group of natives were taking their God, a wooden horse, to cleanse it in the lake and, as there was only manpower they were having some difficulty pushing the God up the hill. They were straining and groaning and, although there were a lot of English people close by, no one offered assistance. We, being "bushies" could not stand by when someone was in trouble so five of us put our "shoulder to the wheel" and we made it to the top of the hill amid cheers from the natives. When we came back to watch the match the white people moved away from us with many a black look but we lost nothing as they would not talk to us before the incident.

Concerning the native population, their respectfulness, gracious and inborn, was a reflection of the spiritual standards of the Malay environment. The racial harmony that prevailed at Seremban and other parts of Malaya, was a privilege to observe and share. There we could practice our separate faiths, enriched by the tolerance and tranquillity of this cosmopolitan community.

Some of the picture shows were wholly European and some wholly native. The admission was about the same as in Australian theatres but there was only one main feature film and selected shorts. Smoking was allowed in the theatres. The programmes and the theatres were equal to theatres in our suburbs.

In 1941 Malaya was a country of pushbikes and all cinemas had row upon row of bikes standing outside in special bike racks provided. The Japanese used many of these bikes in their advance down the Mainland of Malaya.

I had seen "The Good Earth" where a Chinese woman had given birth to a baby in a nearby hut while working in the field, returning a short time later to continue her work. This became a reality when I was on guard duty at the rear gate of our barracks and was watching some Chinese workmen laying a concrete floor in one of our mess rooms. Outside was a woman screening the sand and gravel, mix-

ing the concrete and carrying it into the hut for spreading in two baskets. The two baskets were hooked to a thin, durable, special length of wood with which she carried the two baskets on her shoulder. Inside the hut were three men spreading the concrete, while this woman, who was doing most of the work, was to become a mother in the near future. Each day, while on guard duty at this post, I watched and marvelled at her because I could see her time was near and often wondered how a white woman would react under similar circumstances.

One day, after relief from my post I washed and came back to the mess hut and as I passed the post noticed the woman was missing. Upon asking the relieving guard as to her whereabouts he replied: "She was taken away a short time ago, she would be a mother by now." It was only the matter of days and she was back on the job. It was upsetting seeing this woman work so hard in her condition and one felt like taking the shovel off her and carrying out the work but there was little we could do about the local situation as it was common practice in Malaya where personal feelings did not count.

We enjoyed the native cooked meals as they were a welcome change from our regular Army meals. Being partial to hot sauce as we know it in Australia, one night on a visit to our Malay friends, I placed part of our 10 dishes on my plate and gave it a liberal sprinkling of hot sauce. Our host warned me that the sauce was hot but I said the more hot the better.

Here tea is not served with meals, the beverage being iced water or beer, so there was a tiny jug of iced water near me. Well, I ate my first mouthful of food and it was so hot it near burnt my socks off and I dived for the iced water to put out the fire. My host noticed this and told me not to eat the meal if it was too hot. But rather than offend Auntie Kate I ate the meal with the aid of a full jug of iced water and perspiration pouring out of me. I named it hellfire sauce and avoided anything hot and red from then on.

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On another visit our host asked if we would like a cup of tea. The tea having being bought especially for us, we said we would love one. Well, the tea was made with warm water and the tea leaves were floating on top of the water, it tasted terrible. When the first cup was finished I was asked how I liked it and being polite I said I enjoyed it, which pleased my host so she gave me another cup which was just as awful but I drank it and managed a smile.

Wages were very low in Malaya and, at times we would buy all the remaining newspapers from the paper boys, plus a tip, if one would walk up and down in front of Battalion Headquarters calling: "Read all about it, Colonel Varley is no

good (plus some very rude sayings), read all about it." R.S.M. Johnny Dixon would come out and chase the paper boy who was always too fast for him. Another call was: "Paper, read all about it, German pocket battleship sails up Mehi and shells Moree." This was amusing to us as we knew that the only time the Mehi had a volume of water in it was in flood time as a result of a backwash from the Gwydir River, and normally it was a large size creek with the occasional waterholes. Incidentally, the Mehi is known to flow in either direction depending on which mouth is silted up at the time; this is helped by the flat nature of the terrain.

**Next — Seremban continued.**

M. MULLENS

## UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

# CELLAR XMAS CLUB

To assist members with the financial burden of the festive season, the Club has introduced its own XMAS CLUB.

Members wishing to avail themselves of this service should contact Mrs. Val Chubb in the Cellar in the front foyer of the Club.

Members of the XMAS Club may deposit small amounts as they wish whenever they wish. At Xmas time the deposits are made available to you for your purchase in the Cellar.

## Excellent wine and spirit stock



## HOME DELIVERY SERVICE





On Sunday, 7th June, we played an Ambrose 2-B Stableford event at Bossley Bush for the Joe Stanton-Charlie Frost Trophy.

The attendance on this day was about half the usual. This was brought about by the Queen's Birthday falling on this weekend when half our golfers make the trip to Grafton to play for the Claydon Cup. This is almost impossible to overcome as we have to book our local course some 18 months ahead and the holiday is not confirmed until about 6 months ahead.

Nevertheless we carry on and still enjoy our golf and social outing.

Results were as follows:

Major: John Kitchen, Sid Pettiford.

1st: Bill Brady, Bert King.

2nd: Peter Peronchik, Les Estreich.

3rd: Owen O'Neill, Dave O'Neill.

Nearest Pins: Bill Brady, Sid Pettiford.

Drive and Pitch: Mike Stannard.



*Had to carry the old man.*

Our next game was a very interesting one. We played the first round of our Singles Championships in conjunction with the Joe Coogan Memorial Trophy donated by Dennis Newsome.

The game was played at Cabramatta and all players were extremely confident on the 1st tee. After 18 holes some were jubilant while others had the wheel fall off so to speak.

Results for the Joe Coogan Memorial Trophy:

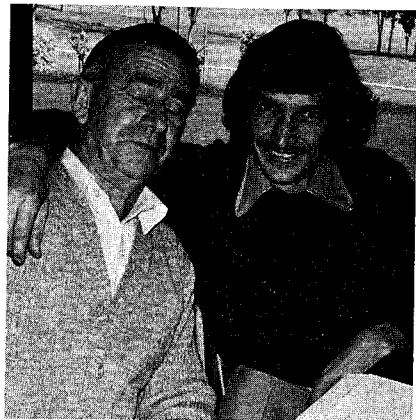
Major: Ray Cook.

"A" Winner: Sony McSavaney.  
R/up: Frank De Bressac.

"B" Winner: Les Estreich. R/up: Mally Dredge.

"C" Winner: Doug McVicar. R/up: Rudi Paul.

Visitors Trohy: D. Lovegrove.



*He did it with his eyes shut.*

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 10)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

While in Seremban we heard that the 2/19th's mascot, a kangaroo, had to be destroyed. This kangaroo had been smuggled aboard the "Queen Mary" at Sydney in a medical case as the quarantine officials would not allow the 'Roo aboard. The 'Roo became the favourite of the "Queen Mary" crew and when the Bn. disembarked at Singapore it was once again smuggled ashore and travelled up country with them. The 2/19th took pride in their mascot and the cover of their Battalion magazine had the photograph of the 'Roo on it. For months it roamed the camp at will till one day some natives and dogs chased it and it fell into a deep concrete drain and broke its leg. It was taken to a Seremban veterinary surgeon and after a two-week's fight to save its life the 'Roo had to be destroyed.

Men in other Battalions were also anxious about the health of the 'Roo and were very sorry to hear of its death as it was the only piece of Australia on the Malayan landscape. Previous to this a considerable amount of money was offered for the 'Roo but it was turned down as the sentimental value was worth much more.

Empire Day was celebrated while we were in Seremban and was a most colourful occasion. All the children turned out in their national dress and marched to a nearby Padang near our barracks. The British Resident (like a Governor in Australia) and a group of British people occupied the official stand and a large crowd gathered. The resident delivered the Empire Day address.

The police in Malaya was Malay and Sikh. The Sikh came from Punjab and had a fighting tradition back into the ages. They fought against the British in 1845 but later became the most loyal and fiercest soldiers for Britain. They were the one lot of troops who remained loyal to Britain in the Indian Mutiny and helped the British quell the outbreak.

They were tall, average six foot, with black beards and moustaches. They did not drink alcohol or shave and observed the strict morality of Baba Nanak, the founder of Sikhism who was born in 1469. They believed in the existence of one spiritual God. Their hair was long but, on duty, it was done up and held together with a comb and a tiny dagger stuck in it. On duty they wore khaki shorts, shirt, khaki turban and putties and they discarded their boots at the first opportune moment. This amused us to see them all dressed up outside the bank without their boots. They were a happy race of people but we had to be on our guard as they were also temperamental and we could upset them unbeknowningly through their strong beliefs.

In front of a bank in Seremban was one of the most photographed Sikhs in Malaya. The majority of our chaps who passed that way had their photographs taken with him. Further down the street was an Indian manager of a Japanese shop who was an expert photographer, winning the State Amateur Championship. I often wondered about this chap, as I saw some of his work and every detail could be picked out,

H. McMahon; I. Hokin d. E. Cullis; J. Ashby d. G. Czarnocki; M. Brennan d. E. Hill; V. Hankey d. L. O'Brien; E. White d. E. Warfield; D. Short d. L. Kitchen (on forfeit); D. Bateup d. R. Purkis; F. Gayton d. D. Plummer; C. Eddy d. J. Mockler; V. Towers d. M. Adams; G. Campbell d. N. Sherlock; E. McNarmara d. J. Stewart; I. Hokin d. J. Ashby; M. Brennan d. V. Hankey; D. Short d. E. White; P. Byrum d. D. Bateup; G. Campbell d. V. Towers; M. Brennan d. D. Short; C. Eddy d. F. Gayton (on forfeit).

There is still another five games to be played in the Major Singles. The results will be in the next issue.

This is my last report, the next and following editions will be in the capable hands of our new Publicity Officer, May Badger.

#### Birthdays

E. Smith, E. Young, D. Stretton, D. Plummer, P. Byrum, M. Kelly, M. Badger.

#### Vale

Dr. R. V. Rickard, who served Fairfield as a highly respected doctor, died after a long illness.

I would like to pay tribute to the memory of a dedicated Christian whose whole life was one of service.

Dr. Rickard was a graduate of Sydney University and was a member of the Australian Medical Corps during the Second World War.

He saw service in Colombo, Ceylon and New Guinea, and served the last year of war in an Army Hospital at Baulkham Hills.

On behalf of Fairfield Diggers Womens Bowling Club, I would like to extend to his wife and family our sincere sympathy.

#### "WELCOME TO OUR CLUB"

To all our new members . . .

There are no strangers here, only friends you haven't met.

Till next month, happy Bowling and keep smiling.

☆ ☆ ☆

*Sing this to the tune of . . .*

#### "ARE YOU LONESOME TONIGHT?"

*Are you lonesome tonight?  
Is your brassiere too tight?  
Are your corsets all falling apart?  
Have you got a big chest  
That makes holes in your vest?  
Does your spare tyre reach up to  
your heart?  
Are your stockings all laddered,  
your shoes wearing thin?  
Do you keep up your knickers with  
a big safety pin?  
Are your teeth not your own?  
Do they drop when your yawn?  
Then no wonder you're lonesome  
tonight.*

IVY HOKIN,  
Publicity Officer



*Dot and Bruce Short having a great day.*

and when I commented on his work and asked questions he became evasive. It was a known fact that some Indians were very "shady" so when I heard he was arrested after war was declared it did not surprise me.

While on guard at the barrack gates a Malay, about 10 years old, became friendly and told me what our Battalion would do and where we would be for months ahead. We called him "Snowball" and told him my name was Ned Kelly and my mate's name was "Thunderbolt". As we were a favourite of "Snowball", he used to come to the barracks quite often and call out for Ned Kelly or Thunderbolt much to the amusement of all.

When I asked him to tell me more he said we would shift back to Port Dickson, be quartered in the Haig Lines, stay there for eight weeks then shift to Mersing which would be our battle station. At this stage we did not know of our advance movements so I took the information seriously and reported the matter to Lt. Warden who was concerned and said he would handle the matter from there. All that "Snowball" told me came true, but I am a little ahead of myself and these moves will be covered later.

#### **We shift to Haig Lines**

As "Snowball" told me, on 16th June, 1941, we moved from Seremban to the Haig Lines and were quartered in long grass huts, but there was electric lights and wooden stretchers to sleep on. The sea was a short distance away and faced the Straits of Malacca.



*Our Bren Gunner, Pte. Tom Highton, in a defensive position.*

We had large wooden boxes to store our surplus clothes, etc., but found, with the humid steamy atmosphere, all leather items became thick with a green fungus and rotted the leather in a short space of time, leather watch bands being replaced frequently. To counter the deterioration of the leather items we aired and cleaned them regularly.

Then followed more local training and concentrated exercises in rapid movement through the jungle, counter attacks, guerilla-type ambushes, disciplined fire power, forced route marches, knocking out "enemy" tanks and perimeter defence, and many exercises extended over five days.

Here, hand-picked men were sent into the jungle with limited supplies of rice and water. Some used elephants for transport purposes and the training gained was to be of great assistance later to combat the Japs at their own game of infiltrating behind the enemy lines in guerilla groups.

About this time certain men were picked out of the various Companies to train as snipers. I was picked from "A" Company and attended a course conducted by Lieut. Solomon, the Intelligence Officer. We had to lay in a hollow in open ground for hours without revealing ourselves, with a minimum of water. Water bottles were placed near our mouth so as to cause the minimum of movement. Oh boy, was it hot out there in the sun? We were relieved when we practised the concealment among the trees exercise, it was so much cooler. When we had target practice the bulls-eye in the centre of the target was our objective, inners, outers and magpies did not count. I was one of the "crook" shots as, out of five shots I put one in the centre and the other four were in the bulls-eye but off centre, so I was a failure. I never did get the chance of being a sniper when war was declared.

We were trained to take precautions against chemical warfare. As there was thick jungle and undergrowth in Malaya we were taught to expect gas from above us where it would be more widespread and effective on penetrating the thick

jungle so we were issued with a plastic sheet which was neatly rolled up and carried on the top of our haversack. In the event of a gas attack we were to crouch down and cover our body till it was reasonably safe, the sheet was not large enough to cover us in the standing position. For training purposes, we were told that certain areas were contaminated with mustard gas and that we would have to improvise a method for troops to pass over the area. We cut palm leaves and made a thick "mat" over the area, then we advanced; as is known, mustard gas is a powerful item. Litmus paper was a standard issue to determine the presence of gas and to declare an area clear.

No. 1 seat was working overtime with the rumour that the 8th Division would move to the Middle East after assisting in stabilizing the Malayan situation and for this everyone was happy as here was a way out of a depressing situation. But our joy was short-lived and we soon realized we would remain in Malaya as General Bennett stepped up our jungle training.

While carrying out one of these manoeuvres I captured Colonel Varley and two of his staff. Two of us were detailed to guard a road and was told by Lieut. Warden to liken it to actual warfare and that no-one was to pass. Approximately 9.00 pm that night a car approached and was halted by our road block and the occupants got out of the car. With fixed bayonet and rifle at the ready I ordered them to the roadside when the Colonel remarked that I was outnumbered and could have run into trouble. I pointed out to the Colonel that there was a Bren gun trained on him in the roadside foliage. I advised the Colonel he would have to proceed to Platoon Headquarters for identification as there were enemy everywhere and that anyone could be the enemy infiltrating. The Colonel was annoyed but he and his staff accompanied me to Platoon Headquarters to an amazed Lieut. Warden who told me to go back to my post as he would handle the situation from there. Later I was told to report to Lieut. Warden who said:

"Mullens, if you ever do that again I will skin you alive."

Quite innocently I reminded the Lieut. of the pipe line incident at Ingleburn when the Colonel "bayoneted" every man in "A" Company when we all decided to have a sleep irrespective. I mentioned that I couldn't let the Colonel catch "A" Company again as he had said: "Never let me catch you again. Colonel or no Colonel, everyone is the enemy on these manoeuvres so don't you forget it." Lieut. Warden looked at me long and hard but I looked as serious as I could, then he told me to go back to my post. At least the Colonel found out that we learned a lot from our previous "mistake".

About this time Dhoobie's Itch and other unheard of complaints were breaking out on a large scale. Before this there were not many severe cases. Mind you, even our minor cases would call for doctor's treatment pre-war but the more serious cases received preference.

As I mentioned before our uniforms and hats were drab next to the spic-and-span British and Scot troops, the hats stained with perspiration and some had holes in them as equipment was not reaching Malaya. One day Sergeant James called for eight volunteers to do some axe work but most of us stood by the old saying, never volunteer. After a certain amount of coaxing the eight men fell out and the Sergeant said: "Left turn and down to the Q.M. store. We have just received eight new slouch hats for our platoon." One can be unlucky.

It was about this time the Colonel decided he had moulded us into shape and we had reached efficiency in the art of jungle warfare so he relaxed and granted four days' leave to Singapore, there still being a limit as to how many men were granted leave at the one time per Company.

Towards the end of June, 1941, I was detailed as a picket to Singapore (A.I.F. Military Police were mainly used for traffic and camp offences so when troops went on leave, pickets were picked from various Companies to assist the

British M.P.'s keep order). Each man had his turn at picket duty from time to time, which suited me, a married man on low pay, as our train fare was paid and we were quartered free of charge. This was my chance of seeing Singapore after five months of jungle training so it was a welcome relief.

When we arrived at Singapore Railway Station, a Land Rover was waiting to transport us to the Military Police Headquarters, a Sergeant M.P. being the driver. On the way, while proceeding up a narrow street, the driver did not reduce speed and collided with a rickshaw and did not stop. Instead he laughed and thought it was funny. Knowing the natives depended on the rickshaw to exist I objected strongly and told the Sergeant it was a low act and not funny. This led to a few words and I got off on the wrong foot from the start.

We were then quartered in the M.P. barracks and got off to a further bad start. Just prior to going on duty we were sitting down resting when the duty officer came along and issued an abbreviated order which we did not understand. Apparently it was a fall in order for the inspection parade as in a flash the British M.P.s were lined up, dressed up and standing at ease before we even stood up.

This did not win us cheers of joy from the duty officer and the situation was aggravated when I, as the marker, was handed an M.P. armband which I let drop to the ground which did not endear me to the Provost Captain. He ordered me to pick it up, which I did, but told him I had no intentions of wearing the armband as I was not a M.P. As a result no A.I.F. picket wore the armbands.

The Captain was not finished with me as he made me stand at ease then spring to attention. This he repeated three times and by this time I had little sense of humour left. Then the climax, in front of all the A.I.F. pickets and British M.P.s, he pointed to his pips and asked me what they stood for. I replied he was a Captain in the British Army. "Right," he said, "then come to attention and salute me." Well,

by this time my Irish had reached its peak so I told him to go to hell as we didn't always salute our own officers and they were twice the man he was. I was well aware of the old saying, that one salutes the uniform not the man, but he happened to be in it.

Later the next day a Corporal invited all pickets into the Colonel's Mess for a beer. A Lance Corporal came up and asked me to leave. I assured him I was not fussy who I drank with. He nearly burst a blood vessel but our M.P. Corporal came along and sorted things out. In the Australian Army a Lance Corporal is a glorified Private but in the British Army he has much authority.

This was not to be the finish as, after a tour of duty with a British and Scot M.P., we were bedding down when a British M.P. Sergeant in a loud voice said: "Today there was an argument between a member of the A.I.F. and a coolie and after listening to both sides I believed the coolie."

I jumped to my feet and said: "You would be Pommy . . . ." We both gained our feet and walked towards each other for a head-on clash; he was a tough, callous person and no doubt could give a good account of himself in a rough and tumble, no holds barred, fight. An officer passing by heard and saw what had transpired and ordered the Sergeant to another hut till we left camp. Had the fight eventuated there was no doubt I would have returned to camp a battered but satisfied person as no one would be allowed to rubbish an Australian in my presence, especially a British Red Cap.

The British Red Caps did not like the A.I.F. and we contributed, as the feeling was mutual. Poor Jerry Woodall, who was in charge of the A.I.F. pickets, nearly had a stroke on this tour of duty as our aim was to stop trouble and we got into

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**THE CLUB CAR PARKS ARE  
NOW OPEN, MONDAY TO  
FRIDAY, FROM 10 am**

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more incidents while on duty as pickets. As expected, Corporal Woodall reported the matter to Lt. Warden when we returned to camp and quite rightly I was given a severe caution and a lecture on saluting officers.

At night we carried out picket duty and by day we made the most of our leave and visited the New World, Happy World and the Great World. These Worlds were a mixture of hoop-la, knock-ems, darts and many more games, Chinese opera, picture shows, ghost trains, a very large cabaret and refreshment room. We saw the Ronggeng, a Malayan dance where the dancers faced each other with hands on their hips, jiggled towards each other then pass, not once did they touch each other.



*The Ronggeng dance.*

These amusement centres were popular and were always crowded with both troops and the local population.

It was at Great World that I saw a calf water buffalo, dragged by horns, on to the dance floor by some merry Australians. The buffalo was slipping on the slippery floor, was terrified and the more it slipped the more mess it made on the dance floor. The offending buffalo and the Australians were finally evicted but not before the dance floor had been scratched by the hooves of the buffalo. I really thought this was uncalled for and did not agree with the incident.

A strip show was advertised involving women and many Australians rushed to buy tickets. When the house had been sold out a very

pretty Chinese girl, with a lovely figure, came on to the stage gracefully swaying back and forth in front of the audience showing all her curves in her skin-tight dress, to commence her act. The lights on the stage gradually faded till she was "blacked out" and in her place there showed an "X-Ray picture" of her bone structure only. The light then gradually came back to show her in the same position minus her dress. After the same procedure she reappeared minus her slip, the same procedure and she reappeared minus her bra but wearing briefs. Then finally the stage blacked out, the "X-Ray skeleton appeared and across the stage appeared — The End. The show was so quick that one had not quite settled in the seat. The audience yelled: "We have been had, we should wreck the place." Which they did not. What's that I hear you women say: "Good enough for you. Ha' Ha'"

How the Chinese stand their Operas amazes me as the noise would aggravate anyone with a migraine or a bad head after a night before on the beer. All I could hear was a crash, bang-like hitting a kerosene tin and a lot of "yelling". One has to understand their culture and what every movement means to appreciate the Opera.

Near the Great World I saw girls, with rickshaws hovering nearby for a "fare", trying to pick up some British servicemen. They appeared to be doing fine till a jeep, with British Military Police aboard, pulled up and the servicemen took off like a shot as they were scared stiff of the M.P.s. The girls put their hands on their hips and called the Red Caps names which are not for publication, but they just laughed as they were used to this reaction from the girls.

Apart from these incidents British Red Caps were detested by all. They seemed to enjoy exercising their power and authority. I remember, when I was on this tour of duty, the M.P. Sergeant in charge of our detail, chipped an off-duty M.P. who had the top button of his tunic undone. The off-duty M.P. smiled and said: "She's right," but the smile was wiped off his face when the

Sergeant said: "It's not right. Do up the button or I will cancel your leave and escort you back to camp." The soldier conformed, but he was not happy, at least the Sergeant was consistent.

In the streets one met snake charmers, fortune tellers, beggars, natives trying to sell "hot" items at a low price. Numerous rickshaws crowded the centre of the city, their pullers telling us where to find a No. 1 girl (fast taxis have taken over these days in this area) and there were boys offering to guide one around the city for a fee.



*An Indian snake charmer—as numerous in Malaya as the snakes themselves.*

Small boys would take our hand, in the streets, and tell us they knew of a No. 1 shop where we could buy items of any nature, very good, very cheap. The storekeeper would then proceed to take every item off the shelves if he thought he could sell one. They were the most persistent and obliging people I had ever met. The boys would wait with us and if we did not buy anything at that shop they would tell us they knew of a better shop, much cheaper and this went on and on. They would not let up if they thought they could make one sale. If there were no boys about the storekeeper would stand in front of his shop and lit-

erally drag us in saying: "Come on in Aussie, this is a fair dinkum store". They caught on quick but we did not pay the storekeeper the first price quoted but would barter with him till we thought we had value for our money.

Many times we strolled through Change Alley and had many "battles" with the natives over prices, sometimes we won, sometimes we lost. In those days Change Alley was a place where the natives displayed their wares on the foot-path and many times one had to squat to barter but today this old charm has given way to the "concrete jungle" shops. In 1974 this was one of the first places I took my wife to as I wanted to show her this interesting place as I knew it but one can't stop progress and the place was cleaned up. I was a little disappointed.

With all the above factors missing, a lot of the old oriental charm had disappeared. I thought Singapore was fascinating in 1941. But what one has not seen one does not miss, Singapore is still an interesting place to visit.

A fortune could be spent in Singapore, but on 2/- (2 shillings) a day we were restricted and did little to add to the profits of the merchants. There were numerous articles made of ivory, ebony, pewter, silver, gold and oriental designed silks which were eye catching to say the least.

Gold was a favourite with the natives; a very noticeable feature was the gold teeth, when some natives smiled all one could see was a flash of gold. Looking around I came to the conclusion that some natives had gone without some essential item just to have gold teeth. The Tamil women had many trinkets and rings from ears and hands, right down to the very toes.

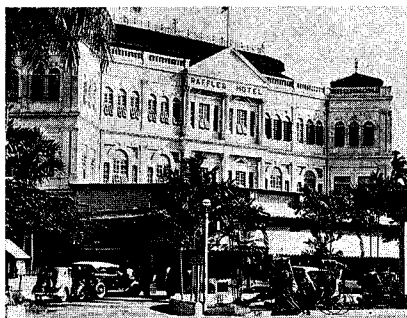
Many Chinese lived in junks on the canal in Singapore and I often walked along the banks watching the junks move about missing each other by inches for that was all there was to spare, sardines could not be packed tighter. As in all parts of the Orient, these people are born on the junks, marry and die on

them, coming off the junks by day and returning at night. The conditions they live under binds them into a very close knit community and, in the main, marriage is kept within their people. The locality is not the healthiest of places as rubbish was thrown into the surrounding waters plus other waste.



*A Sampan Symphony.*

I visited Raffles Museum and spent an enjoyable time there as the Oriental relics were very interesting, plus displays from other countries. Raffles Square, being the main shopping centre in 1941, had some nice buildings and the cafes were more pleasant to walk into and it was a pleasure to partake of a meal or drink there. These cafes were more expensive than other cafes but it was well worth it.



*Raffles Hotel, Singapore.*

One time we were looking for a cafe and the Stamford was recommended and, as there was a partition across the door, we could not see in but with the "babble" going

on we decided the place was full of natives so we didn't go in. We inquired further and were directed to the Stamford but we said it was a native cafe but were assured it was an all white cafe. Upon entering the cafe we found it was full of English and Scot soldiers and everyone was talking at once in their different accents.

While on picket duty I was detailed with a British Sergeant and a Scot Red Cap (M.P.) and we were assigned to patrol Lavender Street and the adjoining streets. Most establishments in this area were out of bounds to all troops. The British M.P. tried to stop two Australians from entering a dance hall and the situation looked grim till I stepped out of the shadows, there being a brown out at the time. The Aussies saw me and said: "Are you a picket mate?" I told them I was and they asked me if the dance hall was out of bounds. I replied: "Go where you like." Being Australians and told they could go in if they wished, they quietened down and said: "OK mate, as you are a picket we will not cause any trouble but these two other mugs can thank their lucky stars you are here as we wouldn't take it from them." They walked away and peace reigned. They realised that they could be detailed for picket duty at some future date.

Many of the women of the street frequented Lavender Street and the dance halls were second rate and filled with smoke and like a furnace to walk into but there was ample beer to quench the thirst. One woman shuffled up to me and offered me the keys to her flat but I wasn't interested, not even in a brown out. She was fat, smelly and her clothes were not clean. Another girl approached the Scot M.P. and tickled him under the chin and he made the only sound I heard him make all night, that being a "girlish" giggle which sounded quite comical. Another girl rubbed her body up against the British Sergeant M.P. asking him if he was looking for a woman. The Sergeant was enjoying it till he stepped out of the shadows and the girl saw his M.P. armband. She abused him then, and called him names which would have made a bullock driver blush and

more. I could see the Red Caps were not popular, even in Lavender Street.

In the year 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles founded Singapore, when, it has been said, he purchased it from the Sultan of Johore. Apparently it was a place with no future, just an island of mangrove swamps and jungle inhabited by only a few fishermen — what foresight did he have?

Singapore went ahead, the name Raffles marking its progress, for it appeared in many parts of the city. Raffles Square, the European shopping centre in 1941; Raffles Museum; Raffles Hotel, which was out of bounds to Other Ranks in 1941 but I eventually strolled through it and had a cool drink in 1974 with my wife, and Stamford Street with a cafe of the same name located there. In Singapore we also saw the statue of Stamford Raffles, which, I am told was still standing when Singapore fell in 1942. I once again saw the statue in 1974.

In the days of Sir Stamford Raffles and Somerset Maugham, Singapore was known as the City of the Lion as, it was stated a lion was found under the billiard table in Raffles Hotel and there was an old Colonial atmosphere which today has changed into a thriving, bustling city of various races, religious and culture. Singapore is known as one of the Orient's most fascinating

cities and has the title of "Instant Asia".

Raffles Hotel and Victoria Memorial Hall still present their dignified facades to the ever changing city. It would be a shame to see them go, but they are being dwarfed by skyscraper hotels, office blocks and apartments. Some of the present day towering hotels are the Equatorial, Cockpit, Shangri-La, Mandrin, Hyatt plus many more.

Today a tourist attraction is the Car Park in Orchard Street which is a car park till 5.00 pm then, before the last car has left the "mobile kitchens" are hand drawn into allotted positions with the food already cooked. Within minutes tables and chairs are set in position and food is served. We had a meal there but some may find it a bit primitive.

Two years before the war the population of Singapore was approximately 700,000, of which about 8,000 were Europeans. Three-quarters of Singapore's population were Chinese, the remainder mixed races.

In Singapore it was possible for one to walk through one portion of the city and view the magnificent houses of the Europeans, Malaysians, Chinese and Indians and yet not far away existed Chinatown and the slum areas which, these days, are slowly becoming smaller as they are demolished for new structures.

**Next — Singapore continued.**

M. MULLENS

## DIGGERS DART CLUB

### INVITATION TO ALL MEMBERS, INTENDING MEMBERS OR VISITORS

*All welcome to join the fun and enjoy the pleasant company of all ages. You can be a beginner or a champ.*

*Social games played Friday nights, 8 pm start.*

*Competition is played Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Ladies teams, Mixed team, Mens teams— A, B or C Grade players welcome.*

*For further information see any Committeeman on Friday nights in the Darts Area.*

## Members please note —

THE RECITING OF THE "ODE" WILL BE AT 8.00 pm.

ON THE SCREENING OF FILMS, TUESDAY AND SUNDAY  
AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN A PRODUCTION  
SHOW IS BEING STAGED.

R. T. THOMPSON, M.B.E., Sec./Manager.

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*Orders now taken for the Service Members Cuff Links  
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Cuff Links ..... \$12.00      Tie Bar ..... \$5.00

*Hours of business: 8 am-4.30 pm, Tuesday to Saturday  
inclusive.*

## Notice to Members

### TO ALL MEMBERS

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THIS IS FOR **YOUR** BENEFIT

R. T. Thompson, M.B.E., Secretary/Manager.

## TO EX-SERVICE MEMBERS OF CITY OF FAIRFIELD RSL MEMORIAL AND EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB LIMITED

Limited copies of "Reveille" will be available, from time to  
time, at the Records Office.

DOES YOUR CLUB HAVE A REPORT IN THIS EDITION?

IF NOT — WHY NOT ASK YOUR SECRETARY OR  
PUBLICITY OFFICER WHY?

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 11)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*



*Chinatown scene.*

I visited Chinatown and such filth, at that stage, I had never seen its equal. In the narrow dirty streets, children, many just toddlers, and dressed in soiled clothing, would put out a grubby hand for a few cents. Others more forward would tug at our pockets and be more demanding. To see people like this was more like a tug at our hearts. Items of clothing hung from buildings on sticks and, at times literally blotted out the sun.

Most shops opened onto the footpaths and in these shops hung dried shark fins, dried fish, poultry and items of food which looked like rubbish to me. A strong odour always hung over these shops. The native cafes were always crowded and were most unhygienic according to European standards.

Singapore was described as:

"A city of strange people, a city of strange customs, a city of still stranger odours. Magnificent buildings, filthy hovels — limousines and bullock drays, rich merchants and

miserable mendicants — rickshaws milling in the centre of the city — mecca of a Digger on leave."

Thus I found Singapore in 1941.

There was a big clean-up and re-organisation of Singapore post-war. The disappearance of the rickshaws, which were replaced by wide roads and fast traffic, the absence of snake charmers, fortune tellers, beggars and the reduction of Chinatown, which was replaced by modern structures, were quite obvious in 1974. However the average present day tourist will not notice this fact as there is still a large area of Chinatown in existence.

Every city has its slum areas, a blot on any city.

In 1974, 32 years after the fall of Singapore, I stood before the graves of Captain John Edgely and Pte. Tom Highton in Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore, and of other men from the "bush" whom I had known, with bowed head, sad but proud to have known these men.

It was fitting that water from a tropical storm, which we all knew so well, was running down my cheeks, not all was rain water. To those with men resting there let me assure them it is a beautiful spot in lovely quiet garden surroundings away from the bustle of the city, immaculately cared for. There is a thin garden strip where flowers grow in line with the headstones. The in-between areas consist of beautiful well-kept lawns. Four thousand graves exist in this cemetery but on the walls of the Memorial there are 24,000 names from all Allied units.

Special thanks to Mary Tryp who made and donated a beautiful bear, won by Carla Montgomery and wanted by everybody. Thanks also to A. Carroll, P. Bramble, B. Cottle, M. Walker and Val Lovatt for raffle prizes and lucky seat prizes. Thanks also to L. Wheatley and A. Carroll for selling and folding raffle tickets and to Ralph Glennon for driving us. Thanks to A. Carroll, L. Bowling, V. Lovatt and Richard Seddon for the loan of their airpots.

President Gloria would like to express her heartfelt thanks to Dot Sherlock for always taking her to do the buying of the sweets for the hospital. Dot has always offered to do this chore since Gloria has been President.

President Gloria would also like to thank all the girls who sold Legacy badges on Friday 28th, Saturday 29th and Sunday, 30th Aug-

ust. Special thanks to Dot Kemister for selling badges at husband Tom's place of work and to Joan Nolan for selling them at her place of work and to all her workmates who bought the badges.

Thanks also to all the girls who prepared and served afternoon tea to all the boys and girls who sold badges and thanks to the 6.00 am sellers on Friday 4th: Wilma Wheeler, L. Bowling, A. Bowen and N. Sherlock.

I've just heard that Mary Kovais has had a stroke. We all wish her well.

"By the time parents are ready to enjoy the comforts of life, their children are using them."

Till next time,

DAPH SEDDON,  
Publicity Officer

\*\*\*\*\*  
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IF NOT — WHY NOT ASK YOUR SECRETARY OR  
PUBLICITY OFFICER WHY?

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**Your Barber**  
**and**  
**Ladies Hairdresser**  
**are upstairs**

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the Club.

Continuing my sojourn as a picket in Singapore, the British M.P.s handed over a prisoner for escort back to Port Dickson. Well I have never seen such a leech as he smoked nearly all our cigarettes, made a hole in our sweets and drank our beer on the 200-mile back. We tried moving to another carriage to avoid him but no matter where we pickets went, he found us. I had never seen such an annoying person under escort. His crime in Singapore had been drunk and disorderly.

We arrived back in camp for a Company manoeuvre which lasted a week. A platoon from another Company acted as the "enemy". We were to advance along the road in extended formation, would be fired on by the enemy which would hold us up. When held up by this well-entrenched road block we deployed into the jungle and infiltrated to the rear of the road block to find the "enemy" had withdrawn. We would then reform and advance till held up again. If we were not successful in breaching the roadblock we struck across country relying on our compasses to keep us on our correct bearing. Even then we would strike pockets of the enemy which we had to eliminate. In these cases we avoided set tracks and paddi fields as we became good targets in these areas.

When the Japanese came down Malaya these were the exact methods they used, so we were to be well aware of their tactics.

We passed through many villages and I had often heard the saying that some people live on the smell of an oily rag, well here was the saying in real life. The people seemed happy, though as it was the only life they knew they had no regrets. Native houses were very flimsy. The floors could barely take our weight but were suitable for the much smaller natives. In the main the houses had very little furniture but we were amazed at the number of portable sewing machines. Some houses had large chiming clocks.

Many jungle houses were built high with a pen beneath in which they kept their goats and pigs. The common saying was there was nothing wrong with that as they had been there for years and not one

goat or pig had died because of this. Small drains ran through most villages and over these drains the natives built toilets so, although the water was crystal clear further down it was contaminated.

Many men showed more than a casual interest in our arms, mostly the tommy guns, bren guns and the .55 MK1 Boys anti-tank rifle. It may have been "childish" interest but some looked very intelligent so all questions were treated with caution.

After yet another successful manoeuvre where we fought the "enemy" in scattered groups, in delaying actions, in set positions and destroyed their tanks at road blocks, we returned to camp which entailed a 15-mile route march. Upon arriving back to base all Companies lined up for a medical inspection of Dhobies Itch and tinea which was very prevalent by that time. From this medical three quarters of the men were ordered to a special quarantine hut by the R.M.O. for extended treatment.

Having tinea around the thighs and crutch I was not considered serious enough for admittance so was placed on full duties which entailed three guards in the one week plus Battalion runner and other duties in my stand down time. Some men were in a bad shape and Colonel Jeater (2/20th Bn.) had weeping tinea from head to foot. He was so effected that he was replaced at a later date.

Many signs sprung up outside the quarantine hut such as, "Keep out of the B.E.F." (Capt. Arthur Barrett was our R.M.O. so the name 'Barrett's Experimentel Farm'). Another sign read: "Visiting hours 2.30 to 4.30 pm." "Babies washed and fed at certain hours." After a week in the B.E.F. the men returned to their quarters which pleased me immensely as I had my full of guard duties and boring Bn. and fatigue duties.

The rubbers and scratchers, while in the B.E.F., had been daily entertained by Pat Wall and his banjo, assisted by a chorus of more or less harmonious melodists. This combination was our Bn. concert party and used this sojourn to practise. This brought back memories of the



sing songs on the "Queen Mary" when a large crowd congregated in one of the stair wells aft, and spectators lent over the rails from "A" deck down to about "F" deck and took part in singing of all the old favourites.

Prickly heat was uncomfortable but did not worry us to any great extent and in this direction we were liberal with Talc powder. It was the tinea which worried the men and the R.M.O. most as it literally ate into the flesh. It attacked the feet, arms, high in the thighs, ears, and some men were a slimy mess all over. As we were carrying out arduous training and were constantly wet from either rain or perspiration, the tinea or itch did not have a chance of getting better. Once one caught the infection there seemed no way to cure it.

Some civilian doctors were of the opinion that our diet was the cause of these diseases, although there was no confirmation of this, and that eating bananas and pineapples would help solve the problem. Although these fruits were plentiful, they did not appear on our mess tables frequently, we relied on buying them from the canteen. The doctors were also of the opinion that we ate too much meat which, they stated, heats up the blood and so could contribute to the diseases.

In all their experience in the tropics the civilian doctors had never encountered the same skin complaints among the European and native population as existed among the AIF. They were baffled as to the actual cause and our Regimental Medical Officers, newcomers to the tropics, naturally had no answers.

Very few green vegetables were available to us and salads were unheard of. The fish we did see had to be purchased from the natives or caught by ourselves, then we had to arrange the cooking. There were tinned herrings which was hard to stomach.

Our R.M.O.s did everything in their power to combat these diseases which, at times kept the Battalion far below fighting strength. Every morning there were long queues outside the R.A.P. and special

showers were set aside for the "worst" cases of men suffering from extreme tinea but this did not alter the situation. The tinea was treated with merurichrome which stung like hell on the raw flesh and it stained all our underclothing yellow.

With all these annoying skin diseases plus the distressing Malayan climate under army conditions, the inactive garrison duty role we were playing in the war while the men in the Middle East were fighting, the complete boredom of it all, we were fed up with this "glamour boy" existence.

Soldiering in the tropics was for the young only as most men over 35 could not cope with the climate, especially if they had led "soft" easy living lives pre-war. We had some tough "39 ers" bushmen in our Battalion like Pte. Arthur (Jordon Valley) Cameron of the 1914-18 Camel Corps who were the exception and coped with the trying conditions.

But to the credit of the troops they did not throw in the towel but battled the conditions and at all times maintained their cheerfulness and the will to overcome all obstacles in the true Australian spirit.

Discipline was very rigid and in some cases men were put in the Guard House for minor offences. We, as guards, personally knew the men, let them out to eat at the guards' mess table but quickly returned them to the "brig" when warned that the officer of the day was approaching. In my own opinion some of the offences were trivial and laughable and would pass as high spirited in civilian life where there is not discipline as found in the army.

One day, while I was carrying out Battalion runner duties, I noticed a ripe paw-paw on a tree at the fringe of the jungle and, slicing it with my bayonet, I had an enjoyable feed. It seemed strange that a paw-paw stayed there to the exact ripening stage so, on second thoughts I disposed of the skin well into the jungle. The next day was Sunday and in came Sergeant James inquiring if any Bn. runner had seen or touched a ripe paw-paw on a tree near Bn. H.Q. as it was to be the Colonel's dessert and he was not

amused. When the Sergeant asked me I looked blank and said: "What paw-paw?"

On the 7th July, the Battalion began yet another series of five-day exercises among the rubber trees and surrounding jungle. "A" Company was the first to go out into the field, with a platoon of "D" Company acting as the enemy. These exercises were continued week by week and were extremely valuable in providing the officers and men with first-hand experience re tactical work in typical Malayan countryside.

Major Bill Fraser rejoined the unit on 28th July after being attached to Brigade H.Q. as Brigade Major.

There were times when the Colonel relaxed and let the men unwind and one of these times was the 29th July, 1941, when we had our Battalion birthday party, as it was a year since the initial forming of the Battalion.

Previous to this, on 20th July, the Battalion band had assisted at the funeral ceremonies at Malacca of the late Mrs. Seet Kee Ann who had been known for her many womanly qualities. It was for this reason, coupled with the fact that members of this family had shown many kindnesses to the AIF in Malaya, that Colonel Varley permitted the band to attend the service and so give tangible evidence of the AIF sympathy for the family in their bereavement.

In appreciation the relatives said they would like to repay the Colonel for his actions so, knowing our party was to take place, the Colonel suggested beer for the troops. With that beer and the beer we bought we sure had a royal time: soft drink was served for the non-drinkers, yes one does have non-drinkers in an army. A large piece of fruit cake was also given to each man and the "party" was held under the coconut trees just on dusk. The band played selections during the evening and, later assisted at the community concert conducted with success by Lieut. Ken Mosher. Two large bon fires provided all the lighting necessary and reminded us of our pre-war bush days around the camp fire. After all the old favourites were sung, including the rollicking "Dash Em All" (or words to that effect), the band led a "crocodile crawl" in and out and around the bon fires. We were whooping like aborigines at a Corroboree in wild-est Australia.

Being near the main road, people passing thought we were mad but it was our night and we really unwound. After long arduous training it was a good move on the Colonel's part and it was appreciated by all.

In the current "Men May Smoke" Battalion magazine the Colonel wrote as follows:

#### Retrospect

We have now completed a year's training as a Battalion. The pay

## DIGGERS DART CLUB

### INVITATION TO ALL MEMBERS, INTENDING MEMBERS OR VISITORS

*All welcome to join the fun and enjoy the pleasant company of all ages. You can be a beginner or a champ.*

*Social games played Friday nights, 8 pm start.*

*Competition is played Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Ladies teams, Mixed team, Mens teams—A, B or C Grade players welcome.*

*For further information see any Committeeman on Friday nights in the Darts Area.*

books of a number of officers show their date of enlistments in the 2/18th. — 13th July, 1940. On the 15th July a number of officers and Militia N.C.O.s commenced training at Wallgrove. On the 24th July the Headquarters of the Battalion was officially opened and on the 29th July our first big batch of recruits totalling 369 men, marched into the camp from Tamworth R.R.D. Before leaving Wallgrove the Battalion was up to strength in numbers including our first reinforcements.

Since that date a year's training and testing has slipped by and a number, for health reasons chiefly, have been discharged or returned to Australia.

As a Battalion or as an individual we should not be content to look back and feel contented with our achievements but always look to the future and the tasks ahead which become more apparent with the training we have done.

However, on our first birthday, I take the opportunity of thanking all ranks for their efforts which have been made as a result of your sense of duty, just as surely as the prompting of your conscience which caused you to enlist.

The individual maintenance of such ideals will cause this Battalion to be honourably known when the official records of the doings of the AIF in this war are written.

In looking back we take pride in the conscientious endeavours to carry out our training. We have learnt quite a lot and I feel we have earned the commendations expressed by the Brigade Commander. We are proud of our band, our concert party, our orchestra and Battalion Magazine. We have taken the lead in these important departments.

We are building up a spirit of esprit de corps within the unit which will, with the blooding of action, cement mateships and will be prized in the years to come more than anything else.

The humidity of the Malayan climate plus the disappointment caused by our absence from the scene of action with your fellow Australians in other units of the AIF is apt to fray our nerves, but you can be rest assured, your time will come, and for that event we must be always ready. It is my bounden duty to keep this in mind. A Battalion which is thoroughly trained can perform its task much more expeditiously and much cheaper in casualties, and this is of primary importance to us all. The Battalion birthday party held on the beach will ever remain a pleasant memory to me.

The enthusiasm, goodwill and lightheartedness displayed by all was fitting climax to a year's endeavour.

A. L. VARLEY,  
Lt. Col., C.O., 2/18th. Bn.  
Malaya, 1941.

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### NSW EX-PRISONERS OF WAR ASSOCIATION

This Association is organising the 4th National Ex-Prisoners of War Reunion to take place in Sydney — October 14 to 18, 1981.

We will have large parties from the United States and New Zealand as well as visitors from Great Britain, Holland and Canada.

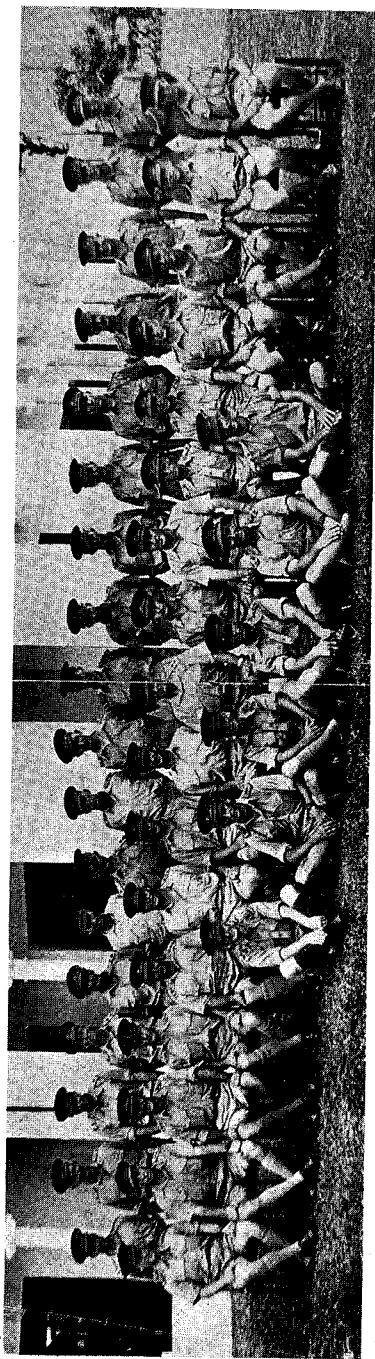
It will be the largest gathering of Ex-POWs since 1945 and the expected attendance in the vicinity of 4,500 including those from all States of Australia with the largest contingent from NSW.

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### TO EX-SERVICE MEMBERS OF CITY OF FAIRFIELD RSL MEMORIAL AND EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB LIMITED

Limited copies of "Reveille" will be available, from time to time, at the Records Office.

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## *Officers of the 2/18th Bn. outside their mess in Malaya.*

Officers of the 2/18th Battalion shortly after arrival in Malaya.

Back row left to right: Lt. Ken Mosher, Lt. L. Sulman, Lt. V. Schwenke, Lt. R. Cohen, Lt. M. Chisholm, Capt. Gregg, Lt. G. Richardson, Lt. J. Vernon, Lt. G. Warden, Lt. G. Solomon, Lt. J. Crago, Lt. Thirgood, Lt. F. Evans, Lt. J. Fuller, Lt. J. Carey, Lt. A. Hence, Lt. J. Pringle, Lt. R. Griffin.

Middle row: Capt. A. Barrett, Lt. G. McLaughlin, Capt. O. Davis, Capt. C. O'Brien, Capt. T. Johnstone, Major A. Davis, Major C. Asheton, Lt. Col. A. Varley, Capt. D. Wilson, Capt. V. Toose, Major W. Fraser, Capt. Topfer, Capt. D. Okey, Capt. H. Gibson, Padre Saunders, Lt. A. Loxton.

Front row: Lt. W. Wilmshurst, Lt. M. Swaddling, Lt. I. McKay, Lt. E. Simmons, Lt. B. Barnes, Lt. A. Nickols.

We were proud of our officers and had full confidence in them, they were as fine a body of men to ever leave these shores.

The Battalion boasted a fair percentage of rough riders, including some who made headlines in the main shows in NSW and Queensland. Among the best known was Les McNamara, who hailed from Moree and Goondiwindi way, and who has ridden the wildest of scrub bullocks in the North and North-West and was a familiar figure at the Royal Easter Show in Sydney, in his sombrero and scarlet shirt. He was also a number one horseman with, what is known to the riding fraternity, as "a good seat" Les survived the P.O.W. days only to be killed in a shocking road accident near Moree a short time after his release, five out of six people were killed in this accident.

Laurie Harris who came from the Hunter River District was another stayer who had ridden at Sydney and Brisbane and many important country shows. Laurie also was a good shearer and could turn out 120 to 130 sheep a day with ease.

Jack Scott, a typical long-legged bushman, was Bogabilla's representative when buck jumping and bullock riding, camp drafting were on the show programme. Two of Jack's sisters, May and Bessie, were known renowned horsewomen in the North-West of NSW.

Dick Purcell, whose home was Midkin station, Moree, with his family, were top line show performers at Moree and other country shows.

Bruce Munro from Weebollabolla station, Moree, could handle a horse with the best of them and inherited the ability to rope a steer quickly and get even the wildest bullock drafted in the minimum of time.

Al Counter from Emmaville was something out of the bag when sticking to the bucking, heaving lump of short horn bullock. They have to be tough in the New England district when it comes to bringing cantankerous hill cattle to their grazing fields.

Lieut. Jack Carey was well versed in cattle, horses and sheep which he handled on his sheep station at Tamworth. Jack was known as a first class rough rider and he could throw more than could throw him.

Being a bush Battalion in the main there were numerous others who could fit the bill concerning horses and cattle and the list could go on and on.

Some of our rough riders tried their hand at water buffalo riding. These lumbering animals, domesticated for ploughing etc., have enormous horns, a rather nasty look in their eye and are not very friendly so they were a challenge to our boys.



*Notable Australian Rodeo riders in new surroundings.*

*Left to right: Jack Scott, Dick Purcell, Jack Carey, Bruce Munro, Laurie Harris, Les McNamara.*

Some buffaloes were being led down the main street of Port Dickson, near our barracks, when our rough riders saw them. With a real Australian bushman's yell, they dashed down the quiet street and hopped on the backs of several of the animals before the owners or the buffaloes were aware of their intentions.

With a snort and frightened stamp of hooves, the buffaloes commenced to buck about in a lively style, some of the riders being pitched off. They soon remounted, having however more difficulty this time as the element of surprise was gone. Soon there was a medley of sounds, as the boys coo-ee'd, the Malay owners yabbered excitedly in their language, and the very annoyed buffaloes snorted with mingled fear and rage.

One or two of the animals made a bucking run along the street, in an attempt to dislodge the yelling Diggers on their backs, while others milled around and did everything but roll on the ground.

What a sight! The entire population of the town seemed to gather in the twinkling of an eye and a large number of Diggers on leave helped to swell the tumult by shouting encouragement to the riders.

A few of the chaps had spills, but some managed to stick to their animal's bony backbone till he beast got too tired to do more than snort asthmatically.

It was the best bit of rough riding seen about these parts, in fact it was something the natives had not seen before so it was a treat for them. By the time the boys had distributed a few pieces of Malayan coinage among the owners everyone was smiling — except the buffaloes.

With all the pranks the AIF used to get up to, they were always popular as there was never anything detrimental done to the people or any destruction of property.

It was while we were at the Haig Lines that two of our officers, Lieuts. George Warden and Crago, caused a minor International situation on one of their leave breaks. They unwittingly crossed the Thailand border and to add to this they were unofficially wearing side arms and carrying binoculars, so technically they became an armed party. They were detained by the Thai border guards and, after "diplomatic" negotiations by Major Bill Fraser, from Battalion Headquarters, were released to be severely reprimanded on their return to the unit. It was rumoured that it was a touch and go as to whether they would be returned to Australia, but they survived for which we were very pleased as Lieut. Warden was our platoon Commander and a good officer.

What made the Thais treat this incident serious was the fact that Indian troops, carrying out manoeuvres on the Thai-Malay border pre-war, became so keyed up that they wanted to carry the manoeuvre on and sweep into Thailand and so had the Thais all tensioned up.

Indian troops on the Malay-Thai border were professional soldiers and fought for whoever was paying them at the time. As one soldier explained he was now being paid by the British so would fight for them but when his tour of duty was up there was the possibility he would be fighting against the British.

Next — The Haig Lines continued.

M. MULLENS

## ATTENTION SERVICE MEMBERS

Orders now taken for the Service Members Cuff Links and Tie Bar — at the Records Office.

Cuff Links ..... \$12.00      Tie Bar ..... \$5.00

Hours of business: 8 am-4.30 pm, Tuesday to Saturday inclusive.



# Fishing

There has been no news in the Field of late from the Fisho's mainly due to our new Publicity Officer's inability to get the latest results etc. Maybe this will stir him to greater heights and he will then put his pen to paper.

The Club has had a most successful year to date and the score board is wide open — the biggest fish, biggest bag, but there is no doubt in my mind who the Club Champion will be this year, or I could be wrong? We may have a new champ?

This weekend the venue is Nelsons Bay so there should be some massive catches recorded. This is a Saturday trip and if it is successful we will make it a monthly affair, so come to our monthly meetings and join us, the second Wednesday every month.

I have noted the build-up of new members at the last few meetings. It is good to see the old members' sons carrying on the tradition. Maybe we will have another Szelocci champ next year.

It is good to see "Alex Nagy" back fishing with us. He was one of the best fisho's we had in the Club, next to brother George, who never misses a trip or fish.

Well members, the tickets for our Presentation Night in The Old Bark Hut in October will be on sale next month so make sure you get yours early and don't be disappointed. This, as always, will be a night to remember.

As you know the Club is involved in quite a bit of comp this year. Crossroads, De Havilland and W.W.F.A. Comp and up to now our Fisho's, I believe, are hoping to have the trophies for "Presentation Night".

My congratulations to the old stalwarts who turn up to run the raffles. Without them we would not be enjoying our normal every year get-togethers. Let's hope everyone helps next year.

Have had no reports from Heinze Eumann re the wonderful fishing in Queensland. We all know he has been very ill of late so maybe his fishing trips are limited.

A Ladies and Gents day out is proposed in the warmer weather so ask your wives and sweethearts if they want to go so that arrangements can be made. "Nelsons Bay"?

I could write on all night but must get this epistle to the Club to have same inserted in the Field.

OLD MARLIN



100

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 12)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

While at the Haig Lines we witnessed a Malay marriage. Their religion is Mohammedan in which a man can have more than one wife depending, of course on his financial status. The wedding ceremony must be strictly observed, and the bridegroom, contrary to customs prevailing among Europeans, must remain glum and funeral-like throughout. In the ceremony he must not move at all; if the fidgets, moves his head from one side to the other like nervous bridegrooms are apt to do, he is regarded as coming from a bad family; in fact it ruins his reputation.

It takes three weeks before a Malayan wedding is finished. Firstly the parents of both families meet and there is a feast. Then the couples are banished to their respective homes, where they must remain with someone watching them all the time. On the day of the wedding feast the bride is dressed in the ancient wedding gown handed down through the family, and sits in front of her home for all to see. When the feast is finished, the last hymn is sung and the last piece of fish is accounted for, the couple are regarded as being married.

The bridegroom then walks past the bride's home and she beckons him in. The guests take the bride and groom and place them in bed. Long stemmed flowers are handed to all and sundry, each flower having an egg attached to it. The long stem denotes the straight life they should lead, the flowers the bloom of youth, and the egg denotes fertility. When the bridegroom walks past the bride's house in his Sunday

best consisting of long white trousers covered by a colourful sarong, a white blouse and a Turkish style hat, and the bride does not beckon him in, he is rejected. This would be unusual.

As marriage was a simple affair so was divorce. When a husband says: "I divorce you." Three times, he was divorced.

On the 7th August, 1941, I departed on my first four days' leave since landing in Malaya in February. I was on duty in Singapore in June and other leaves were day leaves to nearby towns. George Fenner and I went to Kuala Lumpur and were guests of a very nice Malay family.

Kuala Lumpur was and is the most important city in Malaya because it is situated between Singapore and Thailand and is conveniently accessible by air, sea, land and rail. It is the main rail and telegraph junction between Singapore and North Malaya. The railway proceeds through Ipoh, Kuala Kangsar, Taiping, Butterworth, Kuala Perlis (on the West coast Malay Thailand border) to Thailand. The other main link is from Singapore through Gemas to the Northern tip of the Malay peninsula to Kota Bharu on the East coast of Malaya and on to the Thailand border.

The main sea terminal of present day Malaysia is Port Kelang, 26 miles from Kuala Lumpur (Port Kelang was Port Sweetenham in 1941) and today 19 International Shipping lines frequently fly their flags in this port.

Kuala Lumpur, with a population of 800,000, was a mixture of races



# *Sunday Showtime*

**IMPAX** and Compere **RICHARD ALLEN**

Starting at 4.00 pm

*Sunday, 18th October —*

- ☐ ROY COOPER & CUSTER'S LAST STAND  
Fabulous Country Group.
- ☐ KERRIE GRANT, Popular TV Vocaliste.
- ☐ LESTER & SMART, Versatile Comedy Duo.

*Sunday, 25th October —*

- ☐ LITTLE PATTI, Talented TV Singing and Recording Star.
- ☐ MARTY MORTON, TV Comedian.
- ☐ DES GIBSON, Popular TV Vocalist.

*Sunday, 1st November —*

- ☐ FAMILY AFFAIR, Mo Award-Winning Vocal Group.
- ☐ DENISE MORRISON, Popular TV Vocaliste.
- ☐ CARL BARITEAU, Talented Multi-Instrumentalist.

*Sunday, 8th November —*

- ☐ THE FOUR KINSMEN, Popular TV Singing Stars.
- ☐ JANETTE SIMAN, Versatile TV Vocaliste.
- ☐ THE MAGIC MAN, Illusionist.

*Sunday, 15th November —*

- ☐ JENNY GREEN, International Vocaliste.
- ☐ NOEL TALBOT, Entertaining English Funny-man.
- ☐ LEYLAND ROBERTS, Talented Piano/Vocalist.

which milled in the streets. There were slant eyed Chinese maidens wearing cheongsams, but who now wear mini skirts; dusky Malays wearing kebayas and baju kurungs but who wear colourful flowing maxis; long-haired Indian girls in their colourful saris, pretty vivacious Eurasians dressed European style and every so often, the golden-haired Caucasian features of the European, American, Russian or Australian.

As in other parts of Malaya we found that our hosts were more shy than Western people but once one "broke the ice", their hospitality knew no bounds. A sign of genuine feeling was an invitation to their home where they proudly showed off their visitors to their family and relatives. They would try to introduce one to as many dishes of Malayan food as possible but we had to be careful of dipping into anything that looked tasty and red. That probably was a chilly sauce which was dynamite to the unaccustomed tongue. I know because I was "caught" while partaking of a meal at the home of a Malay family whilst in Seremban. We named it "hell fire sauce".

Unless very modern, it is the custom to remove one's shoes when entering a Malay home and one is always polite to the old folk as they are held in high esteem. One accepts a drink graciously whether it be a cool drink, Chinese tea or the usual 'kopi oh' or black coffee with sugar. When partaking of a meal eat with the right hand and avoid using the left hand.

We noticed that Malays were fashion conscious as, although the heat tempts one to dress to a minimum, it is thought impolite to enter certain places such as Mosques and Temples if one is not fully clothed.

In 1974 the skyline of Kuala Lumpur had changed with the building of large shopping blocks and towering hotels, the latter being self contained with shopping centres, restaurants, ball rooms, discos, cabarets, etc.

But the very attractive railway station still stands to retain its lovely Moorish architecture and the National Museum is a majestic structure in the interesting old Malay style of architecture. It has two large murals on the front depicting historical episodes and Malayan craft.



Railway Station.

We toured Kuala Lumpur by day and at night we attended the various cabarets where, as in all cabarets in Malaya, there were taxi dancers to dance with all comers for a charge. The cabaret owners preferred men without partners as it meant more business for the taxi dancers and so more profit for him.

There being no AIF Military Police patrolling the streets (our Military Police were mainly used for traffic and within the Battalion for discipline infringements), the British MPs (Red Caps) were in charge of all Imperial troops. They would delight in causing embarrassment by approaching one in a cabaret and, in an arrogant demanding manner ask for our leave pass, especially if we were in the company of civilians which we objected to. This was low cunning as it was a way of getting at us without any direct action on our part as the MPs knew we would not cause trouble while we were guests in a public place. When the situation was peaceful they sure had a way of stirring up trouble. It was here that a major confrontation between the Red Caps and the 8th Div. Sigs was averted by negotiations between the men and AIF officers.

Bruce Dickson, No. 2 table in the Bowlers Lounge, could enlarge on this as he was one of the "rebels", but I will endeavour to cover the main facts.

The trouble started when two Sigs. were manhandled by the Red Caps before they turned them over to the AIF guardhouse. This added to the existing resentment between

the two bodies and the Sigs. were stirred up. This, plus the fact that R.S.M. May tried to enforce the 10.30 pm lights out, brought things to a head and an object was thrown at him. A compulsory parade was called to find the culprit but this was to no avail so some time later another compulsory parade was called but still no result, so they were told they would be confined to barracks till the matter was resolved. In opposition to this the Sigs. formed up, marched out of the camp and headed for Kuala Lumpur in what ever they stood up in. One of the leaders was Cec Ramilles of Rugby Union fame in that era.

On the way they encountered two Red Caps and, although they did not harm them, cut all the buttons off their uniforms and shoulder epauletts. They made them stand to attention, then sent them on their way. The Sigs. then took control of the Great Eastern Cabaret, which was for officers only and out of bounds to other ranks. They evicted the staff, and proceeded to dance with the taxi dancers. Two Sigs. acted as barmen and carried on serving all types of beverages.

The idea, I assume, was to bait the Red Caps for a showdown. Had the Red Caps come in there would surely have been bloodshed. But between the Sigs. officers and an AIF Provost officer from Seremban, the men were talked into returning to their barracks. So a little common sense and tolerance avoided what could have been a serious major situation.

## *Dedication Ceremony*

An invitation is extended to all Sub-Branch members and Memorial Club members to attend the Re-dedication of the Commemorative Plaques for those who did not return from the Second World War and the Dedication of Motifs, commemorating those Servicemen from the Fairfield District who paid the Supreme Sacrifice in Police Actions, Confrontations and Conflicts, from Korea to Vietnam, to be held at the War Memorial Gates, Fairfield Park, Lawson Street, Fairfield, on Wednesday, 11th November, 1981 at 3.00 pm.

As expected disciplinary action was taken against the men but after this incident the powers of the Red Caps over the AIF was not so far reaching.

Situated 8 mile from Kuala Lumpur was the Batu Caves, a great mass of limestone cliffs with large caverns. In the largest was housed the Hindu Shrine of Lord Subramaniam. Once a year during the latter part of January, thousands of worshippers throng to this place to pay homage to the Shrine in the Thaipusam festival. I visited the caves again early in the year of 1974.

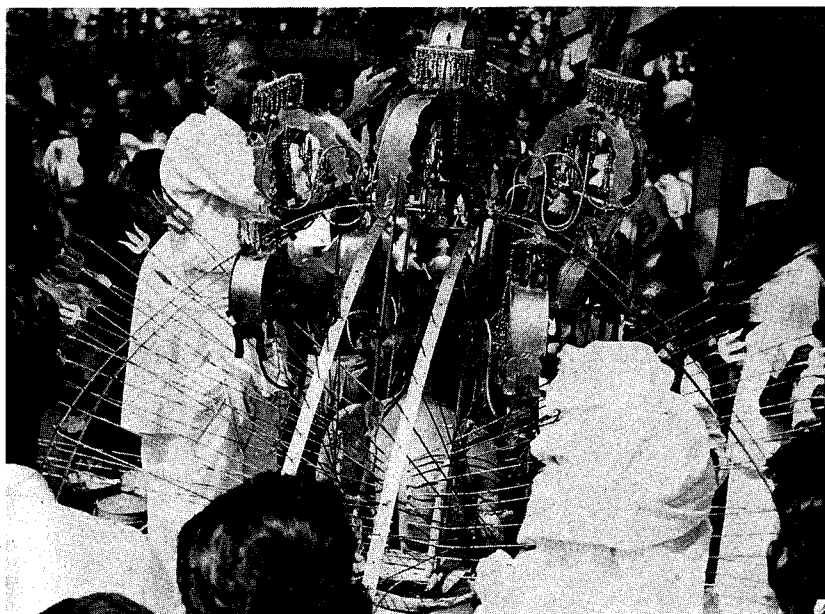
A gradual but exacting 272 steps lead to the entrance of the caves. Some devotees, young and old, run up these steps as an added act of faith. We were told of one aged Hindu who ran up the steps then collapsed and died.

Celebrations commence about a week before Thaipusam. Every element of the Indian community, which includes Ceylonese Tamils, Malayalees and Telegus, takes turns to organize and finance the celebrations each day. Various celebrations, feasts and shows are held.

The "Stick Dance", carried out by a score of boys, is a famous classical Indian dance where the holders of sticks beat each other's sticks in a rhythmic manner — producing music of a special kind. The beating of the sticks is accompanied by various dances to the various beats.

On the eve of Thaipusam devotee kavadi bearers arrive carrying small kavadis and large kavadis. The bearers consist of small boys, men and women. The kavadis are of various shapes and sizes, some taking on bow-like appearance. They are beautifully decorated and are stabilized by attaching them to the body by hooks and small spears. Some could be 6' above the bearer's head.

Most bearers were pierced all over the body with small spears; a spear piercing the protruding tongue and another piercing his cheeks. The bearers are in a trance and dance to the music of the drum beats of their relatives or followers. In fact the followers appeared to be in more of a trance than the actual kavadi bearers. If the bearer looks like fainting he is held up by



*A devotee being prepared to carry the Kavadi.*

his followers and given a substance to revive him. He has no reprieve till he has fulfilled his obligations.

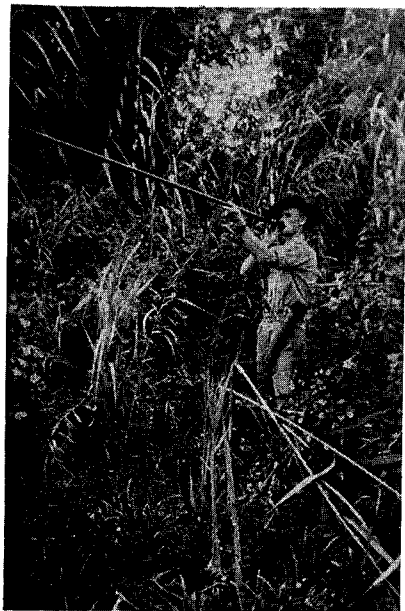
"Vel! Vel!", these unmistakable chants are best associated with the Thaipusam celebrations — a time when devout Hindus fulfil their vows. Although it is a religious festival, gaiety fills the air as the devotional songs, coupled with the chants of "Vel! Vel!", are the essence of the festival, and with the vibrant beat of bongo drums, the spirit of Thaipusam penetrates. To the outsider the spirit of the occasion is difficult to describe.

One has to be there among the gaily decked kavadi bearers, smell the fragrance of jasmine and camphor and observe the sea of faces to experience it. But Thaipusam is not just a religious festival with no trimmings. To the contrary, it is a time when the men and the women, attempting to be bold and yet bashful, come dressed in their best.

They danced wildly dressed in their colourful clothes and the climax of the Thaipusam festival,

in other parts of Malaya, is a procession where the idol, Lord Subramaniam, is conveyed on a vehicular transport hauled by cows or bulls led by Temple musicians, dancers and kavadi bearers. The chariot stops every 20 yards or so, so that the people could make their offerings and pray to the diety. Thaipusam festivals are held in various parts of Malaya but the two main places are the Batu Caves and Penang.

I used a blow pipe while in Kuala Lumpur. For years I had wanted to use one of these silent deadly weapons as they had fascinated me from boyhood. I could visualize the old time natives waiting in ambush sending their darts of death at some unsuspecting enemy. It must have been nerve-racking to see men dying around close by and not hear a sound or see the attacker. Myself, I like to hear a little noise. The blow pipe was 9' to 10' in length and made of hollow bamboo and the darts were pieces of hardwood about 9" long. The natives could hit a target at unbelievable distances.



*The new — myself using a blowpipe.*



*The expert — Saki native using blowpipe.*

So after these enjoyable days at Kuala Lumpur we boarded our bus back to Seremban where we called to see our Malay friends, the Rozarios and stayed till late that night. Then we engaged a taxi to take us to the Haig Lines near Port Dickson.

On the 15th August, 1941, another Brigade of our Division, the 27th Brigade consisting of the 2/26th Bn. (Queensland), 2/29th Bn. (Victoria) and the 2/30th Bn. (NSW) plus the 2/15th Field Regiment R.A.A. (NSW) and support troops, landed in Malaya. They were introduced to Malaya with a tropical downpour which flooded the decks and wharves. Like our landing, their arrival was broadcast to Australia in, once again a "sabre rattling" propaganda exercise. To add to this the Straits Times reported that 31 ships had landed troops. The actual number of ships in the convoy was three. This Brigade made two Brigades in Malaya or six infantry Battalions and this was the position when war was declared. At various times I have heard it mentioned that there were Australian Militia in Malaya, this was not so.

We now received word that we were to move to Mersing which was to be our battle station as "Snowball" had told us while stationed in Seremban, he sure was on the ball. Mersing was the most vital position on the Malayan Mainland and was situated in the State of Johore. We were given lectures on the supposed enemy and it was more than a hint that it would be the

Japanese. Irrespective of what British Intelligence told us we could not believe that the Japs had poor vision, would not fight at night, were poor shots and that some areas of jungle were impregnable and that there would be no danger of an attack by the Japanese from these sectors.

We knew the Japanese were seasoned troops who had experience on the Chinese and Russian fronts. We knew the impossible was a little harder to accomplish as far as "impregnable" jungle was concerned as we had cut our way through some thick jungle which was hard, hot work, but it could be done. We did not underestimate the Japanese by thinking they were less resourceful than we were. We disregard reports by British Intelligence and relied on the more down to earth accurate AIF Intelligence.

It was to be at Mersing that we were to prepare our battle positions which were to be successful initially and, although there was to be only a Brigade strength, it was a deterrent to the Japanese for an easy way to Singapore for they, no doubt, knew the strength of the position and showed respect as, when war was declared they preferred to infiltrate and force a withdrawal rather than a frontal attack.

The AIF were allotted the defence of the State of Johore on the 16th August, 1941 — it was battle stations at last. The Brigade was made responsible for a long strip of the coastline and the relative hinterland, just south of Mersing, on the

## EZI-WINNA

Now Super Prize No. 2 has commenced and due to popular request the prize will be another colour TV and video.

Ezi-Winna commences at 5.30 every Wednesday, with over 100 prizes plus the Major Prize.

Be early to ensure you participate in this atmosphere of real good fun and enjoyment.

"Ezi-Winna sure is great, you can't get a ticket if you're late."

East coast of Malaya. The move took place on the 27th August, 1941, at 0720 hours and the road party, consisting of 120 vehicles, left for Kluang, the first stage of the move.

On the 28th August, at first light, the rail party, Commanded by the C.O., linked up with the road party at Kluang. After breakfast we were moved by vehicles of the 4th Reserve M.T., to Jemaluang, some 12 miles from Mersing. Our tented camp at Jemaluang was situated in a rubber estate and the men found living in the steamy atmosphere somewhat enervating.

While driving pegs for the erection of the tents, the hammer slipped off the peg and caught me on the shin. I was calling the hammer all sorts of names when a voice behind me said: "Does this include me?" "Yes, you so and so, if that's the way you want it," I said, and turning around I saw Sergeant James.

He asked me to apologise but, being in pain, I refused so after I had erected the tent he ordered me down to the cookhouse and sat me in front of a sack of potatoes with orders to peel the lot. Towards the end of the sack he came back and asked me to apologize and I still declined so he brought out a sack of onions. Well, half way through the onions, with tears streaming down my cheeks I conceded and was allowed to return to my lines well into the night. Oh boy, were my hands sore.

Another time when I told him I enjoyed peeling potatoes he said, in that case, he would give me a change. He told me to report to the

Pioneer Sergeant who had me taking away the "rose bowls" (toilet pans) for disposal and the mode of transport was on one's shoulders. I always seemed to be allotted the brim full ones and, with the overflow, my clothes became saturated and smelly. For some time after that I was a "good boy" as the Sergeant sure found a way to make me toe the line. There were three avenues open: carry out allotted fatigues, fight the Sergeant or have fines deducted out of the pay book. There was no way we would fight him as he was over 6 foot, 14 stone solid and had been the heavyweight champion of the railway in the area where he worked pre-war. Truthfully, I always liked the Sergeant as we deserved all the punishment fatigues he allotted us as, after all, what is an Army without discipline and this applies on and off the parade ground. He could have hit us in the pay book where it would have really hurt.

This was a break camp with duties confined mainly to camp routines. The normally quiet village of Jemaluang nearby did not know what hit it as it suddenly became a hive of activity as our boys "invaded" it and set up crown and anchor, odds and evens and all sorts of gambling in the streets. When word reached Battalion HQ pickets were sent to clear the village of all gambling where AIF were concerned as the Colonel did not favour gambling at any time, especially if the native population looked like being fleeced by Aussies after a fast buck. No doubt his idea was if the natives thought they were being cheated, then this would not be good public

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## MONDAY MEAT & SEAFOOD RAFFLE

Now on Monday nights commencing at 5.30 pm a monster meat and seafood raffle takes place, with over 40 prizes to be won, including top quality meat and delicious seafoods.

Tickets are 50 cents each, and can be obtained from any bar operating on the day of raffle, and also from the front and rear foyer.

Winning numbers will be announced throughout the Club and prizes must be collected within five minutes of the draw.

Come and enjoy a night to remember with lots of beautiful trays.

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relations and we needed the native population with us, not against us. The natives did a roaring trade with their fruit stalls and shops, they never had it so good.

There was a Japanese girl barber cutting hair and shaving customers so we tossed up to see who would try her out. The winner went in. It was a big open front shop and soon there was a large audience to watch. Some called: "Have you made a date yet?" and so on. Anyway, the Digger survived and came out to the cheers from the troops.

Here our Battalion bugler, Pat, played the longest reveille in military history. Pat had a big night on Anchor beer and so did not like being disturbed to sound reveille the next morning. He was called three times we were told later. At last he arose extremely annoyed and emerged from his tent minus his trousers. What a sight! "All right, you bludgers, I will give you reveille," he said. He then proceeded to sound every call in the Army. We were puzzled till it was explained that Pat had his "paddy" up and gave us the works.

At Jemaluang, newly arrived reinforcements were puzzled when, before attending the R.A.P. for treatment for tinnea and Dhobies Itch, we used to place a piece of cardboard on our beds. Most of us had the itch in places which were constantly damp with perspiration. We dropped our trousers at the R.A.P., had merurichrome dabbed on and then would tear back to our tents and vigorously fan cool air between our legs for relief.

This amused the new arrivals but it did not take them long to join the club. We reckoned we left a

trail of smoke between the R.A.P. and our tents.

The centre of attraction at Jemaluang was the YMCA hut where we had very good entertainment by Lt. Val Mack, from the then Mack Show in Australia, plus other good artists from among the troops. There was also a good jazz orchestra which originated from the Bn. band. The instruments were two saxophones, one trombone, one coronet, drummers, a piano and a piano accordion.

Our move to Palm Beach camp, centred in the Battalion area of Mersing, was carried out on the 6th September, where we were quartered in long grass huts adjacent to the sea.

In 1941 the East coast had hundreds of miles of quiet unspoiled beaches, unmarred, right down to the China sea. The government is now encouraging tourism investors and the East coast of present day Malaysia has been developed and there is a chain of tourist attractions with their new American-type motels and quaint Malayan-style bungalows, 4,000 in use and another 2,500 under construction. These units overlook golden beaches, crystal cool blue waters and swaying palms and are situated in the States of Kelantan, Trengganu, Pahang and the Eastern and Southern parts of Johore.

The Brigade had been allotted the task of protecting a very vital position which was classed as the "back door" to Singapore. Any break through in this sector would mean all troops up north would be cut off and there was the possibility that Singapore could be taken within a week.

## Notice to Members

### TO ALL MEMBERS

YOU **MUST** NOTIFY DESK IMMEDIATELY YOU CHANGE  
YOUR ADDRESS

THIS IS FOR **YOUR** BENEFIT

R. T. Thompson, M.B.E., Secretary/Manager.



The 2/18th and the 2/20th Battalions were positioned on the beachfront and the 2/19th was in reserve at Jemaluang. What amazed us was the lack of prepared defences in this area. In fact apart from holes dug in the sand on the beach approximately 500 yards apart, there were no defences at all although at least two regiments had been there before us. There were no distractions here as, the small fishing village of Mersing, about 4 miles by road, held very little interest for us.

In our Battalion company positions were immediately allotted, then platoon and section positions. Our section was allotted a position on a high ridge.

After a settling in period we at once commenced to "dig in", to organize our defended localities, sight our machine gun positions, as well as tackle the problems of water, sanitation, hygiene, anti-malaria measures and administration generally. Every man was working at top speed these days and the transition from continuous jungle training to a battle role had a remarkable effect on all of the men. One of the batteries of the 2/10th Field Regiment R.A.A. 19th Battery — was quartered in our camp and very soon we became fast friends with men of the Battalion.

The 4th Anti-Tank Regiment was situated to the right of the 2/18th positions on the beach front towards the right headland and their defences included a trench system connected by tunnels. This unit performed well in action against the Japanese later.

Now that we were at our battle stations the work became harder and the amenities fewer. Days were spent in back breaking work of trench digging and other equally important tasks. The hot sun and the humid conditions brought the perspiration pouring out as we carried on with our work.

Though the work was hard, we were a little more content now because we knew we were playing an active part in the defence of Malaya, and that if anything broke we would be right in it right up to our sun browned necks. Later we were allowed to parade minus our shirts as the least clothes we wore the more chance we had to keeping the tinnea and Dhobies itch under some sort of control.

We worked in shorts only and as a result we became so brown that we could hardly be distinguished from the native population — except, of course, by our typical Digger language.

On the 10th September, we had a "stand to" at first light, following a report that the Japanese situation had taken a serious aspect. Nothing eventuated, but we set to more seriously to improve our defences, extend our defensive wiring and erect further water obstacles on our beachfront.

As we were quartered on the beachfront, a compulsory swimming parade was the order each morning, and very few objected to this parade. However, some were exempted because they had contacted Singapore ear which was extremely painful. There was an outbreak of

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## BOWLS LOUNGE

The Bowls Bar will be open until 10.30 pm as from the following dates:

Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, as from 31st July.

Every Wednesday as from 5th August and every Thursday as from 27th August, 1981.

R. T. THOMPSON,  
Secretary/Manager

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malaria but it was only mild as most Australian troops took strict precautions.

In our leisure hours, which were cut to a minimum, some would go fishing, write letters home, or have a quick one or two Anchor beverages at the N.A.A.F.I. canteen.

Some of the fishing enthusiasts had some very good hauls and provided a breakfast dish of very palatable fish for themselves and their mates. That was one way of getting a fish meal seeing the Army could not supply it.

Some bright lads made a raft of saplings and petrol tins and went sailing, but not too far as it was sure makeshift. However it was a welcome diversion and good fun while it lasted.

A large draft of reinforcements arrived on the 26th September, 1941. These were required to provide personnel for the beach searchlight squad, additional machine gun sections and also to replace wastage due to sickness.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, C-in-C Far East, and his staff once again visited the Battalion area on the 8th October and were very impressed with the organization of our sector and the defences which had been constructed there.

Concerts were given in the "Domain" at the rear of Battalion Headquarters, and were always popular as there was no other entertainment at Mersing. The band, under Sergeant Norm Whittaker, with the assistance of piper Jock Creighton, Pte. Frank Colenso, Pte. Tex Bowman, and the Battalion

male quartette (led by Sgt. Bob James), entertained the troops on several occasions and their recitals were always keenly anticipated.

Another form of entertainment were the news commentaries by Pte. Bert Pikett which became very popular with the troops, in fact so popular that men from other units came a considerable distance to listen to him. Using maps as visual aids, radio news and commentaries and latest press information, Bert Pikett made up a comprehensive survey of the war situation that was, as Col. Varley said: "A very much appreciated and extremely valuable service to the Battalion." We will always remember Bert's theme cry: "The Germans will never reach Moscow." All these shows were very important as they went a long way in helping the men to forget their boredom.

We watched the inter Battalion Rugby matches which, in my opinion, were the best football I had seen for some time. There were also the inter Brigade matches between the possibles and probables and from these teams was to emerge a team to play the Combined British Services team. The AIF won the first game with such players as Cec Ramilli, John Fuller, Schultz and Wynne, the latter two from the 2/10th Artillery Regiment from Queensland. The British Rugby team consisted mainly of officers and many had won their Oxford Blues. The AIF team only had three officers in it. The British were so sure of winning that we could name our own price about the AIF — a lot of money changed hands, all going to the Australians.

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## POKER MACHINE JACKPOT BONUS SCHEME

The Board of Directors at the last Monthly Meeting resolved that the Club would establish a Jackpot Bonus Scheme, where there will be some very attractive and beautiful prizes to be won.

The display cabinet will be set up in the Poker Machine Room.

Watch for further information to be displayed in the Poker Machine Room.

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*Lt.-Col. Varley "paints the picture" to the C-in-C Far East while Brigadier Taylor is in meditative mood.*

One day we were carrying out rifle drill and were having our 10-minute break in the hour and, as normal, every man put his rifle in a certain position. Pte. Clarrie Weir picked up the Sergeant's rifle and replaced it with his own when the Sergeant was distracted. He then put a piece of straw down the Sergeant's rifle barrel followed by some dirt. Upon seeing the Colonel approaching the Sergeant called for a marker and then ordered us to fall in for a port/arms rifle inspection. Naturally everyone picked up his rifle from where it had been placed, the difference being the switching of rifles. The Colonel was an interested spectator and when the Sergeant came to Pte. Weir and

the rifle swung to the thumb in the breech/barrell inspection the Sergeant said it was the dirtiest rifle he had seen. It was a well known fact that Pte. Weir's rifle was the cleanest in the Company and he suggested to the Sergeant that it was not his rifle and could he call out the serial number. Upon calling out the serial number Sergeant James had no option but to claim his rifle. The Colonel discreetly moved on and we could see something sure upset the Sergeant as the tempo of the drill increased and our breaks were a little longer coming around.

**Next — Mersing continued.**

M. MULLENS

## MONSTER MEAT TRAY RAFFLE

It has been decided that a Monster Meat Tray Raffle will be run in the Club on Monday afternoons.

There will be one thousand tickets sold at 50c per ticket. Tickets will be on sale at front and rear doors of the Club and in the Auditorium from about 3.30 pm.

The drawing will be conducted in the Auditorium, commencing at 5.30 pm and all ticket holders must be in the Club to collect.

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 13)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

While swimming in a nearby river one day some natives came and indicated that we should leave the water. Indignant, we told them to go to heck. However, when they explained it was for our own good as they had just pulled a 12 foot crocodile from the river just around the bend, we broke all records leaving the water. We reckoned he may not bite but he would take a mighty big suck.

There were tigers around Mersing and within our Battalion area was a tiger trap. The trap was in a clearing and consisted of an enclosure with poles about ten feet high and driven into the ground side by side. In one corner of the enclosure was an opening 5 feet high by 2 foot 6 inches wide with a drop gate made of spiked poles, which had a length of rope attached to it. The rope went across the top of the enclosure down to the gate of a smaller cage which housed a goat. When the tiger attacked, the rope on the goat's gate became detached and both gates would close so protecting the goat and closing the tiger in.

Also within the Battalion area there were various services such as Smokey Joe's, an Indian tailor, two Indian barbers and Ice Cream Charlie.

One of the N.A.A.F.I. people could not conceal his dislike for us. One day I bought a bottle of beer and a packet of tobacco. He threw the tobacco at me and it hit me in the chest. I didn't say a word but, putting my thumb on top of the beer bottle, I shook it up and called him back. As his leering face came close I put the bottle in front of him and

released my thumb with the result he received about half a bottle of beer down his front. I thought the beer I lost was well worth it.

It was found that these Indians and at least one N.A.A.F.I. canteen staff were forwarding information to the Japanese. There was an arrow on the roof of one of our huts pointing towards Brigade H.Q. for reference by Japanese planes but our planes spotted it first and so the arrow was removed. After war had been declared these people were arrested for espionage and appropriate action taken according to the articles of war. Their arrest did not surprise me.

Boredom was still our main enemy at Mersing as we had gone through 9 months of all types of jungle training to reach an efficient stage. To offset this boredom the Colonel, although he did not approve of gambling set up a special area near the canteen for this purpose. It was supervised by the Officer of the Day and there were snap inspections by Bn. H.Q. staff. It was a good move as everyone was above board and it gave the men an interest.

The cinema was an open air show and rain, hail or moonlight the show went on. At times it rained so heavily that the screen was blotted out. But this was our amusement and we just sat there with rain pouring off our hats. I remember one night when it came down in bucket fulls and the picture we were watching was "Then Came The Rains", quite appropriate.

While on guard one night I had a great fright. After finishing a two-

**Results of Ingleburn Festival***Ballroom:*

Under 10 C.T.: 2nd: Matthew and Michelle Skinner.

Under 10 Advanced C.T.: 2nd: Marthese and Sharon Sammut. 3rd: Tracey Cempa and Jeffrey Roffe.

Under 12 C.T.: 2nd: Amanda Kelly and David Drummond.

Under 14 C.T.: 2nd: Aileen Sutherland and Andrew Horvath.

Under 16 Advanced C.T.: 3rd: Deirdre Shaw and John Sammut.

Under 18 C.T.: 1st: Susan Horvath and Mark Sutherland. 3rd: Lynda Shaw and Christopher Clifford.

Under 18 "A" Grade: 2nd: Susan and Debbie Morris.

*Latin American:*

Under 10 C.T.: 1st: Paulene Cempa and Stuart Psaras. 2nd: Michelle and Matthew Skinner. 3rd: Michelle Albon and Jeffrey Drummond.

Under 10 Advanced C.T.: 2nd: Marthese and Sharon Sammut.

Under 14 C.T.: 2nd: Aileen Sutherland and Andrew Horvath.

Under 16 Advanced C.T.: 2nd: Christine Defraime and Steven Slavic.

Under 18 C.T.: 1st: Susan Horvath and Mark Sutherland. 3rd: Lynda Shaw and Chris Clifford.

Under 18 "A" Grade: 2nd: Susan and Debbie Morris.

Senior Girl and Three Junior Boys: 3rd: Libby Cocchietto, Brian Kelly, Andrew Horvath and John Sammut.

Supervisors: Mrs. Hardimon, David Drummond, Ross Hardimon and Scott Hardimon reached the finals.

Couples please remember your numbers and surely I did not see someone chewing on the floor. However it was lovely to see Mrs. Hardimon dancing into the finals with her two sons and David.

Next Festival — Sunday, 1st November, Parramatta Police Boys' Club. Why not come along and join the fun? This time mothers will be jiving with their sons and fathers quick-stepping with their daughters — a sight worthy of a camera I am sure.

Remember Picnic Day Sunday, 22nd November. Buses leaving RSL Club at 8 am.

**PUBLICITY OFFICER**



*Deirdre and John, Auburn-Lidcombe Festival.*



*Andrew Horvath and Aileen Sutherland.*

hour guard I crawled into bed and was dozing when I was struck square on the chest. I did not know what hit me. It appears that a monkey, perched on the roof rafters, jumped into my net thinking it was solid. I yelled and I don't know who got the biggest shock as the monkey made off poste-haste into the nearby jungle.

The next morning I caught a monkey taking my fountain pen out of my shirt pocket which was lying near my bed. When going on guard we were issued with 5 rounds of ammunition and were held responsible for the return of the rounds at the end of the guard. I found my clip was missing and knew a monkey had taken it so I searched the nearby jungle and sure enough there it was. They would steal the eye out of a needle and were real pests.

Once when A Coy. was on guard R.S.M. Johnny Dixon approached one of our guards and asked to see his rifle, which he handed to the R.S.M. Being daylight and knowing the R.S.M., the guard interpreted this as an order. However he was now in hot water. The R.S.M. said that under no circumstances does a guard hand over his rifle.

We had a good memory. On another night A Coy. was on guard and about midnight the R.S.M. conducted a tour of our guard posts. He approached Pte. Harry Piercy's position and when challenged said: "It's OK Pte, it's me, the R.S.M.," and kept walking towards the guard. The second challenge was given and at the same time the rifle came

down in the "on guard" position but still the R.S.M. advanced. On the third challenge Pte. Piercy lunged forward and had the R.S.M. not taken a backward step he would have been impaled on the bayonet. He pursued the matter no further. On the same night I was guarding an ammunition shed and my entire beat was the length of the building. The R.S.M. tried to cross my beat and down came the rifle with bayonet attached and I told him he would have to walk around but could not cross my beat. He told me I could be in trouble but it didn't wash and he was forced to walk around. Unofficially we heard the next day that R.S.M. Dixon told the Colonel that those A Company guards were bloody mad and dangerous. At least he found we were efficient this time.

The favourite Fire Picket duty was the officers' mess and one could always tell the picket who drew this fatigue as there was always sauce on that particular table the next day. As I said before sauce was rationed out to us at the mess door.

Meanwhile our beach defences were taking shape and our section had dug a trench system around the crest of the hill which we were to defend. We had a set position on the main side and on the "blind" side we had our alternative position to ward off attack from the rear. There was a double apron barbed wire entanglement all the way around the hill and in front of this we had a row of danute barbed wire. There were strict orders not to cut

## *Dedication Ceremony*

An invitation is extended to all Sub-Branch members and Memorial Club members to attend the Re-dedication of the Commemorative Plaques for those who did not return from the Second World War and the Dedication of Motifs, commemorating those Servicemen from the Fairfield District who paid the Supreme Sacrifice in Police Actions, Confrontations and Conflicts, from Korea to Vietnam, to be held at the War Memorial Gates, Fairfield Park, Lawson Street, Fairfield, on Wednesday, 11th November, 1981 at 3.00 pm.

down any rubber trees but some were "accidentally" cut down as they impaired our field of fire. The whole Battalion area was a maze of barbed wire entanglements and trench systems. The 2/10th artillery had every dot on the water and beach ranged and one day, shooting from behind a hill they scored a direct hit on a fish trap out in the bay. Any attempted landing would receive a warm welcome. There were drums of oil set in position in the water which were to be set on fire by incendiary bullets. The bullets would puncture the drums causing burning oil to spread over the water on our front, lighting up the area and making the enemy good targets.

There was a row of barbed wire at the water's edge and another row at the base of the hill. Another row of barbed wire was placed just over the rise of the hill where the enemy would be temporarily halted and skylined so making good targets. On each headland search lights were installed. The 4th Anti-Tank Regiment was situated on the beach and had constructed tunnels between guns which added to this strong defensive position. No wonder the Japs decided not to attack this strong position.

While erecting our beach defenses at Mersing a delegation of Thailand army personnel were given a tour of inspection of the defences but they only saw what the Colonel wanted them to see. Anything of a vital nature was concealed.

The Sergeants' toilet block was situated near our huts and as it was a pan system the odour was strong. Repeated requests by the men to have the block removed to another location failed. One night, with the assistance of the transport personnel, petrol was poured over the block and it was burnt to the ground. Colonel Varley was not amused so he had the block rebuilt on the same site and made it one of our picket duty areas with a reminder that if it was burnt down again the picket on duty would be in a lot of bother so we had to put up with it. The Colonel sure knew how to make us toe the line.

As was the case in other parts of the Malayan jungle where we had

trained there was no shortage of snakes at Mersing. It was not unusual to see dead snakes on the roadway between our huts, where lorries had run over them in the night.

On one occasion we were on manoeuvres in the jungle and were following a narrow path when a cobra passed between my legs. A fraction of difference in my step would have been a little awkward to say the least.

One of the most famous and much photographed snake was a King Cobra which was killed in one of our Headquarter Coy. huts. The snake was making himself comfortable behind one of the green boxes alongside Kel Sullivan's stretcher when spotted.

With commendable promptness (if reckless courage) Pte. Stranger, assisted by Kel Sullivan and the M.T's star mechanic, Jim Woolley, set about putting paid to the snake's account, but when they began hauling on it to get it from behind the bed they thought they would never come to the end of it. When the head appeared there seemed to be snake all over the hut.

Measured by Pte. Ralph Smith (of the "I" section), R.S.M. John Dixon, Sergeant Bill Briely and practically every other member of the unit from the Colonel to the Asst.-Deputy-Asst.-Cook, the snake was found to stretch 10 foot 3 inches.

Numerous arguments arose as to the type of reptile it was. Some called it a python, others a grass snake, a hamadriad and a carpet snake — it was ultimately established that it was the deadly King Cobra.



*The snake.*

Many of our sergeants, which included Sgt. Col. Allwell, Sgt. Ron Walley, Sgt. Don Campbell, Lance Sgt. Sam Brown and Sgt. Bob James (our platoon sergeant) had their photographs taken with the snake. Bob James had a few extra copies run off to sell to his platoon to send home.

He came into our hut at the rest break and was taking the copies out of his pocket for distribution when before he could say a word, "Slasher" G. Lee said: "Hello Serg., they tell me you have a snap of six snakes." Poor Bob clamped his mouth shut, wheeled and left the hut without uttering a word. We never did see that photograph — something sure upset our Sergeant.

Another incident involved Sgt. Barrie Whitehead who received a shock while searching for a clean shirt. Opening his clothing box he turned over a pile of clothes that had recently come from the Dhobie (laundry). He lifted a towel and felt movement. Looking closely to see he was not mistaken, he saw further movement and, removing the towel, a snake dropped out.

He merely called out in a matter of fact voice for a nearby sentry who, a good soldier, refused to leave his post. The Adjutant, the Pay Sergeant, the post orderly and Sgt. McIntyre, meanwhile made a strategic withdrawal from the venomous reptile which was writhing all over the ground. Eventually the snake was decapitated and despatched to safer grounds.

One morning Pte. Flockton, who was employed as an orderly in the officers' mess, yawned, rubbed his

eyes and decided to hop out of bed. Reveille was just being played and like a good "swaddie", he wanted to have his feet on the floor by the time the last note had sounded.

"Look out," yelled Pte. Rixon from the adjoining bed, "Don't get out of bed yet, there's a wacking big snake under your stretcher." Naturally Pte. Flockton postponed getting up. The two soldiers concentrated their efforts on getting the reptile out of the hut, so they could get a good whack at it. Pte. Flockton almost wrecked his stretcher as he bounced up and down on it in order to frighten the snake. Pte. Rixon banged with great gusto at the snake, but except from giving himself a whack on the head and almost braining his companion, did not cause any damage to the unwelcome visitor. After a while the snake made for the open, where the lads soon finished its slithering career. The deceased was measured and its length was 5 foot 8 inches.

"C" Company was sent on a special mission to guard an outpost which was surrounded by heavy near impenetrable jungle and a stagnant, long winding crocodile infested river which was its only approach. There they carried out long, arduous reconnaissances into the thickly-timbered country where practically all types of indigenous Malaysian fauna roamed wild.

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**Access to the Barber Shop and Ladies Hairdressing Salon can only be made through the Back Foyer.**

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## EZI-WINNA

Now Super Prize No. 2 has commenced and due to popular request the prize will be another colour TV and video.

Ezi-Winna commences at 5.30 every Wednesday, with over 100 prizes plus the Major Prize.

Be early to ensure you participate in this atmosphere of real good fun and enjoyment.

"Ezi-Winna sure is great, you can't get a ticket if you're late."



A number of armed tongkangs — open flat bottomed boats, which could carry a platoon of men comfortably — were attached to the post for the purpose of supply and patrols.

The patrols sighted crocodiles in small tributaries at low tide and quickly vacated the river when a 12 foot crocodile was pulled out of the water 200 yards away by some natives.

Animal life was both plentiful and varied with wild pigs, long-tailed black baboons, monkeys and the ever present snakes which, after the first two days, became routine. An estimated 25 snakes were killed during the stay at the outpost.

As always, the monkeys became "camp followers" when they became used to the invaders and, at times, became a source of annoyance as they would steal anything left laying around.

One patrol saw two elephants which lumbered off in the opposite direction into the dense surrounding jungle. One relief was that man-eating tigers were not encountered but there were paw marks in the soft ground as evidence that they were lurking nearby.

Patrols which attempted to penetrate the thick jungle soon found themselves in trouble, paths had to be hacked with parangs and bayonets to find openings. It was a consistent arduous task but happily the Company was equal to the occasion. Where maps showed jungle paths, now there was dense tangled jungle. Why? The maps were drawn up in 1914-18.

"C" Company were indeed happy to leave this malaria-mosquito infested swampland and return to Mersing.

We had sufficient sterilized water for drinking purposes only. There was not enough to have regular showers or baths. Our means of a bath was standing near troughs, dipping brackish water then pouring it over ourselves, lather up with soap, then again bucket the water to wash off what little soap remained. Even after these "boong baths" we still felt sticky with this brackish water.

We used the rivers to bath when the opportunity arose but because of crocodiles swimming was not popular. We stood on landings on the bank, specially made by the natives, and bucketted the water over us.

The sea was our bathroom to a great extent and was well patronised. However when storms passed over the opportunity to bath in fresh water was not missed. As the rain poured down on the roofs of the hut men stood under the "eaves" and, soaping up let the fresh rain water pour over them to enjoying the luxury of a real back to nature bath. It not only removed the "sticky" feeling caused by the brackish and salt water, but acted as a real tonic to the system.



A "Boong Bath".

One day while on guard duty at the main entrance to the camp I was standing with my rifle at the "easy" position and with the lazy hot humid weather plus the fact that my thoughts were miles away, I noticed a convoy of trucks approaching. I thought I saw someone wave and I unconsciously waved back at the same instance. I realised that Colonel Varley was in the lead truck but it was too late to present arms. It appears that the entire Battalion's officers were in the convoy and they were on their way to reconnoitre the countryside for a future manoeuvre.

As my military training extended back to pre-war militia then A.I.F.I. was fully aware of the correct procedure so I had no excuses. As expected the Colonel was not amused

and a reprimand came down through the system and I was given a lecture re the correct procedure by the Sergeant of the guard in which he impressed on me that one did not wave to a Colonel but rather he presented arms. Knowing how it happened I was amused but I made sure, from then on, I did not infringe as after all it was part of military procedure.

Our camp was surrounded by thick jungle and one guard position had a narrow path between the jungle and a building. It was eerie doing guard at this position, more so because it was reported that a tiger was on the prowl in this area. One night another Company took over and on the midnight relief the outgoing guard was found dead. We heard the cause was heart failure.

Members of "A" Company will remember "Speed" Gordon Mackay who was a fitness fanatic and looked the part. Upon completing work on our defences one day he stated he could carry a log on his shoulders, leave the same time we boarded our transports for camp and be there before us. He was naturally ridiculed and told to prove himself. The log was placed on his shoulder and away he went through the jungle as the crow flies. We boarded the transports for the round trip which had to follow the lay of the hills and jungle.

We arrived back in camp but no "Speed" Gordon. Some time later he arrived back in camp with the log still on his shoulder which amazed all. The humble pie was all over our faces as no-one expected him to survive the "iron man" trip up hill and down dale through the jungle.

When our fruit cake and tins of coffee-milk mixture arrived from Australia we invited our mates and we had a right royal party. As it was forbidden to take water out of the containers in the cookhouse we had to creep down and "steal" the hot water from under the eyes of the patrolling picket.

When my turn came to get the hot water I melted into the jungle and wormed my way to the edge of the cookhouse block in true commando fashion, waited for the picket to pass to the other side of the building, then crept in and dipped my billy into the boiling container, then back to the shadows of the jungle.

The container I so hurriedly dipped my billy into was the one the cook used to boil his clothes in and the result was that I had to make a second attempt this time with a positive result. Thanks to the Colonel we were able to put our jungle training to good use.

The troops became pukka creators of charpoys — these anti-vermin stretchers were fabricated from rope — and many discarded the old canvas affair. The designs used were many and varied, but the charpoys, in any case, were undoubtedly comfortable, and after one recovered from sore hands caused by twisting and threading coarse rope, the back ache resulting from continued bending, and the sun burn on the back and neck, sleep became more restful than on the canvas. Added to the self satisfaction of having manufactured something very practical and quite ornamental, there was the comforting thought that this type of stretcher made things tougher for the vermin that did so freely breed in Malaya.

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## FAIRFIELD RSL ALL-AGE SOCCER CLUB

Wishes to advise all players and any interested persons wishing to play or participate in this Club's activities, that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on TUESDAY, 10th NOVEMBER, 1981 at 7.30 pm in Committee Room, adjacent to Pioneer Lounge RSL.

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On account of boredom the troop's sense of humour was running riot. This "tropical clowning" caused much laughter and relief from army life. "Shorty's Dog" gave the troops a welcome diversion just when things were getting a little monotonous. There were men whistling and calling their straying dogs; men leading all types of tripe-hounds on cotton, string and rope — the dog being a figment of imagination.

One of the most exciting dog races I had seen was run with imaginary dogs. Owners were parading their dogs, bookmakers were laying the odds. The course was marked out, the dogs were placed in the boxes and away they went. A commentator called the races in a most exciting manner, using numbers 1 to 7 to identify the dogs. Men yelled for their dogs, jumping up and down, and threw their hats in the air when they won and showed displeasure when they lost. There was so much noise that Colonel Varley sent the 2 I.C. to the area to enquire and he was there no more than minutes when he bought a dog and entered it in a race.

Even while on leave in Singapore we kept this "clowning" up. We would trip on the footpath and would turn around and say: "What a stupid place to leave a log." English people would pull up and stare wondering what was going on as there was no log on the footpath.

Don Company staged a shearing shed scene, complete with rouseabouts, and some record tallies were knocked out that day. One chap rode an imaginary horse up to the canteen and tied it to a tree and when he came out the tree was laying on the ground and the horse gone. He was heard to mutter that he would have to borrow another horse to ride out after the stray.

One chap with a keen sense of humour, strolled along with his "wife" on his arm and caused a chuckle by introducing her to R.S.M.

John Dixon. The R.S.M. was not amused and he was quite indignant when the R.S.M. answered sarcastically and pungently in typical Connaught language. "Don't swear in front of my wife," he retorted. Turning to his invisible cherished one, he said: "Come on darling, the nasty man doesn't like you."

Then there was trout fishing in which some beauties were landed even though they only had a rod and were casting an imaginary fly onto the sand near the huts.

Many more instances occurred where the men showed their keen sense of humour in connection with this craze. It was all in good fun — and more importantly it proved a tonic for jaded nerves. One thing, while the troops made their own fun in this manner there was no danger of them being seriously effected by their stay in Malaya.

**Next: Mersing Continued.**



*An improvised wheelbarrow.  
Mersing defences.*

M. MULLENS

## JOHN HORSLEY DINING ROOM

6 pm to 9 pm (Friday, Saturday and Sunday)  
Ring 72 0611 for bookings

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 14)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

On the 22nd October, 1941, a tactical exercise for our transport was successfully carried out — this exercise was designed to practice Companies in rapid movement and counter attack. These exercises were some of the many carried out extensively while stationed at Port Dickson.

Great interest was taken in the 1941 Melbourne Cup. We had a licensed bookmaker, Bert Pickett, with us and he ran a book giving very good odds. There was a betting board for straight out and each way betting. He even had a stand erected and called the odds a week before the race.

On another day we saw the combined AIF Rugby Union team play a trial match as the main team was in training near our camp. I had missed the first match in Singapore in which our team was successful against a combined British team.

On the 7th November, '41, another "Manning" exercise was held. All personnel were put on a war footing and transports were fully packed and moved out to our battle stations. The move was a complete success despite very heavy rain. By 16th November, all companies were busy further improving our strong defensive dispositions by adding tactical wiring, preparing anti-tank ditches and preparing for the laying of anti-personnel mines.

Incidentally, it was rumoured that we had enclosed two tigers inside our wire, but some said they don't bite this month while others said they would have to take their chances with the Japs the same as us. Even at this early stage all AIF

were on full alert and on the 18th November the Brigade carried out yet another "Manning" exercise.

On the 18th November General Bennett left Singapore for the Middle East as there was still the possibility that the 8th Division would hand over the defence of Malaya to the British and Indian troops and move to the Middle East to join the other AIF Divisions.

We were fortunate to be granted leave to Singapore on the 20th November because of the alerts and we had good reason to believe this would be our last leave. The reason we were granted leave so soon was the fact that a certain number was allotted leave from each Company and believe it or not, "A" Coy., could not raise their quota, as it was the off-pay week. Maybe the men were short of cash.

We were once again quartered at the Anzac Club. On this leave we visited Singapore aerodrome which was quite a large place and saw large flying boats which had just landed. Returning from Change Alley one night we saw all along the footpaths natives asleep, some on the concrete and some on beds put there for the night only. We tickled their feet and ears with straws, then put our mouths near their ears and yelled, causing the natives to fall off the beds with fright. We were quite merry with ale at the time and later thought how lucky we were as the natives could have attacked us with knives, one can be lucky.

Many British troops were being issued with Australian slouch hats as, it was found, the pith helmets



*Winner of Youth Club New Faces at Fairfield RSL Queen Competition for City of Fairfield Festival, Rita Barbara.*



*2nd Place in Youth Club New Faces at Fairfield RSL Queen Competition for the City of Fairfield Festival.*



*Encouragement Award Youth Club New Faces Fairfield RSL Queen Competition for City of Fairfield Festival, Brett Carey.*



*Ballroom Dancing.*

## JOHN HORSLEY DINING ROOM

6 pm to 9 pm (Friday, Saturday and Sunday)  
Ring 72 0611 for bookings

were unsuitable for the tropics and it was common to get a "Not bad chum" with a broad accent to a greeting by a soldier wearing a slouch hat.

A place where most men visited while on leave in Singapore was Haw Par Villa, about 8 miles out and owned by a Chinese millionaire. The entrance to the grounds had a large arch with Haw Par Villa written on it and Chinese writing and a statue of a white elephant on either side. As the owners partly occupied the premises in 1941 permission was required to gain admission and an attendant met us at the gate for a guided tour. These days it is open all the time and no permission is required as I found out when my wife and I visited there in 1974.

We drove up the long driveway in 1941 which was bordered with artificial gardens. We saw an unusual house which did not contain a single corner as the house and rooms were built on a round basis. There was a wireless in each room and the place was spic and span, with beds made and all bedroom requirements laid out in a neat manner. The bedrooms were doorless. Instead of doors, a half round wardrobe was built just inside the bedroom opening and built in a manner which obscured the view of the interior of the bedroom from the hall forming a two-way entrance to the bedroom. The furniture was solid oak and highly polished.

The garden was very large and entirely artificial. There were dragons, animals and figures made of stone and other substances to a lifelike appearance. The deer were so arranged as to give the lifelike effect of feeding among the trees. There were models of Chinese bridges and houses with a beautiful lilly pond, bordered by artificial pine trees which I had to feel to see if

they were real. It is hard to explain this place but it reminded me of a fairyland out of a book. At the time this same Chinese owned a similar place in Hong Kong. Having seen both places, in my opinion, they are interesting and well worth seeing.

At last — the big game which we came especially to see. We arrived early to get a good seat. Before the first game of Rugby Union between Combined AIF and Combined British troops, we could get any price about the Aussies, which they won. Now for the second game the British were still making their team favourites as they had strengthened their side but there was no alteration to the AIF side. We could still get 2 to 1 about our team.

In a good close game the Aussies were once again the victors with Cec. Ramallie, Ide, Schultz, Wynne and John Fuller playing well. We yelled ourselves hoarse and when the Englishmen put in some dirty work Cec. Ramallie turned around and shaped up to the cheers of our boys. When one Englishman had his jumper torn some called, "Give him an Australian wool jumper that will hold." After the game we went to the pictures and saw "Bitter Sweet" then to bed. On the morning of the 23rd November, we boarded our transports for the trip back to Mersing.

When we arrived back there was a tense air around the camp and we knew, without consulting No. 1 seat, something very important was brewing. We were informed in a roundabout way that war was near. All general leave was cancelled and we were working hard putting the finishing touches on our defences.

There were some people sitting at home and arm chair generals who unjustly tried, judged and con-

## EUCHRE

THE EUCHRE IS HELD IN THE OLD BARK HUT, EVERY THURSDAY EVENING AT 8 pm.

R. T. THOMPSON,  
Secretary/Manager

demned the AIF in Malaya for not being "on the job" when war was declared. These people reached their opinions, unfounded in fact, through ignorance of the true situation.

To this minority the following is the true, on-the-spot account of the procedure the AIF carried out prior to the attack on Malaya which shows we were alert to the situation. All leave had been cancelled, we were not wandering around Singapore but rather on a war footing firmly entrenched at our battle stations prior to war being declared.

In addition to the stand-to on the 10th September, the tactical exercise for our transport on the 22nd October, the "Manning" exercise on the 7th November and the full alert on the 18th November, on the 24th and 25th November a Brigade Tactical exercise book took place. Our Intelligence noted that the Japanese American situation was becoming alarmingly serious.

Our Intelligence was "on the ball". What was happening in Japan was as follows — Prior to Pearl Harbour, the Japanese High Command was divided whether to side with Germany or America and Great Britain. Admiral Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Naval Fleet, informed Premier Konoye:

"If you tell me it is necessary to fight, then in the first six months to a year of the war against America and Great Britain I will run wild, and I will show you an uninterrupted succession of victories; I must also tell you that, should the war be prolonged for two or three years, I have no confidence in ultimate victory."

Soon afterwards, at the Imperial Council immediately prior to the decision to enter the war, Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai stated to the assembly that, "— at all costs we must avoid war with the United States and Great Britain which means a deterioration in our National situation; we can afford the risk of a gradual loss of our political and economic situation —."

Ex Premier Yonai's advice, supported by many high ranking Naval Officers and Civil Officials, provided an excellent summary of the actual pre-war situation. Admiral Yamamoto, however, not only pro-

perly evaluated the chances for initial success by the Japanese, but he also foresaw with forbidding clarity, the inevitable defeat which lay ahead.

The Imperial Council decided in favour of war despite expert opinion against.

Like the decision to drop the "A" bomb was reluctantly made at top level, and the men who dropped them carried out their orders irrespective of personal feelings so, although not in favour of war, on the 26th November, 1941, Admiral Yamamoto personally issued sailing orders to Vice-Admiral Nagumo as he sailed from Hitokappu Bay with the task force which was to strike at Pearl Harbour.

The force consisted of twenty-three vessels which included six aircraft carriers. They were the Akagi, Kaga, Soryu, Hiryu, Zuikaku and the Shokaku. With the carriers there was the battleships Hiei and Kirishima, two heavy cruisers, Tone and Chikuma, one light cruiser, nine destroyers plus other vessels.

On the 29th November, 1941, all men were issued with ball ammunition, sentries were doubled and steps taken to combat Fifth Column activity, which was always evident in the Mersing area.

In addition, a sentry was placed outside each known or dubious dwelling after dark to watch for signals towards the sea. As war had not been declared, we had to use our discretion and not carry rifles but we made up our minds not to take the matter lightly and hoped they would become aggressive so we could retaliate as we were sure they were Jap agents. At the time we wore side arms only.

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**THE CLUB CAR PARKS ARE  
NOW OPEN, MONDAY TO  
FRIDAY, FROM 10 am**

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**PHONE NUMBERS FOR CLUB**

727 5000

727 5677

727 5999

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*Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey, C. in C. Australian Military Forces.*

It now appeared that the "real thing" was about to commence. All ranks were ordered to pack their kit bags for disposal to Base Kit store. Another large anti-tank ditch was commenced near Battalion Headquarters.

On the 1st December the Code word for No. 2 Degree of Readiness was received; full issues of ammunition were made to all ranks, field rations (bully beef and "dog biscuits") were issued.

Meanwhile, on the 2nd December, 1941, Admiral Yamamoto despatched new orders to Admiral Nagumo at sea, informing him of the date arrived at for the declaration of war.

On the 3rd December General Bennett received a cable from Malayan Command telling him not to hurry back as there was no immediate threat from the Japanese. But the General did not share their view as he was aware of the build-up in Indo China and the "peaceful" infiltration of Thailand which he was sure was to be the springboard for an attack on Malaya.

Owing to the abnormal tide on the 3rd and 4th December, several emplacements for our forward machine guns were damaged; another anti-tank ditch near Brigadier's point, in the Battalion area, was commenced.

On the 6th December, 1941, General Bennett had a discussion with General Wavell (Later Field Marshal) and General Blamey (also Field Marshal later). General Blamey was anxious for the 8th Division to be sent to the Middle East but General Bennett insisted the 8th was needed in Malaya as, in Bennett's opinion an attack was pending. Blamey scoffed at the idea of such an attack. In his opinion the Japanese had no intention of attacking. When General Bennett told him of the build-up in Indo China and the situation in Thailand, Blamey was still not convinced.

General Bennett did not share the Malayan Command or General Blamey's view and cut short his visit to the Middle East to return to Malaya where he estimated the attack could come at any time.

At 1745 hours on the 6th December, 1941, the code word "Raffles", bringing into operation No. 1 Degree of Readiness, was received; the zero hour for occupation of our

## **SPECIAL NOTICE**

## **SUB-BRANCH**

THE BRANCH MEETS ON THE 4th MONDAY IN EACH MONTH  
unless it is altered on the question of Holidays.

**Please note and make it a date**



battle stations was fixed at 2000 hours. The move of the Battalion into battle positions, the disposal of our kits to Base, the transport of ammunition, rations and stores etc., to field dumps went according to plan without a hitch.

It was raining very heavily when we moved out and we were slipping and sliding in the mud and slush. When going up hill it was one step forward and two back but we were helped going down hill, we found it much easier to reach the bottom. Upon reaching our Battalion area we immediately split into Company, platoon, then section dispositions.

We continued to improve our defences day and night and still the rain poured down. The water was running a foot deep in our slit trenches. We were busy loading Bren gun magazines and Vickers belts, and priming hand grenades. We completed our anti-tank ditches and finalized the laying of anti-personnel mines, so now we had to sit and wait. Patrols were regularly sent out into the nearby jungle to alert us of any approach of a hostile force as, even at this early stage we were on a war footing.

There were many reasons why the British and Americans underestimated the Japanese and were lulled into a false sense of security.

First, the Japanese were masters of deceit, a title they earned by their own actions. While they were holding the Olive Branch in one hand, smiling, bowing and saying so sorry, they were planning a "sneak" attack on Pearl Harbour *before war had been declared*. They became the aggressor, invading Malaya and the surrounding countries.

This deceit was extended when they successfully concealed the majority of their better type planes and only used a few on trial in China as the Chinese air power was no match for the Japanese.

As the Chinese air power had "held" the Japanese for four and a half years Malayan Command were confident that the Brewster Buffalo fighters were equal to the Japanese fighters. The Japanese surprised Malayan Command with their Navy O fighters (later the Zero) in quality and quantity. They made our 141 planes look sick. In fact, of all the

Vildebeete torpedo bombers which took off to attack sea borne Japanese forces, none returned to base.

The British and Americans based their estimates of Japan's military, naval, and air power largely on Japan's performance in China, where for four and a half years of war, Japan was still far from reaching a conclusion. She had occupied all the main cities but failed to break the spirit of the Chinese people.

But on the credit side, in those years, Japan had ample time to train, test and temper a huge National army with actual combat experience. Japanese fighter planes could thoroughly test their value and bombers had all these years of actual target practice.

The second error the Americans made was thinking they could bring Japan to her knees by applying economic pressure, which they were doing just prior to the war. In other words, sheer race prejudice played its part in leading us, especially America, to under-estimate the Japanese.

Another strong factor was Japan's close association with Nazi Germany which had effects we could only judge after war actually broke out in the Pacific. Ironically Hitler, in his master race plan, despised the Japanese next to the Jews.

These facts may have escalated Japan's entry into the war but her expansion desire extended over a much longer period prior to World War II in view of the following facts:

As the Japanese army had never suffered defeat it was the belief of the Japanese people that their soldiers were destined to rule the world.

This war-like attitude is further borne out by a summary by Japanese Premier Tanka in 1927 in which he stated:

"Japan cannot remove the difficulties in Eastern Asia unless she adopts a policy of "Blood and Iron".

If we want to control China we must first crush the United States of America.

If we succeed in conquering China, the rest of the Asiatic countries and the South Sea countries will fear us and surrender to us.

Having China's entire resources at our disposal, we shall proceed to conquer India, but to get control of Manchuria and Mongolia is the first step if the Yamato race wishes to distinguish itself in continental Asia." Unquote.

The invasion of Manchuria, China and the thrust into Burma towards India and the conquest of the Pacific area ties in with Premier Tanka's summary even though it was planned years previous.

Apathy and turning a blind eye to the obvious appeared rife in Malaya in many high places and there appeared to be a complacency that no-one would dare attack this Bastion of the Far East. America was caught with the same complacency at Pearl Harbour.

It appeared, for the Malayan Command, that the threat of war was remote and the lax tempo of life was allowed to continue undisturbed. The propaganda, which was designed to deter Japan from attacking Malaya, only fooled the British into a false sense of security. There is no doubt the efficient Japanese Intelligence system saw through this and were aware of this laxity and weakness.

Over a period of years the Japanese had built up an elaborate Intelligence system in Malaya and Singapore. Every village, town and city had one or more shops run by Japanese selling a great variety of goods. One of their most important sources was their camera and photographers shop where much valuable information was channelled direct to Japan.

The Fujiwara Haikan (the Japanese secret organisation in Malaya) consisted of doctors, dentists,

bakers, owners of tin mines, rubber estates and their employees, barbers, masseurs, non-European hotels with their English speaking "ladies" and even servants to British families. Many Japanese fishermen were part of this huge network and handled the coastal side of the operation.

Just prior to the war a large number of Japanese left Singapore and Malaya to later appear as officers in the invasion forces or to serve as guides. When a Japanese tank was destroyed near Kuala Lumpur papers identified the tank major as a man who owned a shop which repaired bicycles in Singapore pre-war. A Colonel in the Secret Police (Kem-petai) was later recognised as a former photographer in pre-war Singapore.

Speaking overall, two days after the fall of Singapore, Field Marshal A. Wavell recorded:

"The trouble goes a long way back; climate, the atmosphere of the country (the whole of Malaya has been asleep for 200 years), lack of vigour in our peace time training, cumbrousness of our tactics and equipment, the real difficulty of finding an answer to the very skilful and bold tactics of the Japanese in jungle fighting."

The question to be asked is, why wasn't action taken by Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, Commander-in-Chief Far East, and General Percival to rectify and update the training methods of the British and Indian troops in Malaya in line with General Bennett's rigid jungle training as carried out by all AIF units. This only serves to reflect the negative approach to war by top level Malayan Command.

## R.S.L. SUB-BRANCH

Any person who has been appointed, enlisted or posted for service in the Armed Forces may apply for Service Membership of the City of Fairfield RSL Sub-Branch.

All enquiries to Records Office or the Hon. Secretary R. T. Thompson, M.B.E.

Let us assess the potential of the troops who were to oppose the Japanese, who through their efficient pre-war intelligence system, were aware of the capabilities of the different troops in Malaya and so could plan their strategy. The AIF, Gurkhas and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, because of their pre-war training syllabus, were efficiently trained jungle fighters.

The majority of British troops were garrison troops and not fully trained in jungle war-fare although many had been in Malaya for years.

The 18th British Division arrived in Malaya in January, 1942. They were dressed, trained and equipped for desert warfare. They were hampered by excess clothing and equipment with no jungle training. How could anyone expect these men to be effective.

The same applied to the 44th and 45th Indian Brigades who had been in Malaya a matter of weeks before war was declared and were no better than raw recruits.

The 9th Indian Division arrived in Malaya partly trained and had no anti-tank guns, no signallers or signal equipment which meant no communication in the field which is essential. They had barely settled in when the Japanese hit them at Kota Bharu and Kuantan on the 8th December, 1941.

The 11th Indian Division had arrived in Malaya prior to the arrival of the AIF and had trained in jungle warfare but their officers were not efficient and hesitant regarding modifying text book tactics to conform with the new techniques of jungle warfare. This was so necessary as experience had to be gained on the spot in practical training where mistakes had to be ironed out as they occurred as per the training carried out by all AIF units.

AIF reinforcements arrived towards the end of November and early 1942 with little or no training. Some could not insert the clips of bullets into their rifles without jamming them. When we moved to the trenches in Mersing seven of us were sitting on grenade cases priming grenades. A "new chum" reinforcement jammed the fuse and it would not go far enough in to allow for the plug to be replaced.

He was about to hit it with the handle of his bayonet. Next second there was only one in the circle as we headed for cover, at the same telling him not to hit it. As luck happened, he stopped in time.

On the credit side the Japanese used combat trained well equipped troops from the Russian, Chinese and Korean Campaigns with a minimum of four and a half years battle experience behind them.

Pre-war, General Tomoyuki Yamashita, Commander of the 25th Imperial Japanese Army which was to invade Malaya, insisted that special troops assemble on Hainan Island and in the heavy wooded areas of North-West Indo-China for special training in the techniques of infiltrating jungle tactics and beach landing as he knew his objective was to be the jungles in Malaya.

For years prior to the invasion of Malaya each group of students in Tokyo War College had studied the possibilities of landing troops in Northern Malaya and driving down the peninsula to approach Singapore Island's unprotected North Shore. The big guns at the Naval Base did not have an 180 degree traverse and could only fire in a southerly or easterly direction towards the sea.

Further pre-war planning saw a flotilla fighter unit, consisting of thirty-six Mitsubishi Zekes (Zeros), and a reconnaissance plane unit with six Babs (Navy type 98) land-based planes for search duty, moved under the direct Command of Rear Admiral Matsunaga to the advanced base at Soctrang Indo-China (now Vietnam).

The Rear Admiral also had seventy-five twin-engined, land-based attack bombers of the Navy's 22 Air Flotilla. Two Air Corps of the Flotilla were simultaneously transferred to new bases. They were the Genzen Air Corps consisting of 48 Nell bombers (Navy type 96) moved to Saigon via Hainan Island, and the Mihoro Air Corps, similarly equipped with 48 Nell bombers, transferred to Thudaumot, north of Saigon.

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The Records Office is open from Tuesday to Saturday, inclusive between 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

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By way of explanation, the Japanese system of naming their planes, were as follows:

All trainers were named after trees, e.g. Hickory, Spruce, etc.

All gliders were named after birds, e.g. Goose, Gander, etc.

All transports had female Christian names beginning with T, e.g. Tess, etc.

Male Christian names were applied to all fighters and Navy reconnaissance sea planes, e.g. Claude (Navy fighter), Frank (Army fighter), and Dave (Navy reconnaissance sea planes).

Female Christian names were applied to all aircraft including reconnaissance (other than seaplanes), torpedo bombers, dive bombers, heavy and light horizontal and attack bombers, and to all flying boats whether patrol or transport.

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto specifically charged these units with (1) destruction of the enemy fleet and protection of the Japanese troop transports which were to carry the Army's Malaya Landing Force in their planned "sneak attack". (2) destruction of the proposed enemy's air force stationed in Malaya and around Singapore (Butterworth and Kota Bharu, in Northern Malaya, were rendered ineffective early in the war as a result). (3) maintain an effective sea patrol. One can see the Japanese planned the invasion of Malaya down to the last detail.

These land-based planes were to be used in the well-planned destruction of the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse" which, at that time, was the British sea power in the Malayan area.

**Next: War Declared.**

M. MULLENS

# Younger Set

## Members Wanted

**MALE/FEMALE 12 to 25 years**

## Activities Programme

GRASS SKI-ING ☐ SNOW SKI-ING  
 BUSH WALKING ☐ CAMPING ☐ SAILING  
 HORSE RIDING ☐ GLIDING ☐ CAVING  
 FIRST AID ☐ ORIENTEERING  
 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ☐ CANOEING  
 OR ANY OTHER INTEREST YOU MAY  
 WISH TO ORGANISE.

Our Meetings are held in the Fred Galton Hall on Second and Fourth Mondays of each month.

All Welcome. Please contact 727 2674, 604 4463 609 1024 for any information.

## RSL CIRCULAR

ANZAC HOUSE, DARLINGHURST, N.S.W. 2010

1st November, 1981  
Circular No. 37/81  
File No. 2258/173  
KS:d1

The Honorary Secretary,  
RSL Sub-Branches, Women's Auxiliaries and RSL Clubs

Dear Sir/Madam,

### RE: RSL VICTORY BALL 1982 — NOMINATIONS FOR DEBUTANTES

Nominations are now being sought for Debutantes for the RSL Victory Ball to be held at the Canterbury/Hurlstone Park RSL Club, 20-26 Canterbury Road, HURLSTONE PARK, on the evening of Thursday, 27th May, 1982.

Debutantes may be sponsored by either Sub-Branches, Women's Auxiliaries or Associated Clubs, but nominations will ONLY be accepted on the Official Form as attached hereto.

It is to be noted also that nominations will only be accepted over the signature of the Sub-Branch Honorary Secretary. This means that although an Auxiliary or Club may sponsor a Debutante, such action and the *order of preference* in which the girls' names are submitted *must be ratified by the parent Sub-Branch*.

The following conditions which will govern the selection of Debutantes should be noted by Committees of Women's Auxiliaries and if such Committee desire to submit nominations the matter must be decided by negotiating with their Sub-Branch.

- (a) The maximum number of Debutantes to be presented will be 17 (seventeen).
- (b) All Debutantes MUST be 17 years of age or over, on or before 1st January, 1982 and no married persons will be entertained as prospective applicants.
- (c) Nominations will close at 5.00 pm on 31st January, 1982.
- (d) The selection of Debutantes shall be decided by ballot at State Branch and the result of such ballot shall be final and binding. Unsuccessful and second and third choices will be placed on a reserve listing.
- (e) Debutantes from Country areas will be required to attend rehearsals in Sydney as stipulated by the Matron of Honour and Master of Ceremonies.
- (f) Debutantes from Suburban areas will be required to attend all rehearsals which will be held at the City of Sydney RSL Club and the Canterbury/Hurlstone Park RSL Club.
- (g) Debutantes MUST provide their own partners. This State Branch will not be able to provide partners as it has done previously.

W. G. OSMOND per F. BUXTON,  
State Secretary

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 15)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

Troops stationed in Malaya in 1941 were:

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the Gordons, Leicesters, East Surreys, Loyals, Manchesters, Cambridgeshires and the Norfolks.

Some of the Indian troops were: 2/10th Baluch, 1/13th Frontier-2/12th Frontier Rifles, 2/16th-3/16th and 5/14th Punjab Regiments, 5/12th Sikhs, 3/17th Dogras, 2/18th Royal Garhwali Rifles, the Jats, the Raj Rifles, 10th Mountain Battery and the Gurkhas.

Then there were the Johore Regiment and various Malay Regiments.

Australian troops consisted of:

2/18th Bn (NSW), 2/19th Bn (NSW), 2/20th Bn (NSW) of the 22nd Brigade.

The 2/26th Bn (Queensland), 2/29th Bn (Victoria), 2/30th Bn (NSW) of the 27th Brigade.

Supporting troops were:

The 2/10th Field Regiment RAA, 2/15th Field Regiment RAA, 4th Anti-Tank Regiment, 2/10th Field Company RAE, 2/12th Field Company RAE, 4th Reserve Motor Transport, 8th Division AASC, 2/3rd Motor Transport, 8th Division Supply Reserve Section, 2/3rd Ordnance Stores, 8th Division Signallers, 2/10th Australian General Hospital, 2/13th Australian General Hospital, 2/9th Field Ambulance, 2/10th Field Ambulance, 2/2nd Casualty Clearing Station, 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station, 27th Dental Unit, 2nd Convalescent Depot, Divisional and Battalion Pay and Postal Units, GHQ Unit, 2/10th Ordnance Workshops, LAD and Field Units.

The 18th British Division arrived

in January, 1942 too late to be effective but just in time to see the end. They were:

Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, Sherwood Foresters, Suffolks, Bedfordshires and the Hertfordshires.

The 2/4th Machine Bn (AIF) also arrived in Malaya in January, 1942.

There would, no doubt, be other British, Indian and Australian units in Malaya at the time but it is hard to remember as it was so long ago.

## War Declared

In the trenches we received word that, on the 6th December, 1941, the troop transports carrying the Japanese Army Landing force scheduled to invade Thailand and the East Coast of Malaya, were proceeding westward off South Indo-China under constant fighter cover. There were 100 vessels plus destroyer escort and they were not detected at first, then a British flying boat spotted them. As a state of war had not been declared the British failed to attack, which amazed the Japanese.

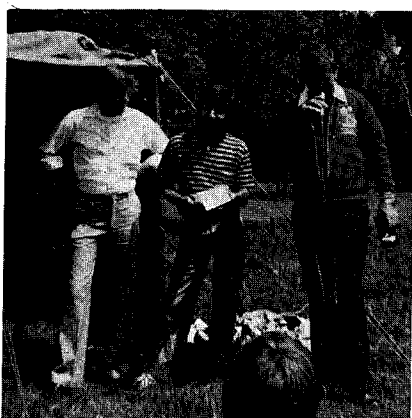
We could not understand why an attack was not ordered because it was obvious there was to be an invasion. There were unofficial rumours that some pilots wanted to take off and attack the invasion fleet but were "grounded" because a state of war did not exist. As a result of not taking off the initiative was lost and for every plane destroyed in the air over Malaya, many more were destroyed on the ground as the Japanese naturally concentrated their initial aerial offensive on the aerodromes and shipping docks.



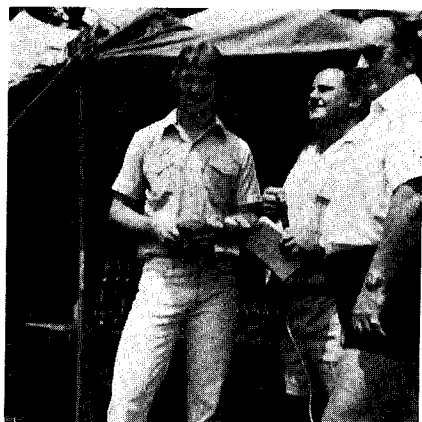
*Under 11s on the march.*



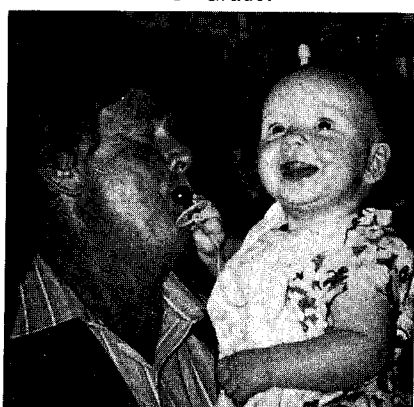
*The two bosses — Don Rinkin and R.T.T.*



*The Three Bob's, Coach and Manager's "C" Grade.*



*Parramatta Ace, Brett Kenny.*



*Uncle Bob spitting the dummy out to Lyn Pollack's little boy, Joel.*

On the 7th December, 1941, planes from Admiral Nagumo's Task Force attacked Pearl Harbour and as a result sank or disabled the USS battleships Nevada, California, Arizona, West Virginia, Maryland and Oklahoma and severely damaged the battleships Pennsylvania and Tennessee. They also sunk the target ship Utah, the cruiser Helena and two destroyers. Shore installations were severely damaged, 188 planes were destroyed on the airfields, 2,403 people killed and 1,200 were injured.

The wording of the Japanese declaration of war was then made in true Oriental vein as follows:

"The Emperor of Japan, upon the throne of a line of Emperors unbroken of ages Eternal, blessed with Divine Grace hereby presents to you loyal and courageous subjects.

I do hereby declare war upon America and England. Officers and men of our Imperial Army and Navy, exert your utmost and go forth into battle. Officials and Authorities of our Government, attend to your duties honestly and conscientiously. Each and every subject, do your part diligently, and with the entire nation in accord putting forth the whole strength of the Empire, making certain that no blunders are made in achieving the objective of this war." Unquote.

The Emperor went on to explain

that his aim was to maintain stability in East Asia and accused China of taking up arms and forcing Japan to retaliate with military action. The world knows that Japan was the aggressor in 1937. He then blamed America and England for the disorders in East Asia.

Early on the 8th December, 1941, formations of Japanese planes passed over our positions to carry out the initial bombing of Singapore. At this stage the only action we had was "getting our own back" as wild pigs and monkeys triggered off some of our anti-personnel mines which were not close enough to cause casualties.

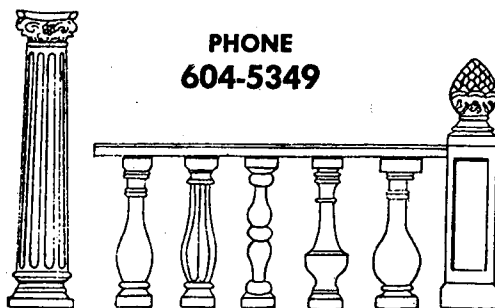
By now we had evacuated all civilians from within our defensive dispositions and the natives were warned that they would risk being shot if they were found in the area from then on. We settled down to "living" in our Battalion area in dugouts and "bivvy" shelters. By now enemy planes were constantly flying over the Battalion area.

Regarding the initial attack on Malaya I will quote an extract from "Why Singapore Fell" by Lt. General H. Gordon Bennett:

"The code word "Raffles" had been signalled through from the Malayan Command on the 7th December, 1941. (As mentioned before, zero hour for all AIF units was on

## J. G. COLUMNS & BALUSTRADES

PHONE  
604-5349



1197 HORSLEY DRIVE, WETHERILL PARK, 2164



the 6th December at 2000 hours). This was the order for all ranks to stand to arms ready for immediate action. To the 11th Indian Division, it meant that they were to be ready to advance into Thailand, the signal for the advance being the word "Matador". The plan, prepared by Major General Murray Lyon and approved by General Percival after much hesitation, was that this Division should endeavour to anticipate a Japanese move by occupying Patani and Singora, on the east coast of Thailand, before the arrival of the Japanese fleet of transports. One column dubbed "Krocol", consisting of 3/16th and 5/14th Punjab Regiments and the 10th Mountain Battery, all under Lt. Colonel Moorhead, should move from its base at Kroh past Betong to Patani, a distance of nearly 100 miles along a road which passed for the most part through thick jungle and over rough hilly country. Another column, "Leycol", consisting of a mixed force of about a battalion strength, and including a company of specially trained guerillas, was to advance along the west coast from the mouth of the river Perlis to capture the Thai aerodrome at Setul. The main

body of the 11th Division was to move via the railway and the main road to Singora, which was about fifty miles from the frontier.

Before the war commenced, these troops had been prepared for this move which was to have taken place before the Japanese landed at Singora and Patani. Before the magic word "Matador" had been sent, the Japanese landed, the time of the landing being between 3 and 4 am at Singora and 5 am at Patani on the 8th December, 1941.

At first light Singapore was bombed and a landing at Kota Bharu was attempted. Thus the campaign started. All day long the 11th Division waited for orders to advance. It was not until 1400 hours that the 2/16th Punjabs of Krocol were sent forward, their patrols crossing the frontier immediately. The Battalion followed but were very soon checked by some Thai police, armed with rifles and light machine-guns. The road had been blocked with felled trees and motor trucks. This opposition was overcome, the Thais withdrawing, and the battalion continued its advance without check, to a point in the vicinity of a ridge known as "The

## *Your Barber*

*and*

## *Ladies Hairdresser*

*are upstairs*

Entry is only from the Rear Foyer.

Be sure to book your times.

Appointments can be made by ringing the Club.

Ledge", about twenty-one miles north of Betong, on the 10th December. Here a Japanese force was met, the Punjabs succeeded in driving back their advanced patrols, which were accompanied by tanks. After advancing another mile, the column was definitely halted by the Japanese who inflicted very heavy casualties with mortars, artillery and machine guns.

The rest of the 11th Division was in occupation of a defensive position astride the main road near Jitra with outposts forward through Changlun. On the evening of the 8th December, the Japanese were at Haad Yai in Thailand, where they placed road blocks across the highway.

During the early hours of 9th December, their advanced patrols, accompanied by Japanese civilian guides, crossed the frontier into Malaya. Their main body moved up during the day and towards evening launched a heavy attack under cover of artillery and mortar fire, and drove our outposts back to the Jitra line where a stand was made.

On the Kota Bharu front, the enemy launched a determined attack from the sea with a well equipped expedition. Our beaches there were held by posts and pillboxes extending along the coast. At 0400 hours, the fleet opened heavy fire on our posts, under cover of which their beach landing-craft approached the shore. In most cases, the garrison, which consisted of Brigadier Key's brigade of Indian troops of the 9th Indian Division, inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. Our air force bombed and machine gunned the boats, sinking many. After some stiff fighting, the enemy managed to

penetrate our position and at the same time to send parties round the flanks, a subsidiary landing having been effected some miles up the coast. There being no depth to the position, it was not long before our posts were forced to withdraw but not before heavy casualties were inflicted on the invaders. Gradually our troops were pushed back and the Japanese secured their objective, the aerodrome which had been partly demolished by our engineers. Immediately the Japanese started putting the runways into repair and by the 10th December they were almost ready for use." Unquote.

Now with the invasion in full swing word was received by the Japanese that the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse" had moved out of Singapore and were heading for the Kota Bharu area. The Saigon-based attack force was given the task of seeking out and destroying these ships before they became effective. With all these Japanese air and troop movements for days before it seems unbelievable that air cover was not given to these important ships, after all our air force was only 100 nautical miles away at Kuantan and so well within the range of our fighters. The lack of air opposition also amazed the Japs especially as the ships came in close to land where they were prime targets for land-based Japanese planes. The large build-up and movement of Japanese planes in Indo-China was known to British Intelligence plus the movement of the Japanese troopships towards Malaya. No doubt the air resistance at Kota Bharu, when the Japanese were actually landing, was an isolated incident as our planes were few.

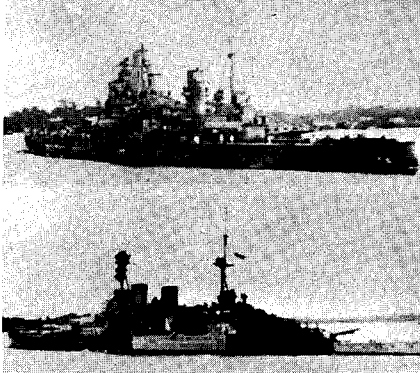
## R.S.L. SUB-BRANCH

Any person who has been appointed, enlisted or posted for service in the Armed Forces may apply for Service Membership of the City of Fairfield RSL Sub-Branch.

All enquiries to Records Office or the Hon. Secretary, R. T. Thompson, M.B.E.

The sinking of the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse", plus the fact of using Thailand for a springboard, had an important effect on the overall campaign.

On the 9th December, 1941, a Japanese reconnaissance plane approached the task force consisting of the "Prince of Wales", "Repulse" and destroyers, the "Express", "Vampire" and "Jupiter".



*The "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse" leaving Singapore on the 8th December, 1941.*

Admiral Phillips ordered a change of course to south during the night seeing he had been "spotted" but the force was picked up by another Japanese reconnaissance plane at 10 am on the morning of the 10th December, 1941, in the Straits of Malacca.

Earlier on the morning of the 10th December, from their established bases in Saigon, nine level Nell bombers, two Babs reconnaissance aircraft for search duty, twenty-six Nell and twenty-six Betty bombers carrying torpedoes, and thirty-four Nells carrying bombs, left when they

received word of the presence of the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse", and headed in that direction.

The point of no return was reached by the level bombers so they wheeled and returned to base. They had used their fuel initially searching for the British ships.

At 11 o'clock a formation of eight level bombers, of the Mihoro Air Corps, commanded by Lt. Hachiro Shoji, initially attacked the "Repulse" and scored one direct hit and two near misses with 550 lb. bombs from 11,700 feet; the bomb which hit the "Repulse" pierced the aircraft hangar, penetrating to the Marine's mess and started a fire which could not be controlled.

These level bombers had actually left French Indo-China (Vietnam) bases after the initial search force but had no trouble with fuel as they flew in a direct line to the target on information passed on by their reconnaissance plane.

This was followed by the first wave of torpedo bombers which came in low. The anti-aircraft guns of the battleships which, at short range, were capable of throwing up a considerable size barrage resulted in seven attackers being sent into the sea. Despite this the attacks were pressed home, the Japanese showing considerable skill and daring.

The "Prince of Wales" was hit and her stern damaged. She signalled to the "Repulse" to ask if she had been hit. The "Repulse" replied: "Have avoided 19 torpedoes till now, thanks to Providence."

The first wave of torpedo bombers withdrew, then 16 bombers of the Genzan Air Corps Squadron launched torpedoes at the ships for nine minutes and of these seven

## ATTENTION SERVICE MEMBERS

*Orders now taken for the Service Members Cuff Links and Tie Bar — at the Records Office.*

*Cuff Links ..... \$12.00      Tie Bar ..... \$5.00*

*Hours of business: 8 am-4.30 pm, Tuesday to Saturday inclusive.*



# Younger Set

## Members Wanted

**MALE/FEMALE 12 to 25 years**

### *Activities Programme*

GRASS SKI-ING ☐ SNOW SKI-ING  
 BUSH WALKING ☐ CAMPING ☐ SAILING  
 HORSE RIDING ☐ GLIDING ☐ CAVING  
 FIRST AID ☐ ORIENTEERING  
 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ☐ CANOEING  
 OR ANY OTHER INTEREST YOU MAY  
 WISH TO ORGANISE.

Our Meetings are held in the Fred Galton Hall on  
 Second and Fourth Mondays of each month.

All Welcome. Please contact 727 2674, 604 4463 609 1024  
 for any information.

## Notice to Members

### TO ALL MEMBERS

YOU **MUST** NOTIFY DESK IMMEDIATELY YOU CHANGE  
 YOUR ADDRESS

THIS IS FOR **YOUR** BENEFIT

R. T. Thompson, M.B.E., Secretary/Manager.

## **BOWLS MIXED LOUNGE**

Bowls Bar will be open until 10.30 pm on the following days:  
 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

R. T. THOMPSON,  
 Secretary/Manager

# Birth of a Battalion

(Part 16)

Dedicated to the memory of officers and other ranks of the 8th Division who gave their lives in the cause of freedom and democratic ideals.

M. MULLENS, February, 1982.

Now the attack was concentrated on the "Prince of Wales" and she was attacked by 15 torpedo bombers. Nine Genzan Air Corps planes released nine torpedoes of which four found their mark and six Kanoya Air Corps planes were also successful with four hits.

The steering of the "Prince of Wales", which was damaged previously, did not enhance the situation of the ship and she listed to port then righted herself, not once did her guns stop blazing.

When the Kanoya torpedo squadron had completed their runs, two level bomber squadrons of the Mihoro Air Corps led by Lieutenant Yoshimi Shirai arrived in position directly above the British ship and moved in for the attack.

Eight level bombers dropped 14 1,100 lb. bombs on the "Prince of Wales", one of these was a direct hit; then nine other level bombers of the same Corps dropped 18 1,100 lb. bombs, but, because of a miscalculation by the Commander he let his bombs go too soon and the rest of the squadron followed suit resulting in all bombs falling short of their target.

The "Prince of Wales" was belching smoke from repeated torpedo hits, plus the direct hit by the 1,100 lb. bombs which had struck directly in the centre of the ship and then a tremendous explosion ripped through her and she started her last plunge and disappeared beneath the waves at approx. 1.20 pm.

Admiral Phillips was last seen sliding down the bridge of the ship and he, with the ship's captain, Captain J. Leach, were among those missing when the survivors were picked up.

The guns of these ships continued to belch death till it was impossible to stand on the deck and it was only then that the order was given to abandon ship.

The "Prince of Wales" had a displacement of 35,000 tons, 10 14-inch guns and a complement of 1,612 men, while the "Repulse" of 32,000 tons, mounted six 15-inch guns and carried a crew of approximately 1,311.

Fortunately the destroyers were not attacked to any extent during the action and at once set about the task of picking up survivors from the sea. There was a story, never officially confirmed that, after the two battleships had been sunk, the Japanese signalled to the destroyers to pick up survivors without fear of further attack. There is so little chivalry in modern warfare that one would like to believe the story.

But one will see below the facts that another mass attack was to be carried out had the two big ships not been sunk

# DIGGERS DART CLUB

## INVITATION TO ALL MEMBERS, INTENDING MEMBERS OR VISITORS

All welcome to join the fun and enjoy the pleasant company of all ages. You can be a beginner or a champ.

Social games played Friday nights, 8 pm start.

Competition is played Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Ladies teams, Mixed team, Mens teams—A, B or C Grade players welcome.

For further information see any Committeeman on Friday nights in the Darts Area.

## **SPECIAL NOTICE**

### **SUB-BRANCH**

THE BRANCH MEETS ON THE 4th MONDAY IN EACH MONTH unless it is altered on the question of Holidays

**Please note and make it a date**

## J. G. COLUMNS & BALUSTRADES

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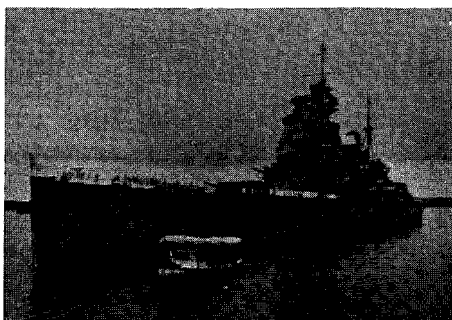


1197 HORSLEY DRIVE, WETHERILL PARK, 2164

in the initial attacks, so one wonders? The Navy wing carried out the attacks and they were the elite of the Japanese air power at the time so their code of honour possibly may have been much higher than of the later "mass produced" fanatical pilots.

Ensign Hoashi's Babs reconnaissance plane circled the battle area and caught the last moments of the two great battleships and radioed back to Saigon base a vivid report of what was happening far below him. His report confirming the sinkings of the ships cancelled another assault which was being prepared if it was necessary with the vast number of planes they had at their disposal.

With his mission over, Ensign Hoashi sighted eight allied fighters racing to the scene, but their belated appearance was to no avail, for the two ships had already disappeared beneath the waves. Ensign Hoashi flew into the clouds to avoid the fighters and returned to base to give a further report.

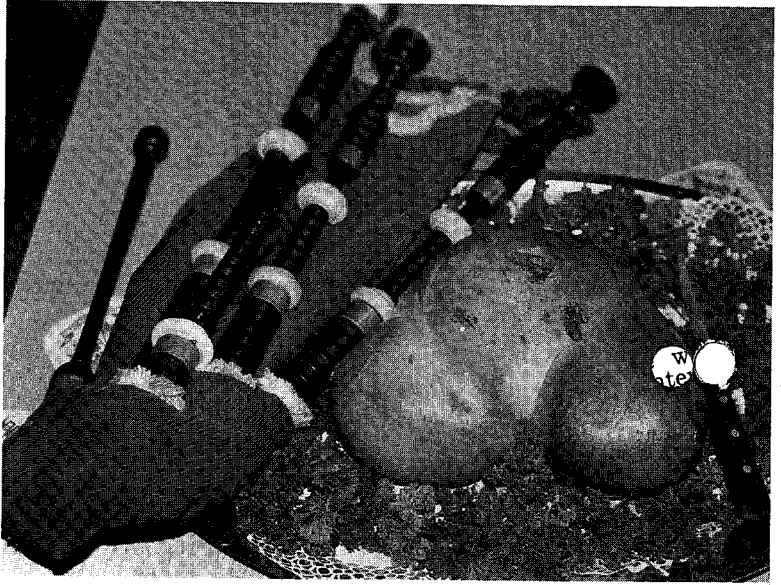


*Last picture of Prince of Wales leaving Singapore.*



*RAF and RAAF Brewster Buffaloes.*





*If the pipes don't get the Haggis, the knife will.*



*When Robbie Burns has a birthday, Bob Pearson celebrates.*

THE FIELD, MARCH, 1982

The destroyers "Express", "Vampire" and "Jupiter" picked up 2,330 survivors out of a total of 2,923, which, under the circumstances of the heavy concentrated attack, was a thankful result to a tragic event.

I met some of the wounded survivors from these ships on the Indian hospital ship "Talamba", which conveyed us from Malaya to Ceylon (Siri Lanka) and they told me the "Repulse" was under way till the last so suffered the most casualties as they were trapped below decks whereas the "Prince of Wales" had damage to her steering early and as a result more men were on deck. I was told by a survivor that Admiral Phillips was not wounded and preferred to go down with his ship as he could have left the bridge at a more opportune time. He also told me that the Admiral asked for his ceremonial hat as the one he was wearing was not fit for an Admiral to die in.

The survivors told me of acts of courage, devotion to duty and even requested acts of mercy which eventuated from this action, many were heart rendering.

There were accounts of burst steam pipes as men were passing and they were literally cut in halves by the escaping high pressure steam and seriously wounded men, unable to move, laying on the hot decks causing the skin to leave the body before they could receive attention. The force of explosions hurled men against the bulkheads, the lucky ones suffering broken backs and extensive injuries. At least while there was life there was hope. One survivor showed me where, when he was blown to the deck by an explosion, a piece of shrapnel passed through his back just below the shoulder blade, came out near the collarbone, entered the side of his neck and knocked out teeth on its exit from his mouth. It was hard to believe the passage of the shrapnel which, by some miracle, missed all vital parts.

There were mortally wounded men, lying on the decks pleading for someone to kill them as their pain was unbearable. In the water men held their mates up as long as possible waiting to be picked up. Many could not hold on and went to a watery grave; how these events must have effected the minds of these survivors only they will ever know. One could go on telling of the sacrifices and heart rendering events as related by the survivors on that fateful day.

Later on at the 12th AGH in Ceylon, the "walking" patients helped the nurses in attending to the more difficult cases and among these was a sailor off the "Prince of Wales" who was bomb happy. He has not allowed knives or forks so we fed him. When we first gave him a hot cup of tea he caught us unawares, he wheeled it in a circle over his head and at the same time he made a noise of a diving plane then the whistle of a bomb and yelled boom as he crashed the cup and saucer into the floor. As luck happened he did not scald himself and we were more prepared from then on.

Then there was a Marine off the "Prince of Wales" who was on duty in the magazine room and his mind was completely

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**THE CLUB CAR PARKS ARE NOW OPEN, MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
FROM 10 am**

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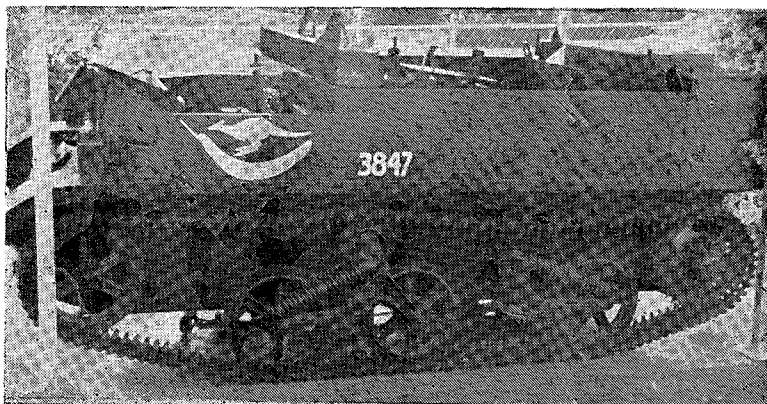
THE FIELD, MARCH, 1982

advised that enemy in strength were moving along the road from Endau to Mersing and advancing on the 2/18th sector. To keep the ensuing action in sequence I will give an account of this action when I deal with Eastforce later on.

G.O.C. Malaya had asked for 500 planes and received 15 Hudsons for general reconnaissance. 34 Blenheim bombers; 27 Wildebeeste torpedo bombers; 43 Brewster Buffalo fighters; 10 Blenheim night fighters; 3 Catalina flying boats; 4 Swordfish and 5 Sharks — a total of 141. Compared with the Japanese Navy 0 fighters these aircraft were obsolescent and inferior. The Hurricane, which would have a vast effect on the ultimate results of the war in the skies over Singapore, arrived too late; not enough could be put into service to be effective. The Hurricane could climb straight up and would have been a formidable opponent for the Japanese planes. The Brewster Buffalo had to slowly spiral up which, with its slow speed compared with the Navy 0 fighters, was a distinct disadvantage.

Malayan Command had requested 48 infantry Battalions, received 32, the majority of whom were poorly led and equipped and not jungle trained. As a result the burden carried by the two Indian Divisions initially was too much for them against the jungle trained Japanese. This fact was borne out when, within a week of fighting, the 11th Indian Division had virtually ceased to exist as an organised force and as a result the whole defensive situation in Northern Malaya was thrown into confusion. For the most part this Division was poorly led at Divisional and regimental levels as they were faced with tactics which baffled the officers. To enlarge on this, a Divisional Commander and three Brigadiers of the 11th Indian Division were replaced and later these poorly trained troops were annihilated at the Slim River at small cost to the Japanese.

The initial attacking force of the Japanese were three Divisions of seasoned troops. The 1st Guards Division and the famous 5th Division advanced down the west coast and the 18th Division advanced down the east coast and operated from Thailand and Kota Bharu, with more in reserve to land down the coastline if necessary. Contrary to some beliefs, the Japanese finally com-



*Bren Gun Carrier.*

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one. When I was able I used to take him for long walks and occasionally he would become "sane" and give an account of his nerve racking experience. He and other Marines were passing ammunition and found they could not reach the decks as the exit hatches were jammed as a result of constant torpedo strikes. They had to remain there listening to torpedo after torpedo blowing into the side of the ship and wondering which one was going to hit the magazine. Then, by some divine circumstances a hole was blown in the side of the ship, water rushed in and flushed him out into the open sea and safety. He was very young and in his sane moments told us of his wife and child in England. His "sane" times were very few and he spent most of his time walking up and down with a dazed vacant look in his eyes. There was an Australian off the HMAS Australia who was in a similar condition. To see young men like this is truly sad.

Many questions have been asked as to why these two ships were sunk. Was the Admiral told, at a secret conference on 8th December by the Commander of the Air Force, that air cover could not be supplied? Was he made aware of the Japanese land based planes in striking distance from bases in Thailand? Did Admiral Phillips, whose ships had only arrived in Singapore on 2nd December, 1941, itching to attack the enemy, feel justified in proceeding northward to attack the Japanese troopships in the Gulf of Siam without air support? Or did he reason that it would be better to put up a fight on the high seas rather than be bombed while he lay at anchor in the Straits of Johore?

Admiral Phillips knew the risks he was taking but he was prepared to take them. The sinkings effected all troops and civilians. It was a bad omen and showed that the Japanese air force was much stronger than anticipated. When we received word in the trenches we couldn't believe it but we had to face facts, it was true. The only bright feature was that 2,330 survivors had been picked up.

Troops on the northern tip of Malaya were in a bad position as their only link with Southern Malaya was a single railway line which they relied on for supplies and reinforcements. The Indian troops became disorganized and began to withdraw using this vital link and so causing congestion which led to confusion. Kota Bharu aerodrome was in Japanese hands and Butterworth was bombed off the map not long after.

The Japanese bombed and strafed all trains day and night, causing native drivers to leave their engines. Australians and some survivors from the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse" were sent up country to man the trains so putting them in the hot seat once again.

Japan, although the aggressor, had a distinct advantage in Malaya for the following factual reasons: With the destruction of America's Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour; the sinking of the British sea power in the Far East (Prince of Wales and Repulse); control of friendly Thailand and North Malaya for air bases and uninterrupted troop movement by land with no problems with lines of communications; our insignificant 141 planes of all types, the Japanese had complete control of the land, sea and air.

In view of this a "dig in" or concentration of troops at any one spot was useless. When held up the Japanese diverted troops

to their best advantage on this peninsular piece of land which was 100 miles across at the narrowest point near the Tha border and the widest part 200 miles across. From the Tha border to the most southerly tip of the mainland was approx 450 miles so making 900 miles of coastline on the east and west coasts on which to land troops whenever and wherever they wished, so a war of movement developed.

The Japanese commenced to land all down the coast. At Kuantan they forced the defenders back and captured the Kuantan aerodrome. The Japanese were landing with the barest of equipment and so were not hampered. The Japanese soldiers' rations were small and in lots of cases they lived off the land; their rifles were a lighter calibre than our 303s and they had numerous automatic weapons which were ideal for jungle warfare. Reports came through that there were white officers fighting with the Japs. An Indian soldier claimed to have shot a white officer on a bridge, a Scot claimed to have shot a white officer who was hiding behind a tree and an Australian saw a white officer in a Jap staff car. This would not surprise as Japan had signed a treaty with Germany.

We had been informed that there was a tiger in our barbed wire system and one night a soldier in Bn. HK Coy., saw the "tiger" coming towards him and opened fire. The "tiger" turned out to be a black stump and fire flies. Positions nearby thought it was a general alert and all guns on our fixed positions opened up so ensuring that all were alert, so it was good practice.

Some natives were found lighting fires on the beach in front of our positions and received a warm reception. A newly-built hut, with stocks of food, was also found in a thick patch of jungle inside our positions. Three Jap airmen were captured a short distance from our positions, their planes had been hit over Singapore and they had bailed out.

We were kept up to date with the progress of the war and informed of the different methods the Japs were using. We were more convinced than ever that the Japs knew the strength of our defences and would not stage an attack in our sector.

Patrols were still being sent out from Mersing and C Coy., captured two Japanese carrying Jap flags. Inter company exercises were carried out in the nearby jungle to keep in trim, formations of jungle warfare were rehearsed. A considerable number of aircraft was overhead. It was reported that there was a concentration of enemy ships in Camranh Bay (Indo-China) and also at Singapore (Thailand) and an attack was expected. Then Brigade advised contact with the enemy eight miles north of Endau. Jap army type 97 bombers were operating at Endau and carrying out low level bombing and strafing. Enemy aircraft were active over 2/18th Bn. area and continued daily. Brigade

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the Japanese at Segamat road been followed by another reversal at the Muar, the Japanese attack on that vital front would have been slowed down and the British would have been able to rush reinforcements there to consolidate that front. Also, it is my firm belief that, had the AIF fought on the one front their casualties would not have been so high. They would have made some attempt to relieve their Battalions which had been cut off, and not written off like the Malayan Command wrote off the 2/19th and 2/29th Battalions. At the same time they would not have let their personal feelings cloud their better judgement.

Apparently General Percival still considered Mersing a vital point as had the Japanese smashed through there, all troops up North would be cut off and Singapore would have fallen in a week.

How frustrating for a fighting General when he knew what could be done but was continually over-ruled by negative thinking. General Bennett was the only General in Malaya who was dedicated in keeping abreast of the times in jungle warfare and local conditions. We lost a lot of "sweat" as living examples of this fact.

This was the way he trained the AIF only to be denied the satisfaction of using them till the position was hopeless and beyond control.

To more ably explain the Command situation let me quote Ian Morrison, London Times and Times of Australia, from his book "Malayan Postscript".

"Percival was a man of considerable personal charm if one met him socially. He was an able staff officer with a penetrating mind although a mind that saw difficulties to any scheme before he saw the possibilities. But he was a completely negative person with no vigor, no colour and no conviction. His personality was not strong, and as a leader he did not appeal to the troops (to whom he was unknown except by name) or to the general public. Both Sir Shenton Thomas and General Percival would have got by in peace times, and after their terms in Singapore had expired, would have retired honourably to England. But they were not men to handle a ticklish situation which prevailed in Singapore; one cannot blame people for what they are. Usually in times of crisis the static leadership is swept aside by dynamic leadership. If the Malayan Campaign had lasted six months instead of just over two months this would doubtless have happened in military and civilian spheres. But things moved so quickly in Singapore that there was never time for it to happen."

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To add further the following is a quote from "Why Singapore Fell" by General H. Gordon Bennett.

"Early in May, 1941, about the time General Percival took over Malayan Command from Lt. General R. H. Bond, who was being retired there arrived in Malaya Lt. General Sir L. M. Heath who had been newly appointed to Command the 3rd Indian Corps, consisting of the 9th and 11th Indian Divisions. Aged 56, General Heath had a brilliant fighting career in the First World War — in which he earned the Military Cross.

"He had a stronger personality than Percival. After the first defeat of the 11th Indian Division, he considered a withdrawal to a line in Southern Johore essential, and that a stand should be made there. Throughout the conference which I attended he urged retirements. In fact, one of his Brigadiers had been detailed to reconnoitre successive lines of retreat down the peninsula. I clashed with him only once. It was at a conference held at the Sultan of Johore's shooting lodge at Gemas on the 5th January, 1942. At this conference, a very gloomy picture was drawn by Heath. He emphasised the danger to his force of a flanking move by the enemy, who was moving down the coast. He urged a withdrawal. I suggested the only way to deal with the situation was to attack. He ridiculed the idea. I then offered to launch an attack with the Australians from Rompin Bahru, towards Tampin — the 11th Indian Division holding a line in the vicinity of Gemas. Heath objected. General Percival supported my idea strongly though he thought the attack should be launched by 9th Indian Division under General Barstow.

"Considering the 9th Division was tired and had been retreating for several days, it seemed better to me that any attack should be launched by fresh Australian troops. The discussion was short lived. I left the conference very dejected and as I sat on the running board of my car eating my sandwich lunch, Percival came to me and very kindly and patiently



Lieut. General A. Percival and Lieut. General H. Gordon Bennett.

mitted more fresh troops when conditions went against them. They used 300 tanks and between 700 and 800 first-class combat planes in the battle of Malaya and Singapore.

The Japanese used light, medium and heavy 18-ton tanks which, in most cases had to stick to the all-weather roads as any deviation off the roads would see them bog down. Malayan Command considered tanks unsuitable for local conditions and so had not requested them. Our bren gun carriers became our "tank corps" and they, at all times, acquitted themselves well.

When I mention that the Japanese were seasoned troops one must remember they were gaining combat experience on the Russian front, in Korea and from 7th July, 1937 when the Sino-Japanese Incident flared up on the Chinese Mainland. They had also been trained in jungle warfare on orders from General Tomoyuki Yamashita, Commander-in-Chief of the 25th Army which was scheduled to invade Malaya. Further, the Japanese air force, flying from Formosa and Kyushu, were also gaining practical combat experience when they bombed Shanghai, Nanking, Hangchow and other Chinese cities. No doubt the resistance was feeble but they had actual live targets to practise on.

Sometimes, against token resistance as mentioned previously, the Japanese came down the Malayan Mainland at the rate of 100 miles a day before being challenged. No matter how poorly trained the troops were, this should never have been allowed so it would appear that some troops lacked the will to fight.

The AIF were held back to guard Malacca, Johore and indirectly Singapore despite General Bennett's pleas to engage and at least contain the Japanese by using the fresh Australian troops. It was near hopeless and too late when General (later Field Marshal) Wavell granted part of General Bennett's wish and placed him in Command of West Force, consisting of the 27th Brigade (AIF), the newly-arrived 45th Indian Brigade, the 8th and 22nd Brigades of the 9th Indian Division. General Bennett assumed command on 8th January, 1942, and immediately deployed the three Battalions of the 27th AIF Brigade on the main road forward of Segamat.

The same day Wavell offered Bennett the newly-arrived 53rd British Brigade but Bennett asked that these troops be deployed in the Australian strong defensive dispositions at Mersing so relieving the 22nd AIF Brigade who could be swung to the West Coast to back up the 27th AIF Brigade which was feeling the weight of the attack from two crack Jap Divisions. It was common knowledge that General Bennett quarrelled bitterly with Malayan Command over splitting of the AIF but to no avail.

There was an unconfirmed report that Wavell instructed Percival to comply with Bennett's wish, but Percival denied any knowledge of such a request and it remains one of the many mysteries as to why troops were not used to the best advantage in Malaya.

The 53rd British Brigade, out of condition after a long sea voyage and with no jungle training, were placed at the vital position at Batu Pahat behind the Muar front. The lack of co-operation from Percival proved disastrous. The 53rd were routed. Had the two jungle-trained AIF Brigades taken the positions as General Bennett requested that front would have held and so had a "stiffening" effect, and had the stinging defeat of



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cleared the air (there was an unconfirmed report that General Bennett was "close to tears" with frustration). Percival went back to Heath to urge his agreement with the "attack" idea but returned to me looking very sad. He was unable to convince Heath and the attack did not eventuate." Unquote.

One may ask who was in command? And if we didn't know different we would think someone had two bob on the Japanese.

I will now quote another extract from "Malayan Postscript" by war correspondent Ian Morrison —

"In my opinion, the best senior military leader was Gordon Bennett. He was a rasping, bitter, sarcastic person, given to expressing his views with great freedom. As a result he quarrelled with a good number of people. But he did have a forceful personality. He was imbued with a tough, ruthless, aggressive spirit. As a soldier he was unconventional, but one wanted an unconventional soldier to deal with what was an unconventional situation. He was passionately proud of his men and devoted to their interests. His men knew this and had confidence in him." Unquote.

It was these characteristics which made General Bennett an excellent field soldier in jungle warfare but these same characteristics made him many enemies in General Staff and political circles and this included the Malayan Command with whom he clashed bitterly over their inability to stem the Japanese advance with means they had at their disposal and at the apathy of the Malayan Command in training British troops in the modern tactics of jungle warfare.

Maybe it was one of these frustrating moments when General Bennett issued this order to AIF units:

"Our troops should have it impressed on them that killing the Japanese is their duty. Not only must we defeat the enemy, but we must destroy him." Unquote.

Next — Westforce.

M. MULLENS.

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PUBLICITY OFFICER WHY?**

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THE FIELD, MARCH, 1982

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 17)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

The Japanese flying columns were advancing down the Mainland with unparalleled success and it was only a matter of time before the AIF had to be swung into action. Reports filtered back that the Japanese carried sub-machine guns which were ideal for close fighting in jungle warfare, firing a .22 calibre bullet at a point blank range of 40 yards which is no distance in the jungle. Others carried .30 calibre revolvers.

There were practically no communications as individual parties used the outflank, infiltrating system with success. They carried their own camouflage, sunglasses, chlorine to purify water as a guard against contaminated water, quinine, a roll of bandages, hard tack, even boiled lollies and concentrated food pills. So one can see that a lot of research and thorough preparation for jungle warfare had been done by the Japanese.

They also lived off the land! It appears that 23,000 tons of rice was left intact at Ipoh. Considering one-third of a pound of rice was sufficient for an adult labourer per day, imagine the windfall this was to the Japanese.

Clothing worn by our troops in Malaya was not suitable. We carried too much excess equipment for swift movement through the jungle so steps had to be taken by the AIF to discard some of this equipment. In contrast to the light up to date armaments of the Japanese as on all fronts our 1914-18 rifles were good but vintage. My rifle was older than I was. Our rations consisted of the evergreen bully beef and "dog biscuits". Automatic weapons were a rarity.

We were told that time and time again the Japanese had infiltrated dressed in Malay sarongs (which concealed a sub-machine gun) or in tunics of dead Allied soldiers and wearing Indian turbans.

Disguised as rubber workers they confiscated bicycles from the civilian population and rode blithely along the jungle roads to the highways with little or no resistance.

Being disguised as civilians made it hard for our troops as they could not slaughter people on suspicion in case they were genuine. Lots of the population were so much like the Japanese that it was difficult to distinguish one from another. I don't condone it but I can sympathise with the problems encountered in Vietnam.

There seemed to be an undercurrent among the Malay population in some quarters, against the British and there was a Chinese saying which did little to enhance their standing — "Malaya is a country inhabited by Malays, run by the British for the benefit of the Chinese."

When the situation swung in favour of the Japanese I am afraid some of the population became "brittle" and switched sides. This was another hazard in addition to the ever-present Fifth Column.

Living in tropical condition for long periods had some adverse effects on many of the troops, though the AIF was not seriously effected in this direction as we had come from a warm climate and had been in the country only 11 months so were fortunate.

However many British troops had served their tour of duty, some up to

### Dancing

Held their first comp. for the year at Hornsby and did very well to begin the year. There are still vacancies for more dancers, especially older boys.

Mrs. Grew had gone lame the other day but I think she's coming good again, you can't keep that lady down for long.

### Indoor Bowls

Mrs. Nancy Sherlock deserves sup-

port in this new venture — which she is trying to get off the ground. The age group is 12 to 25 years boys or girls. Enquiries to Mrs. D. Sherlock, 727 7920.

The news of Fay Perkins' serious illness has deeply saddened her countless friends and I know everybody is thinking and praying for her and Vince and the children.

Yours in Sport,

PUBLICITY OFFICER

## R.S.L. CIRCULAR

ANZAC HOUSE  
DARLINGHURST,  
N.S.W. 2010

Circular No. 13/82  
File KS:pl 875  
12th March, 1982

TO: ALL SUB-BRANCH AND DISTRICT  
COUNCIL SECRETARIES.

Dear Sir,

### Re: WEARING OF PRIVATE MEDALS

The question of wearing Private Medals has been raised from time to time and quoted below are extracts from the Government Departments concerned on this subject which is also League Standing Policy and Standing Orders.

"As you will be aware Government House is the authority on the wearing of insignia. We are, however, pleased to advise that only medals and decorations awarded and approved by Her Majesty The Queen may be worn on the left breast."

"There are strict rules which do not allow Australian servicemen and ex-servicemen to wear foreign decorations and medals issued in respect of campaigns already recognised by British or Australian awards. This is the case in respect of the Greek campaign of 1941, Somme and Dunkirk medals, etc.

"However, as commemorative medallions are not campaign medals, there is no objection to the medallions being issued on a personal basis to Australian survivors of the campaign. They may not be worn on Service uniform and should not be worn on a medal bar with officially approved decorations and medals."

Yours faithfully,

E. BUXTON per

W. G. OSMOND, State Secretary.

15 years in various parts of the Orient. These men were about to return to England for retirement when war broke out. I am not condemning them but stating that because of their way of life, their resistance had deteriorated owing to being permanently stationed in a tropical country. There was also a certain amount of frustration under the circumstances so their mental attitude towards war was not good. Again, England was so far removed from this war geographically, that they were not sure what they were fighting for whereas the Australians knew they were fighting for Australia, their homeland.

Westforce was formed on 8th January and consisted of the 9th Indian Division, the 27th AIF Brigade and the raw, poorly-trained 45th Indian Brigade, then at the Muar, under the Command of Major-General Gordon Bennett. Its object was to hold the Muar-Segamat area and prevent further enemy penetration. The 2/26th and the 2/29th Battalions were to be responsible for flank protection for the main forces, the 2/30th would contact the Japanese west of Gemas.

The Indian Brigade was to break contact with the Japanese at Tampin so giving the enemy the idea of yet another withdrawal which was to give the Japanese more confidence and so make them more careless and so prime targets for a planned ambush by the 2/30th Battalion. Surprise tactics and ambush were the best weapons of defence when opposing superior numbers such as the Japanese had.

The 2/30th Bn. took up a defensive position near the township of Batu Anam and were joined by the 30th Battery of the 2/15th Field Regiment RAA, a section of the 13th Battery of the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment and some 8th Division Engineers.

"D" Company and three carriers moved out of Batu Anam in order to cover

the deployment of the rest of the Battalion. The forward Company was to be "B" Company commanded by Captain D. Duffy and the rest of the Battalion took up their various battle positions with two guns of the 13th Battery 4th Anti-Tank covering the road between A and C Companies. The 30th Battery RAA was further back near a Chinese cemetery, a mile west of Gemas.

The mortars were tactically deployed near Battalion HQ and there were four Bren-gun carriers in the area also which took up a position near the railway line. Vickers guns also covered the railway line and no digging of trenches was allowed in case enemy aircraft spotted this before the arrival of the Japanese troops at the proposed ambush.

Torrential rain poured down for two days and made digging impossible in any case. Patrols were constantly active. The 2/26th was in a position north of Batu Anam and the 2/29th Bn. at Buloh Kasap, a few miles short of Segamat.

Setting the stage for the planned ambush, the Engineers prepared the bridge crossing the Sungei Gemencheh for demolition. Captain Duffy then led his Company forward and took up his ambush positions. The last of the withdrawing Allied troops crossed the bridge and so the stage was set.

About 4 o'clock a party of eight Japanese soldiers, on bicycles rounded the bend in the road beyond the bridge. Then at intervals of 150 to 200 yards came a solid column of cyclists, five and six abreast approximately 150 strong. After a gap of 20 yards a similar party appeared who like the first were allowed to pass over the bridge unmolested to be dealt with by the rear Companies at a given signal which was to be the blowing of the bridge. Captain Duffy was waiting for the main motor transports column to appear but they failed to show so he decided to spring the trap.

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The engineers stood ready to set the charges off, then the order was given. There was a terrific flash and a roar — timber, dirt, bodies and cycles flew through the air. This was the long awaited signal and B Company opened up with all their weapons.

Bren-guns, tommy guns and grenades scattered the bewildered Japanese. They fell in ghastly heaps and after the first 10 minutes it was apparent that all the enemy in the area were casualties, except for a few small parties who escaped into the jungle. To use Capt. Duffy's words: "The sight from my O.P., across the far side of Sungei Gemenchah was a grim one, as the entire 300 yards of road was thickly covered with dead and dying men — the result of the blast when the bridge was blown up and of the deadly fire of our bren-guns, specially told off to attend to the section on the far side of the bridge."

Casualties for the 2/30th was nil but it was estimated that the enemy lost approximately 800, all killed. The Japanese then commenced a flanking movement.

Pte. Ray Brown was using a cup discharger (EY rifle) with "68" anti-tank bombs from the shoulder. Hand grenades were being used freely and small arms poured their rapid fire with withering effect on anything that moved.

With their mission accomplished Captain Duffy decided to withdraw his Company headquarters and forward No. 11 Platoon to act as rearguard, to remuster at Gemas and Quarry Road.

Isolated parties of Japanese were encountered and Lieut. Head and several of his platoon carried out hand-to-hand fighting. The first 2/30th casualty occurred here when Pte. Silvester was wounded by a grenade blast but made it back.

After many delaying actions, near misses and being sniped at, all Com-

panies fell back to remuster with the Battalion. It was learned later that the Japanese had rebuilt the bridge over the Sungei Gemenchah sufficiently to get tanks and motor transports across it within 6 hours from the time the bridge was blown.

On the front of the 2/30th Bn. more fresh troops were being rushed in. It was estimated that there were approximately three Japanese Battalions brought up in support of the troops already there plus medium and light tanks. The 4th Anti-Tank Regiment accounted for five tanks at this stage. There was more action such as another tank destroyed by the 4th Anti-Tank and mortars plus others damaged and there were infantry clashes with parties of Japanese which inflicted more enemy casualties. There was so much more action which cannot be covered in this brief account. There is a 390-page book which fully covers the many actions in detail. It relates sacrifice, devotion to duty and outstanding soldiering as carried out by this fine fighting Battalion and is entitled "Gallegan's Greyhounds" — a book well worth reading.

The Battalion's casualties at this stage were one officer and 16 other ranks killed; nine other ranks missing and 55 wounded (including four officers). Enemy casualties were conservatively estimated at 800 killed at the ambush and 200 others in subsequent actions immediately after the ambush and six tanks were destroyed.

'The Straits Times' recorded, "The news of this battle gave good reason to believe that the tide of battle was on the turn, with the AIF as our seawall against the vicious flood." The trouble was that the AIF was only a minor part of the troops stationed in Malaya.

The Japanese described the AIF as "fighting with a bravery they had not previously seen" and the successful tac-

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## POKER MACHINE JACKPOT BONUS SCHEME

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R. T. THOMPSON,  
Secretary/Manager

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tics used by the AIF caused the Japanese to alter their mode of warfare.

Colonel Tsuji, Director of Operations for the 25 Japanese Army, stated that the action, "Completely changed the aspect of the battle zone."

Colonel Galleghan earned the Distinguished Service Order for outstanding bravery; Capt. Duffy and Capt. Taylor (A.M.C.) were awarded the Military Cross; W.O. A. H. Purdon and Sergeant C. J. Christoff the Distinguished Conduct Medal; Lt. Colonel G. E. Ramsey, Major N. McG Johnston, Capt. J. A. Boss, Capt. F. S. B. Peach, W.O. R. W. Rowe, W.O. P. A. Scofield, Sgt. S. R. Allardice, Sgt. W. T. Barnes, Sgt. S. W. Robertson, L/Sgt. J. R. Stoner and Pte. E. E. Hatfield were Mentioned in Despatches in this and subsequent actions.

Meeting with this unexpected strong resistance on the front occupied by the 2/30th Bn. at Gemas, the Japanese switched their attack to the Muar in an attempt to break through. The inexperienced 45 Indian Brigade held that front and when the Japanese crossed the Muar River they had no trouble penetrating the 45th lines.

To counter this General Bennett withdrew the 2/29th Bn. AIF which had been in support of the 2/30th Bn. and rushed them to the Muar front to help the 45th Indian Brigade stabilize that area. The 2/29th formed a perimeter defence and contact was made with the enemy within hours on the 17th January at Bakri.

The Japanese infiltrated through the jungle with 10 medium tanks in support. The 2/29th had hurriedly constructed tank traps and had the services of two anti-tank guns from the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment. The point chosen to knock out the tanks was where the road went through a cutting which meant the tanks could not turn around and there was no level ground to escape.

The forward gun allowed six tanks to

pass to be dealt with by the rear anti-tank gun which was to begin firing first and at the same time act as a signal for a forward gun to open up. With the tanks only 50 yards away the rear gunner opened up resulting in five tanks being destroyed immediately when their ammunition exploded. The sixth tank attempted to withdraw so the Australians picked up hand grenades and molotov cocktails and raced forward and threw them under the tracks of the tank stopping it, then destroying it.

Most of the tank crews died in their tanks while others, attempting to escape, were picked off with rifle and tommy gun fire. Meanwhile the forward gun accounted for four front tanks.

This was a magnificent start for the 2/29th and they were naturally jubilant. Meanwhile the Japanese near Batu Anam had enough of their mauling by the 2/30th and pressure eased there as the Japanese transferred troops to the Muar area to cope with the new resistance on the 2/29th front. This meant that the 1st Japanese Imperial Guards Division, crack seasoned troops, now faced the Australians and hovering nearby was the famous 5th Japanese Division, so the Japanese had ample manpower to call upon. It was estimated that the Japanese had committed 15,00 troops to this area so the 2/29th was in trouble.

As the Japanese had superior numbers the 2/29th had to rely on surprise tactics so they successfully used the ambush method for which the AIF had trained. The 2/29th halted the Japanese advance initially with little casualties but had to face determined attack upon attack which was beaten off with heavy casualties in some of the most ferocious hand-to-hand fighting in the Malayan Campaign.

Intense artillery duels developed and continued throughout the night. On the evening of 18th January, the Japanese launched two more infantry attacks — which met the same fate as their predecessors. With the weight of the Jap-

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R. T. THOMPSON,  
Secretary/Manager

anese forces the 2/29th were in danger of being over-run and cut off so it was decided to send the 2/19th Bn. to their assistance.

The Japanese continued to attack but the Australian front held firm and at times forced the Japanese back at the point of the bayonet which was used with success in all the clashes between Australian and Japanese troops.

Two days later the 2/19th Bn. AIF was withdrawn from Jemaluang, where they were the support Bn. for the Mersing front and brought into action on the Muar front. This left the 2/18th and 2/20th Bn. AIF to protect the "back door to Singapore". Maybe out of respect the Japanese did not attempt to break through at this logical vital spot where there was only a token force with no depth to fall back on now the 2/19th had been withdrawn.

The 2/29th were still under constant attack and appeared doomed to annihilation against the continual flood of Japanese storm troops who infiltrated and laid down a road block between the 2/19th and their positions.

Meanwhile the 2/19th met the Japanese head-on in severe hand-to-hand fighting. Their first encounter forced the enemy to withdraw leaving 140 dead for the loss of 10 killed and 15 wounded. Once again, as at Gemas and the 2/29th at the Muar, the Japanese met with resistance which temporarily confused them but they had the answer in manpower and threw in some 15,000 troops on the Australian fronts once again headed by the 1st Imperial Guards Division.

The Australian fronts held but the continuing story of the Malayan Campaign came forth, no support on the flanks. This is the reason General Bennett wanted all AIF units on the one front and they could have been ably

supported by the Ghurkas and the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders.

The 2/19th tried to link up with the 2/29th but without success initially, then the 2/19th carriers, under Lieut. Howard, broke through and brought back Captain Gibson of the 2/29th for a conference with Colonel Anderson.

By this time the 2/29th had been mauled badly and Colonel Robertson and most of the officers had been killed so Colonel Anderson ordered them to withdraw and join his force.

How they obeyed this order was a grim story of supreme sacrifice and grim heroism as the Japanese raked them from all sides with machine-gun and artillery fire. Some of the unit even deviated around the flanks of the Japanese to remuster with the 2/19th. When they eventually linked up there was only 200 of the 2/29th left. They could hold their head high as they had acquitted themselves well against superior numbers.

The remnants of the 45th Indian Brigade also linked up with the 2/19th. One of the remaining Brigade staff (the Japs scored a direct hit on their Brigade HQ killing most of the officers) was Major Anderson who acquitted himself well in action later.

General Nishimura, the Japanese Commander of the 1st Japanese Imperial Guards Division, described the Muar series of engagements as "severe and sanguinary".

As darkness closed in the remnants of the two Battalions and the 45th Indian Brigade formed a tight perimeter. The night was so dark it restricted patrols but no chances were taken. Sentries were doubled, fingers were on the triggers and bayonets were fixed, nobody slept.

In the event of an attack the men were instructed to use the bayonet as

**SPECIAL NOTICE**  
**SUB-BRANCH**

THE BRANCH MEETS ON THE 4th MONDAY IN EACH MONTH  
unless it is altered on the question of Holidays.

**Please note and make it a date**

much as possible as ammunition had to be conserved. As usual, the Japanese made noises and fired off rounds at random and then would attack from a different direction. Colonel Anderson said, "make your killings quiet, the bayonet every time as those little varmints don't like it, especially at night."

Now there was less than a thousand AIF including wounded and a few Indian troops so with the Japanese slowly closing in on this small group and with no other support, Colonel Anderson decided to withdraw.

At 0700 hours, the column began moving out, the 2/19th forward, then the 2/29th and artillery, then the 45th Indian Brigade, under Command of Colonel Anderson, covering at the rear.

An hour later contact was made with the Japanese when the first road block was encountered. As one can see, this little force was completely surrounded —there were to be seven miles and seven road blocks to overcome if they were to break out.

The first road block consisted of trees across the road, well established, dug in strong posts supported by six machine guns. It must be remembered that it was necessary to clear the roads to allow our transports and more importantly, the ambulances with the wounded aboard, to proceed.



Lieut. Colonel C. Anderson, V.C., M.C.

The infantry infiltrated and attacked from the flanks to clear these obstacles. The Australians charged with fixed bayonets and secured the north side of the road block. Colonel Anderson and seven men took the south side. In front "A" Company created a diversion and then Colonel Anderson charged with his seven men; he put one machine gun out of action with a grenade and shot dead

## ICE SPECTRUM

INTERNATIONAL ICE REVUE

Friday, 28th May, 1982 — 9 pm

Saturday, 29th May, 1982 — 2 pm

(This is a Special Matinee for Children)

Sunday, 30th May, 1982 — 4 pm

## Members please note —

THE RECITING OF THE "ODE" WILL BE AT 8.00 pm

ON THE SCREENING OF FILMS, TUESDAY AND SUNDAY  
AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN A PRODUCTION  
SHOW IS BEING STAGED.

R. T. THOMPSON, M.B.E., Sec./Manager.



two Japanese manning another gun. This was the beginning of the award of the VC to Colonel Anderson; he was everywhere and inspired his men to greater efforts.

Reports said he stalked the enemy and wiped them out and led his men without thought of personal safety. His men claimed that he won the VC five times over. The small force came back to the main road and encountered road block after road block. When heavy shelling fell in their area the force deployed among the rubber trees.

At times the surrounding hills were covered with Japanese troops and in another clash one Australian officer alone killed 50 Japs with bursts from a Vickers gun. These Jap troops were not wearing sarongs, as some did to infiltrate, but were well dressed, hand-picked troops, dressed in good uniforms.

Many Japanese hid in the trees with transmitters strapped to their chests with which they relayed the positions of the small force back to their 4" mortars which then rained down bombs on our positions.

As on all fronts there is the unsung hero. One private walked openly along the road drawing sniper fire so his mates could pick off the snipers. His action was successful as a number of snipers were seen to fall from the trees when they were picked off. He was wounded but rejoined his mates later and was one of the force which reached Parit Sulong.

After smashing their way through the second road block they came upon their "B" Echelon which had been behind the main force initially. Colonel Anderson passed the word to all Company Commanders that they would see some grim sights and to get the men singing. They sang *Waltzing Matilda*. It wasn't joyous singing as it was a ghastly scene of wrecked vehicles and shattered, mangled bodies which had been savagely slaughtered.

Stirred at this sight of their mates the Australians attacked with the bayonet with deadly grim determination and fierce fighting ensued with no quarter asked and none given, resulting in heavy casualties on both sides. Although the men were haggard, unshaven and tired they were not beaten and surrender was far from their minds.

Brigadier Duncan was killed leading a party of his Gwalis Indian troops in attack which was indicative of the officers in this "all-in" action. Numerous fresh Japanese were rushed in to attack from the rear, supported by mortars, artillery, tanks and unceasing air strikes. By 1730 hours the small force was hemmed into a small perimeter of approximately 806 yards. Colonel Anderson said, "It's a case of death or going through, gentlemen — and we're going through."

At dusk they attacked, the men were fighting mad. Gunners of the 2/15th Field Regiment RAA were fighting with rifles and bayonets and even with axes as the range was too short to use their 25 pounders. The men of the 2/15th fought and matched the courage of the infantry. They ran the gauntlet at the road blocks and one crew pushed their gun and blew a roadblock of vehicles to pieces from 75 yards. Bren-gun carriers drove right up to machine gun nests and destroyed them from a distance of five yards.

There was one brick house with walls 4" thick, housing some 60 Japs, which was proving a major obstacle. Two carriers went forward and, from 10 yards, raked the house with Vickers fire. Only 30 Japanese ran out and these were cut down.

Now there was only one road block left, the road being blocked with fallen trees, before the 10-mile causeway to Parit Sulong and volunteers were called to try to breach it. Without hesitation 20 men volunteered and they raced ahead with axes under covering fire but a hail of enemy bullets met them. In spite of this they did manage to chop

## EUCHRE

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LES MILLS, Organiser

the trees and clear the road block. Then a bayonet charge by the infantry cleared the area of enemy completely.

By 1830 hours the Japanese were in disarray, their dead lay in hundreds across the roadway and among the rubber trees. This left the opening Colonel Anderson wanted and the small force passed through and lost contact with the Japanese. However this was to be temporary as the enemy was only licking its wounds. They had no shortage of fresh troops.

Colonel Anderson's tired force continued on hoping to cross the bridge at Parit Sulong at night and be united with our main force a short time later.

Originally this bridge had been held by a platoon led by Lt. Jack Varley (Lt. Col. Varley's son) and, as they were needed up front with the rest of the 2/19th Bn. he had handed control of the bridge over to the Norfolk Regiment which, to Colonel Anderson's knowledge, was still the situation. Little did he know that the Norfolks had been withdrawn from the bridge and the surrounding high ground, which was another of the unexplained mysteries of the Malayan Campaign.

General Bennett heard of this and sent in a party of guerrillas, under Captain Lloyd with orders to secure and hold the bridge as it was a vital spot for Colonel Anderson's small force to make their final escape bid. They were too late as the Japanese were in control and by then it was well manned and fortified.

As Colonel Anderson's Field Signal unit batteries were flat, no messages were getting through from General Bennett's HQ so he could not be forewarned of the position at the bridge. It was to be an unpleasant surprise.

General Bennett was pleased because General Percival said: "We are going to counter attack at 1400 hours this afternoon. We hope to regain the high ground and re-capture the bridge. This will allow the gallant Australian battalions to go through. General Bennett has already sent commandos to worry the Japs by infiltrating."

But to the dismay and frustration of General Bennett the counter attack did not eventuate. At 1400 hours it was postponed till 1730 hours; at 1730 hours it was postponed till dawn the following day. At dawn it was postponed till 0930 hours and at 0930 hours it was postponed altogether. There was no official explanation why this counter attack was abandoned, still one of the many mysteries of the Malayan Campaign.

General Bennett was shocked at the failure of the counter attack to get his men out. He tried all in his power to have the attack mounted but to no avail.

It must be remembered that Malayan Command had taken control of all Australian troops so General Bennett could not do what he wanted — use fresh Australian troops to relieve his trapped force, whereas before he had left the conference smiling by the knowledge that there would be a counter attack, now he was once again bewildered and frustrated.

Meanwhile Colonel Anderson's force was approaching the bridge unaware of the drama at the conference and that the bridge was in enemy hands. The Japanese knowing how this small determined force swept aside seven of their road blocks, moved in additional troops and mounted more barricades and "dug in" machine gun posts. In all they had a strong fortified position.

## *Snack Bar Trading Hours*

TUESDAY .....	11.30 am to 1.30 pm
WEDNESDAY .....	5.00 pm to 8.00 pm
FRIDAY .....	11.30 am to 1.30 pm 4.30 pm to 10.00 pm
SATURDAY .....	12 noon to 2.00 pm 6.00 pm to 10.00 pm
SUNDAY .....	12 noon to 8.00 pm

To reach the bridge this battered force made their way along a long stone causeway which ran through steamy swamp country which stopped the Japanese from attacking from the flanks. The men marched all through the night and were physically exhausted but far from surrendering. The main party was preceded by an advance guard, then came the carriers ahead of the main body, then trucks filled with badly wounded men with armoured cars at the rear. The "walking wounded" limped on through the night, some of them with blood-soaked bandages on their wounds, some with arms in slings and some with arms blown off. Even wounded men assisted their mates when required, it was sheer guts and courage that got them through.



M. MULLENS.

4 Anti-Tank Gunners in action. Sgt. Ken Harrison in command.

Next: The Bridge at Parit Sulong.



**THE RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE  
CITY OF FAIRFIELD SUB-BRANCH**

**ANZAC COMMEMORATION  
SERVICE**

**TO BE HELD AT THE WAR MEMORIAL, FAIRFIELD PARK —  
SUNDAY, 18th APRIL, 1982 at 2 pm, commencing with the March  
which will form up in Dale Street, Fairfield.**

Youth Club units will marshal in Bertha Street Car Park, then proceed to Dale Street via Vine Street, and will lead the march to the War Memorial via Anzac Avenue and Lawson Street. Included will be the **Mounted Detachment of the NSW Lancers** leading the Ex-Servicemen. On the completion of the wreath-laying ceremony, everyone will return to the Club Auditorium for the Commemoration Service at the conclusion of which the Citizenship Awards will be presented to the winners of the respective Youth Club groups.

**THE CLUB WILL CLOSE AT 12 NOON AND WILL RE-OPEN FOR  
NORMAL TRADING ON THE COMPLETION OF THE COMMEM-  
ORATION SERVICE AND PRESENTATION OF AWARDS.**

Patrons who are attending the Commemoration Service will be permitted to enter the Club by the Dale Street Entrance 15 minutes after the commencement of the Commemoration Service, where they may proceed to the 1st Floor or the Old Bark Hut. During this period there will be no bar service and the poker machine room will be closed.

**Playing of indoor sport will not be permitted during this period.**

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 18)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

.....

## THE BRIDGE AT PARIT SULONG

An Indian soldier met the column and told Colonel Anderson that he had been fired on in the vicinity of the Parit Sulong bridge. A Malay said they were friendly troops and offered to escort them to the bridge but luckily the Japanese fire control was not as good as the Australians and as a result they fired too soon and did not cause any casualties.

The men were heartened when a squadron of "British" planes roared in and, to their amazement, rained anti-personnel bombs on them. It appears they were American planes originally delivered to Thailand, captured by the Japs and used against our men. The Japanese seemed to revel in anything that concerned deceit.

Colonel Anderson was most concerned about the wounded who were in the truck/ambulances. There were two medical officers but no medical supplies. The festering tropical climate was causing men pain and there was no way of giving them relief. There were many walking wounded but the men in the trucks were completely immobilized. Colonel Anderson selected 15 of the most seriously wounded, placed them in trucks just before dusk, and volunteers drove them towards the bridge under a white flag. A request was made to the Japanese Commanding Officer to let the men through as it could be readily seen that they would never fight again.

The officer refused the request and would only discuss terms if the force surrendered unconditionally, and he ordered the trucks to remain where they were.

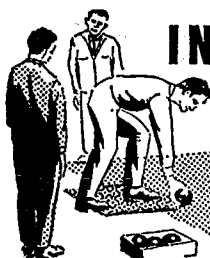
But Colonel Anderson and his men had come too far and too many good men had sacrificed their lives so the survivors could eventually reach the main force. There would be no surrender. Completely cut off from the rear, the Colonel could only go one way — forward.

On dark the Japanese launched another tank attack from the rear and, Lieut. John Ross and Sergeant Bert Tate, with a 25-pounder gun crew of the 65th Battery 2/15th Field Regiment, R.A.A., blew one tank to pieces over open sights at 40 yards. Molotov cocktails and hand grenades accounted for another 5 tanks and the Japanese fell back with no result.

Two despatch riders rode their bikes towards the bridge that night and turned their lights on full to show that the Japanese were firmly entrenched. The Japanese then launched an artillery barrage and machine gun and mortar fire and at the same time launched another tank attack. Three tanks were destroyed by anti-tank fire and finished off by rifle fire.

Late that night Lt. Richard Austin, himself badly wounded, and a private wormed their way among the rubber trees to the truck/ambulances parked near the Japanese road block and, one by one, released the hand brakes and rolled them back inside the AIF perimeter from under the very noses of the Japanese.

On the 22nd February, 1942, Thursday at 1105 hours, General Bennett conceded that he had no way of relieving this gallant force and drafted an order instructing Colonel Anderson to use his discretion; to



## INDOOR BOWLS ● NEWS

### Wednesday Night Mixed

The final of the Glad Talbot Shield was played on the 24th April. Sorry I was away as I have heard it was a good game. Congratulations to the winners Lorna Cochrane and Wayne Makin. Commiserations to the runners-up Lil Flannery and Paul Makin.

The Berowra RSL will visit us on the 25th May for a Combined Bowl. Morning tea will be at 10 am — members bring a plate please.

Nice to see Flo Kiable and Bill Robson back again after their illnesses.

Ron Wenban had a nasty accident but we are glad to know he is well again.

Win Sweeting is unable to be with us for a while as her son's illness is causing her concern at the present moment.

Congratulations to Lil Flannery on her grandson Danny's engagement to Pam.

EDITH McNAMARA

### Oldies

Here we are again, with another month gone, and the time is near for our visit to Pittwater RSL. This is a good day out for us, and I know that everyone is looking forward to it.

Bus leaves Fairfield RSL back entrance at 8.30 am on the 30th May, so roll up!

**THE CLUB CAR PARKS ARE  
NOW OPEN MONDAY TO  
FRIDAY FROM 10 am**

Our Club Doubles are well on the way, and I would like to thank one and all for the good sportsmanship so clearly visible.

Vi Jones is doing very well after her last operation and tells me will not be long before she gets back to give you all what for! Good on you Vi.

Joyce Mattingley is nursing a broken foot in a plaster cast. You have our sympathy Joyce and we wish you a speedy recovery.

Bill Robson is back after a heart attack. Good to see you Bill.

Lil Flannery's daughter Shirley is going to Canada for a happy event, her sons wedding. And Danny, Lil's grandson, got himself engaged to Pam. Congratulations from us "Oldies".

Now we come to our Birthday Party, date 26th June at 7.00 pm in the Old Bark Hut. There will be no bowls on this Saturday, and of course have fun is the order of the day.

Please note that in the "Oldies" you don't have to be a bowler to belong.

On a very sad note I wish to thank Gloria and Una on representing the "Oldies" — a job well done ladies!

Our deepest sympathy to our Patron Bruce and family on the loss of their son Peter. Lest we forget.

I remain just a friend to all.

SUE CEMPA,

On behalf of your Publicity Officer  
Joyce Mattingley

The Records Office is open from Tuesday to Saturday, inclusive between 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

leave volunteers with the wounded; destroy all heavy equipment and, if possible, make his way out.

A final charge was made to capture the bridge by "A" Company 2/19th Bn. and some walking wounded from other units but they were cut to pieces by the firmly entrenched Japanese. Colonel Anderson came to the conclusion that their only chance to escape was to proceed north, then swing to the east and fight their way through the Japanese to Yong Peng. As General Bennett's message had not been received owing to the flat batteries of the Field Signal Unit, it became the responsibility of Colonel Anderson to destroy all heavy equipment (except those housing the wounded) and guns.

Major Anderson, of the 45th Indian Brigade, who had attached himself to the AIF fought gallantly throughout this action. He was everywhere where the action was, mowing down the Japanese without thought of his personal safety. Ironically and tragically, he was killed by straffing Jap fighters at Parit Sulong near the end of this epic action. He was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously.

Calling for volunteers to stay with the wounded, the Australians parked the vehicles on the side of the road as 18-ton tanks were reported coming up from the Muar and it was thought they would steamroll the trucks if they were left in the middle of the road.

There were heart-breaking scenes and farewells between mates of the men (22 years on average) from the

Riverina, Victoria and India. Strong firm handshakes, husky voiced farewells, unashamed tears rolling down the grimy bearded faces of these gaunt, haggard men. One would hear a wounded man say to his 'fit' mate before he left, "If you ever reach home see . . . for me." The Japanese were bringing up heavy tanks and artillery to 'blanket' the area and this fact was known by the wounded men who were to be left behind, but there was still a smile on their faces. They wished their 'fit' mates God speed and good-bye. These 110 wounded AIF and 40 wounded Indian troops left behind were kicked, bayoneted, slashed with swords, tied together with wire, doused with petrol and set on fire in a barbaric manner one would not expect from a so-called civilized, honourable race.

The men formed up in an orderly manner and moved out Company by Company at five-minute intervals and in deployed formation. The Japanese in that Sector saw them coming and apparently thought it was a strong counter attack and hurriedly withdrew leaving a gap of 400 yards along the Sempang River, between the edge of the Japanese lines and the river.

The battle of the Muar was over for this small force as they made their way towards Bukit Incas. They waded through swamps, plunged through thick jungle and rubber trees — the Japanese had let them slip out of the trap.

When the small force remustered at Yong Peng the 2/29th Bn. had 130 men left, Colonel Robertson and

## R.S.L. SUB-BRANCH

Any person who has been appointed, enlisted or posted for service in the Armed Forces may apply for Service Membership of the City of Fairfield RSL Sub-Branch.

All enquiries to Records Office or the Hon. Secretary,  
R. T. Thompson, M.B.E.

most of the officers had been killed in action. The 2/19th Bn. had 271 men left, including 52 wounded. I was in hospital with Pte. Collins in Ceylon who had had his right arm blown off at the elbow. He told me incredible accounts of this action and said his unattended arm gave him hell and there were times the pain was so unbearable he thought of shooting himself but, somehow, managed to struggle through. No doubt there were many more similar cases.

It was estimated that this small force knocked out twenty tanks all told, killed 3,000 elite enemy troops of the Japanese Imperial Guards and the crack 5th Japanese Division, plus wounding many more.

They were told to be ready for battle again in two days.

Colonel Anderson V.C., M.C., wrote later:

"The well-trained Australian units showed a complete moral ascendancy over the enemy. They out-matched the Japs in bushcraft and fire control, whereas the enemy faults of bunching together and noisy shouting disclosed their dispositions and enabled the Australians to inflict heavy casualties at small cost to themselves. When the enemy was trapped they fought most gamely. In hand to hand fighting they made poor showing against the superior spirit and training of the AIF."

General Percival recorded in his book "The War In Malaya":

"The battle of the Muar was one of the epics of the Malayan Campaign. Our little force, by dogged

resistance, held up a Division of Japanese Imperial Guards, who attacked with all the advantages of air and tank attack for nearly a week, and in doing so saved the Segamat forces from encirclement and probable annihilation. The award of the Victoria Cross to Lt. Colonel Anderson of the AIF was a fitting tribute to his own prowess and to the valour of his men."

Field Marshal Viscount Slim writing later of the role the AIF carried out in the Far East and the Pacific stated: "Some may forget that of all the Allies it was the Australian soldier who first broke the spell of the invincibility of the Japanese Army."

Lieutenant General Tomoyuki Yamashita (Tiger of Malaya) Commander-in-Chief of the 25th Army in Malaya was one of Japan's foremost soldiers; he was also Chief of Staff to the Japanese Forces in Central China before Malaya. He was absolutely up to date in the science and technique of war and a soldier whose opinion could be respected. He recorded this compliment to the AIF in Malaya:

"The British and Indian troops are poorly led and lack the real fighting spirit. The Australians are insubordinate and contemptuous of authority, but will fight stubbornly even when outnumbered — their quality as front line troops is not surpassed in my experience."

As one can see by previous mentioned opinions the results of good pre-war training, good discipline and organization prevailed at all times. Had this not occurred this small group would have been an-

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---

ihilated instead of resisting stubbornly and a "thorn in the side" to the Japanese till they broke off contact with the Japanese at Parit Sulong.

Awards for this action were:

Lt. Col Anderson, V.C.; Major Anderson (attached to Col Anderson's force), V.C., posthumous; Lt. John Ross, Lt. Jack Varley and Major T. G. Vincent, each the M.C.; Sergeant Bert Tate, Corporal G. Bingham, each D.C.M.; Sergeant M. C. Hunt, Pte. M. Benoit, each M.M.

As awards were not presented till after the return of the prisoners of war, I would not know the awards to the 2/29th Battalion as I came from Victoria and I am not aware of the full awards to the 2/15th Field Regiment R.A.A. who were as worthy as any unit to leave these shores, but I am sure that, apart from the V.C. (some may have deserved it) their awards could match the 2/19th or should have, as on all fronts there are always the unsung heroes.

#### East Force

East Force had been the factor of a bitter disagreement between General Bennett and General Percival (influenced by the latter's 2 I.C., General Sir Lewis Heath) over the splitting of the AIF. General Bennett said that this was contrary to the AIF Charter. General Bennett's firm belief was that with all his AIF men on one front he could halt the Japanese advance long enough for other forces to regroup. They would engage the enemy with greater confidence when they saw that the Japanese could

be curtailed. At the same time they would be buying more time for overseas reinforcements to arrive. However Battalions are only as good as their flanks.

Figures released give the number of Allied troops captured in the Malayan Campaign as between 100,000 and 130,000 (figure varies from one report to another), so something was wrong even allowing for troops dispositions at vital places. Some of these troops surely could have supported the AIF when they first halted the Japanese at Gemas and on the Muar.

Pre-war the AIF, in their jungle training, had been continually moved all over the Malayan Mainland, at times in trucks, as a quick striking force to deal with break throughs at given points. This experience was not used till the battle of Gemas and Muar when the Japanese were well established. They would have been of great value to the Malayan Command but had been withdrawn and placed at Malacca and Johore to guard Singapore.

As I said before we were amazed at the lack of defences at vital points and also came to the conclusion that lines of withdrawal were mapped out pre-war. If we didn't know better one would think a copy was sent to the Japanese as their maps, captured from dead Japanese officers, were so up to date. In fact, on Singapore Island, they were right down to our section dispositions.

In his capacity, General Bennett was aware of this so this explains the fact that nowhere in our train-

## Notice to Members

### TO ALL MEMBERS

YOU **MUST** NOTIFY DESK IMMEDIATELY YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

THIS IS FOR **YOUR** BENEFIT

R. T. Thompson, M.B.E., Secretary/Manager



ing syllabus were we trained to withdraw. All training was aggressive attack methods, forced route marches, intensive jungle training and guerilla warfare in line with General Bennett's aggressive character.

These finer points of training were very noticeable to us P.B.I. beetle crushers — the rank and file.

Meanwhile the 2/18th and 2/20th Bns. were busy studying Intelligence reports on Japanese tactics on their fighting capacity and in sending out patrols to capture. Jap airmen who had bailed out when hit by anti-aircraft guns over Singapore.

The men were impatient and annoyed wondering why we were in Malaya. We did not seem to be serving a useful purpose although we were aware Mersing was a vital position. General Bennett suggested to Malayan Command that the 2/18th and 2/20th Bns. be replaced by two Brigades of British troops and that we be swung into the role of assisting the 27th Brigade AIF on the West coast but to no avail.

Very heavy rain was falling and water was cascading down the hills and running two feet through our slit trenches so Serge said dirty socks or feet would not be excused. Visibility to sea was less than a 1,000 yards and our area was subject to annoyance bombing and straffing.

As incredible as it may seem the Japanese, operating from Penang, broadcast that our pass word for one period would be 'Tiger' before we were officially notified. When the runner came to tell us the pass word we told him we already knew as it had been picked up by our Field Signal Unit within our Battalion area.

Greetings were also extended through the same source to the Battalions at Mersing by name and exact location. The Japanese announcer expressed regret that the brave Japanese airmen were too busy elsewhere to drop us presents, but not to worry as our turn would come later. She also complimented the 2/10th Field Regiment R.A.A. by name and said she was glad they had got rid of their old 18 pounders and now had new 25 pounders.

Jim Oliver, a member of Fairfield Diggers Bowling Club and ex-member of the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment, can confirm these statements as the broadcasts referred to them as: They had just received new 2 pounder anti-tank guns and the breeches were tight. The Japanese announcer asked how their 2 pounders were functioning and had they freed the breeches yet, within hours of delivery.

She even knew our inner most thoughts as she said she knew we Australians at Mersing referred to the Japanese as "Little yellow b....." — how right she was. To offset this she referred to us as "Illiterate sons of convicts" but this time their intelligence system let them down as apparently they did not know about the Australian sense of humor. Her opinion became the joke of the Battalion.

There did not seem to be anything they did not know about the defenses at Mersing which only goes to confirm the fact that the Japanese respected this strongly fortified area and so avoided a frontal attack in this vital logical sector although it finished up being manned by two battalions.

All this time Singapore was under

# ICE SPECTRUM

INTERNATIONAL ICE REVUE

Friday, 28th May, 1982 — 9 pm

Saturday, 29th May, 1982 — 2 pm

(This is a Special Matinee for Children)

Sunday, 30th May, 1982 — 4 pm

constant aerial attack, watches not being necessary as the enemy came over at set times in the morning, went home for lunch, then resumed in the afternoon to circle like giant birds of prey just above the flack, carefully bombing selected targets at leisure.

The Japanese, now firmly established on the Mainland, were concentrating for a further attack by the 18th Japanese Division on the East coast at Endau near Mersing.

A small detachment of the 2/18th Bn. made contact with an advance party of Japanese and eliminated them without loss. Our A.A. opened fire on low level bombing and trafficking aircraft which then attacked the 2/18th and 2/20th Bn. areas.

There were no casualties at first then Pte. W. Jolly was killed and Pte. G. Brown was wounded being the first Battalion casualties. Brigade ordered A. Coy. to move to Anglo Johore-Mersing Estate and carry out active patrolling of Sungei Mersing.

Owing to the deteriorating situation on the West coast the Battalion was ordered to withdraw a few miles south. The move took place on the 23rd January, 1942, and was part of a plan for the withdrawal of the 2/18th and 2/20th Bns. from the Mersing area. As the Japanese had full control of the land, sea and air, Mersing could not become another Tobruk.

Battalion, less A and C Companies,



**No. 8 SECTION, 9 PLATOON, "A" COMPANY**

Cpl. H. St. John Madden, killed in action, and Pte. L. A. (Bill) Williamson, K.I.A. leading the section and obscured; then Pte. Noel Willoughby, K.I.A. Pte. Jack Fenner, K.I.A.; Pte. Tom Highton, K.I.A.; Pte. Mervyn Mullens; Pte. George Fenner; Pte. Doug Barrett; Pte. A. R. (Sandy) Croxon, K.I.A.; and obscured at rear Pte. Jack Williamson; Pte. Pat Connell, K.I.A.; Pte. Lyle Montgomery, died while P.O.W.

moved to Nithsdale Estate. A Coy. remained astride the road 3 miles south of Mersing in Johore North Estate. C Company moved to the old 2/19th Bn. camp at Jemaluang. Then A Company rejoined the Bn. which was subject to bombing and strafing attacks but no casualties. A reconnaissance was carried out in preparation to a full Battalion withdrawal to Jemaluang.

The Battalion bivouacked in the Nithsdale Estate and was machine gunned shortly after with no casualties. In view of the 2/20th Bn. withdrawing through the 2/18th Bn. during the night of 23rd-24th January, Colonel Varley submitted a plan to Brigade for an offensive action against the enemy, which was now advancing from the direction of Mersing. With the withdrawal of the 2/20th the Japanese thought that a general withdrawal was on.

The request was approved and an inspection was made of the proposed ambush location by Colonel Varley and his officers in daylight so all would be familiar with the countryside. It was anticipated that Malayan Command would soon issue an order for the withdrawal of the 2/18th so the plan had to be put into effect immediately before that order was issued.

The Battalion, supported by two batteries of the 2/10th Field Regiment R.A.A., set a trap for the enemy, who was moving south from Mersing. "A" Company held a defensive locality astride the main Mersing-Jemaluang road in the Joo-Lye Estate; "D" Company was lying in ambush in the Nithsdale Estate in the vicinity of Gibraltar Hill, approximately 3,000 yards north of "A" Company; "B" Company was lying in ambush on the Joo Lye

Estate on the east side of the road, approximately 1,000 yards north-east of "A" Company; "C" Company was in reserve in an unnamed estate approximately 2,000 yards behind "A" Company. The Battalion mortars and machine guns were in position in "A" Company area suitable for co-ordination with the artillery in a pre-arranged fire plan.

The plan for the ambush was to allow a considerable force of the enemy known to be in the area to pass "D" and "B" Companies lying in ambush. A road block was then to be effected by "A" Company. Then, an artillery barrage, supported by Battalion mortars was to "close the gate" and prevent the enemy from either withdrawing or being reinforced. Being able to bring up fresh troops to combat stubborn resistance had been the Japanese trump card in previous actions, so Colonel Varley was not about to let this happen this time. The ambush Companies ("D" and "B") were to attack the enemy North of "A" Company's dispositions from both flanks. The signal for the attack was to be the opening barrage of artillery fire. This barrage, which was to fall on a 400 yard front astride the road for seven minutes, was to lift 100 yards every two minutes for a further period.

At 0015 hours on the 27th January, 1942, the ambush was set with what seemed to the Japanese, an open unguarded road. A forward platoon of the 2/18th located small parties of Japanese coming through the jungle shouting and firing sub-machine guns in an attempt to draw fire and so disclose our positions. The platoon melted into the jungle without firing a shot, as planned. The Japanese

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**ABC RADIO 2 (2SER)** will be broadcasting a series of four programmes on RSL Welfare, commencing at 1.30 pm, Sunday, 9th May. Further details will be published in the May edition of "Reveille."

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then opened fire in the general direction of the ambush Companies but they still did not fire a shot. Although the Battalion had not previously seen action, the men exercised commendable restraint, their pre-war fire discipline bore fruit. The men were cool and still not one shot was fired until the engagement with No. 9 platoon, "A" Company at the road block. At length, at 0200 hours the forward Jap patrols made contact with the main elements of "A" Company and grim fighting in the pitch darkness ensued.

The 2/18th engaged the main body of the enemy who were once again "Mauled" as at Gemas and the Muar and later by combined AIF units on Singapore Island. The six AIF Battalions were credited with effecting 50 per cent of the Japanese casualties overall in the Malayan Campaign because the Japanese officers were inferior, not in courage but in the intelligent use of courage. The Japanese brain washing education, being told they would be shot if captured, Japanese ancestor worship and their overall outlook on life were reflected time and time again. When on top, in numbers and orthodox warfare the Japanese were resourceful and competent but, as proved under the shadow of strong resistance and frustration, the obsession of personal honour often clouded the judgement of their officers, whereas our officers were cool and calculating under pressure and in view of this had the confidence of their men and were able to inspire their men at all times.

With this knowledge Colonel Varley had set the ambush to compen-

sate for the 3 to 1 majority in favour of the enemy.

The fighting continued intermittently until 0316 hours. The C.O. then decided that the enemy force in the ambush area warranted the commencement of the ambush plan, and he accordingly gave the order for the artillery to open up. In the first stages of this fighting, the first officer casualty the Battalion suffered was Lt. George Warden of No. 9 platoon, killed in action at the road block. Shortly after, Corporal St. John Madden of No. 9 platoon was killed and Pte. Colin Spence assumed Command of the section and ordered them not to fire unless it was necessary as the flashes revealed their dispositions, but rather use the bayonet and hand grenades. These tactics demoralized the Japs and forced them to withdraw. A Jap platoon officer circled behind Pte. Spence and slashed him with a sword from shoulder to hip resulting in all his webbing falling to the ground. Spence wheeled and shot the fleeing officer then finished him off with a bayonet. He then continued to direct the fire and movement of the section, repelled further attacks successfully and inflicted heavy casualties on the platoon strength enemy. Weakening rapidly through the loss of blood, he ordered movement of the section to a better position, to which they carried him, to ward off expected attacks. He still continued to direct the section till he became unconscious from loss of blood. He was taken to the Base hospital where 150 stitches were required. His feat of courage and leadership was outstanding and as a result he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

## **SPECIAL NOTICE**

### **SUB-BRANCH**

THE BRANCH MEETS ON THE 4th MONDAY IN EACH MONTH  
unless it is altered on the question of Holidays.

Please note and make it a date



Jap tanks — victims of the 4th anti-tank guns.

With the opening up of the artillery and mortars at 0315 hours, as previously mentioned, all hell broke loose and the Japanese were pushed into a more compact group as the trap closed in tighter. This made good targets for the gunners and mortars causing heavy casualties among the Japanese. The opening barrage lasted the planned seven minutes then crept forward at 100 yards per each two minutes so enabling the 2/18th to advance and keep contact with the Japanese who were slaughtered at every point to which they turned in severe hand to hand fighting in their advance of 1,000 yards. The Japs managed to get six mortars and numerous sub-machine guns up in support but these were eliminated in quick time.

At about 0515 hours "Don" Company, Commanded by Captain John Edgely, moved according to plan and encountered about a Battalion of the enemy entrenched east of the road. They fought magnificently, and, supported by "B" Company and by some splendid shooting by the artillery, inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. Eye witness accounts by survivors of "D" Company, which bore the blunt of this encounter, tell of acts of desperate courage in the face of greatly superior numbers. In carrying out its role, "B" Company encountered and eliminated

several parties of the enemy in the Joo Lye Estate area.

During the operation communications broke down and Sgt. (later Lieutenant) Charles Wagner moved through the enemy lines and ascertained the actual dispositions of the enemy and the two Companies which had been cut off from the rest of the Battalion. Battalion runners were not getting through so he returned time and time again through the enemy lines under heavy fire and obtained valuable information which enabled the C.O. to successfully engage the enemy with artillery fire and attack with his infantry.

Wagner's coolness, courage and devotion to duty was most marked and his service most valuable at a difficult time of the operation, which resulted in success. For this he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Charles Wagner later escaped from a P.O.W. camp and was killed in the Philippines fighting with the guerrilla units there.

To finish off the engagement, at 0700 hours, the C.O. issued orders



Japanese tank and armoured car "casualties".

for a counter attack by "A" Company to extricate "B" and "D" Companies, but these were not put into operation because the expected withdrawal order from Brigade was received owing to the occupation of Kluang by Japanese forces some hours previously.

Some tanks were coming up the road in support of the Japanese and, at a bend in the road, a 25 pounder knocked out three tanks over open sights before becoming victim of a direct hit by a shell which completely destroyed the gun.

The Dons, affectionately called the "mad Dons", died as they had lived. A rugged tough but cheerful lot of men hurled themselves at the Japanese giving no quarter and asking none in a final attempt to link up with the rest of the Battalion.

The role the 2/18th played in this action and the actions of the 2/19th

and 2/29th on the Muar and the 2/30th at Gemas confirms the opinion of Peter Firkins, author of "Australians In Nine Wars" in which he wrote:

"The 23rd Brigade which should have formed the third Brigade of Bennett's 8th Division was divided into three separate locations, the 2/21st Bn. at Ambon, the 2/22nd Bn. at Rabaul, and the 2/40th at Timor. These were the units, among others, for which Bennett begged in vain. When one considers the fight which the Australians made in Malaya, it is just possible that these troops might have provided the stiffening needed to prevent the Japanese invasion of Singapore. As it was they were thrown away in costly actions which made no difference to the Japanese advance on Australia."

**Next: The Withdrawal**

M. MULLENS

#### PHONE NUMBERS FOR CLUB

727 5000

727 5677

727 5999

**Access to the Barber Shop and Ladies Hairdressing Salon can only be made through the Back Foyer.**

## Members please note —

THE RECITING OF THE "ODE" WILL BE AT 8.00 pm

ON THE SCREENING OF FILMS, TUESDAY AND SUNDAY  
AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN A PRODUCTION  
SHOW IS BEING STAGED.

R. T. THOMPSON, M.B.E., Sec./Manager

## EUCHRE

Enjoy a good game of Euchre every Monday afternoon commencing  
1.00 pm.

REAL FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE — EVERYONE WELCOME  
INCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

LES MILLS, Organiser



The RSL Inter-Dominion Darts were played over the Easter weekend with five of our players representing. List of 100's hit were B. Dawson 14, T. Cresswell 12, K. Grills 10, G. Barlow 4. Trophy for most "100" in teams games went to F. Noland from NZ 28. Oh, I forgot, Bob Cliff hit none.

Singles Winner: R. Gilchrist, NZ. R/up: B. Dawson, NSW (Fairfield). Doubles Winners: F. Nolan, NZ; R. Gilchrist, NZ. R/up: B. Lythgow, B. Matson.

Test match won by New Zealand. "180" by B. Bishop (Merrylands). Highest finish "160" by M. Hassler (Vic.).

Highest start by T. Cresswell, NSW, Fairfield, 148.

#### Report for Monday Night Comp

Still no report from No. 1 team captain D. Trevvarthen.

No. 2 team Div. 5 as at 19-4-82: 63 points, 6 wins, 2 losses. One game was a real cliff hanger; down 5-1 to fight back with a win of 6-5.

No. 3 Team Captain: J. Morton leading outright.

Wednesday Night Mixed Captain: G. Frail outright winners.

Thursday Night Comp. captained by John Morton, 2nd in comp. at 22-4-82. They beat their old team Guildford 7-4.

Thursday Night Comp. captained by Jo Shepherd are still running second. They hope to be up there in the finals.

Bob Taylor's Monday Night Team is still in front with 56 points and still going strong. Bob puts this down to the team spirit and good sportsmanship of his team.

Wednesday Night Mixed captained by Bob Taylor is still leading with 92 points. Congratulations to L. Auguston for his "180".

Congratulations to John and Jean Morton on their Wedding Anniversary on the 1st May.

Friday night the 16-4-82 we were host to a visiting group from New Zealand. A good night was had by all and many thanks to the Mother Club for the refreshment supplied.

#### FRIDAY NIGHT SOCIAL GAMES

##### 26th March

Doubles Winners: R. Montgomery and K. Cox. R/up: D. Collins and Mum Grundy.

Singles Winner: Shep. R/up: W. Murphy.

Highest Score: R. Montgomery 160, Jean Morton 140.

##### 2nd April

Doubles Winners: F. Kop and J. Morton. R/up: R. Montgomery and K. McVee.

Singles Winner: J. Morton. R/up: D. Beattie.

Highest Score: F. Kop 140, Kathy McVee 114.

##### 16th April

Doubles Winners: B. Faddes and D. Trevvarthen. R/up: F. Collins and T. Oldfield.

Singles Winner: F. Collins. R/up: S. Wilson.

##### 23rd April

Doubles Winner: K. McVee and F. Collins. R/up: K. Purdy and Jean Morton.

Singles Winner: D. McKniff. R/up: B. Downting.

Highest Score: K. Purdy 81, M. Buchannan 110.

The Diggers Darts Club held their big raffle on Friday, 23rd April. There will be one of these run each fortnight. Tickets will be sold early in the evening but will not be drawn until approx. 9 o'clock. Anyone with tickets wishing to leave the Club before this time could leave the tickets with a friend so that if the tickets were lucky the prizes could be collected.

ARROWHEAD

# R.S.L. STORY WRITING COMPETITION

## ENTRY FORM

### \$435 IN PRIZE MONEY

- \$150 — FIRST PRIZE
- \$ 80 — SECOND PRIZE
- \$ 50 — THIRD PRIZE
- \$ 30 — FOURTH PRIZE
- \$ 25 — FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH & EIGHTH PRIZES
- \$25 — SPECIAL MERIT AWARD MAY BE AWARDED FOR THE BEST ENTRY, NOT GAINING A PRIZE, BUT WRITTEN UNDER SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITY

### OPEN TO

ALL RESIDENTS OF N.S.W. WHO ARE:

- (1) EX-SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN, OR SERVING MEMBERS OF THE FORCES WITH REPATRIATION ENTITLEMENTS WHO DURING THE PERIOD OF THE COMPETITION ARE:
    - IN-PATIENT IN A HOSPITAL OR NURSING HOME
    - RECEIVING TREATMENT AS AN OUT-PATIENT OR THROUGH A LOCAL MEDICAL OFFICER WHICH PREVENTS THEM FROM BEING IN FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT
    - SUFFERING FROM PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS
    - SUFFERING FROM MALIGNANT NEOPLASMS
  - (2) TOTALLY AND PERMANENTLY INCAPACITATED PENSIONERS
  - (3) BLINDED SOLDIERS
  - (4) SERVICE PENSIONERS
  - (5) BOER WAR AND 1914-18 WAR VETERANS
  - (6) EX-PRISONERS OF WAR
  - (7) NURSES OF THE 1914-18 WAR
  - (8) WAR WIDOWS NOT ENGAGED IN FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT
- JUDGING IS DONE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION

NOTE: THE CONTEST IS NOT OPEN TO ANYONE WHO EARNS MORE THAN 25% OF THEIR TOTAL INCOME FROM JOURNALISM.

### PERIOD OF COMPETITION

1st March, 1982 to 31st May, 1982

### CONDITIONS

- STORY SHOULD BE APPROXIMATELY 3,000 WORDS
- AN ORIGINAL THEME
- WHOLLY THE WORK OF THE ENTRANT
- ONE STORY PER PERSON
- STORIES PREVIOUSLY ENTERED WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED
- ENTRY FORMS AVAILABLE HERE OR ON APPLICATION
- THE COMPETITION IS OPEN TO MEMBERS OF THE ALLIED FORCES
- THE COMMITTEE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE ANY ENTRY

### POINTS TO WATCH

- GOOD PLOT STRUCTURE IS IMPORTANT
- AUTHENTICITY OF THE BACKGROUND IN A NARRATIVE OR EXPERIENCE IS DESIRABLE
- A STORY, WHEN WRITTEN AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE NARRATIVE, OR AS A CLOSE OBSERVER, IS USUALLY SIMPLE AND INTERESTING

### Enquiries and entries to:

THE SECRETARY, R.S.L. STORY WRITING COMPETITION  
8th FLOOR, 77 YORK STREET, SYDNEY 2000. PHONE 290 7359



# Sub-Branch Snippets



The Monthly Meeting of the Sub-Branch was held on Tuesday, 27th April. President Eric Austin was in the Chair with 54 members present.

For a full report on Commemoration Sunday and Anzac Day activities I have to thank President Eric for the report that appears elsewhere in this issue.

A vote of thanks to Bernie Connell for his help in expediting the delivery of certificates of appreciation in time for presentation on Anzac Day.

A special invitation has been accepted by the ladies of the Women's Auxiliary to join us at our meeting on 17th May, so let's get together and show them how much we appreciate all they do for us.

New members Messrs. G. Aldridge, R. Harrington, R. Barnes, L. J. Ferris, R. Hancock, M. Lech, N. Richards were welcomed by the President and presented with their badges. May your stay with us be a long and happy one.

Youth Club Report by Reg Sherlock shows Ballroom Dancers and Physical Culture doing well as is normal for them. All other sports are just getting underway.

The Welfare Report was given by George Smith owing to Don Carri being absent, indisposed.

It was with regret we learned Boris Ornowski was critically injured in a car accident and it will be quite a while before he is back with us.

John Burgess gave his first report on F.W.D.C. Affairs and was ably backed up by Jack Dodson.

Bob Thompson reported little progress on the leisure centre but there should be something to report next month.

Special thanks to Brian Ravenscroft for his great efforts as Marshal over the Anzac period.

That's it for now, see you all on 17th May at 8 pm.

HARRY K.

## DIGGERS DART CLUB

### INVITATION TO ALL MEMBERS, INTENDING MEMBERS OR VISITORS

*All welcome to join the fun and enjoy the pleasant company of all ages. You can be a beginner or a champ.*

*Social games played Friday nights, 8 pm start.*

*Competition is played Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Ladies teams, Mixed team, Mens teams—  
A. B or C Grade players welcome.*

*For further information see any Committeeman on Friday nights in the Darts Area.*

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 19)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

Colonel Varley reluctantly obeyed and withdrew to Jemaluang.

The Battalion withdrew through "C" Company which was given the task of covering demolition parties from the 2/10th Field Company R.A.E. To my knowledge the AIF were the main ones to carry out an organized "scorched earth policy" in the face of the advancing enemy by burning or demolishing buildings the Japanese could use and putting the "axe" through machinery to an effective extent. An example where the scorched earth should have been used and was not, was Penang where the installations were left intact except for a few smashed valves in the radio station which the Japs had operational within a few hours of occupation and not one water craft, small boat, launch, sampan or junk was destroyed. The Japanese used these craft to great advantage in the seaborne invasion down the West coast.

The 2/18th Bn. losses in the pre-mentioned action were six officers, ninety-two O.R.'s killed plus wounded but accounted for 1,000 enemy killed plus wounded.

For verification of the Japanese casualties I will set the "clock forward" when a Mersing de-mining party of P.O.W. made up of personnel from the 2/18th (which included Lieut. Charles Wagner of the 2/18th Intelligence Section), 2/20th Bn., and Engineers, left Selarang Barracks, Changi, on 18th April, 1942, per motor transport, for Singapore railway station. The P.O.W. party was piled into cattle trucks for Kluang, the nearest point to Mersing by rail, where they arrived late at night and moved on again

the following morning by trucks towards Mersing.

The road to Jemaluang was not very interesting, but from there to Mersing they passed scenes which were familiar to them. As they passed Joo Lye Rubber Estate, Water Works Road, the Pig Farm and Nithsdale Road Junction, they saw much evidence of the battle which had been fought in that area. The Japanese had erected a Memorial on the Eastern side of the road to their dead. The Japanese officer in charge of the party said that 1,000 Nippon soldiers had died there. The officer also described this action as "an appalling hand to hand battle".

On request the Japanese officer granted permission for the P.O.W.'s to go over the battlefield on the Nithsdale Estate. Most of the men killed in this action were from Don Company, their role being to attack the enemy from the rear after the trap had been sprung. It was established that the men of Don Company had stuck close together and fought it out with a much stronger force, the enemy not only holding high ground, but also having the advantage of being dug in. Among the enemy positions on this area could be seen the terrific damage that had been done by our artillery, the hill was a mass of shell holes. The Japanese officer in charge of the party said: "This was the Muar battle of the East Coast".

A few days later the P.O.W. party made a large cross of timber found in a native hut, and inscribed on it: "In Remembrance, 27/1/42. Fallen Comrades, 2/18th Bn. AIF". The cross was erected on the Eastern

# COMING ENTERTAINMENT

## Monday, 5th July —

5.30 pm: MONSTER MEAT RAFFLE

## Tuesday, 6th July —

11.00 am: BINGO

8.00 pm: MOVIE

"MAD MAX" (R)

The Australian film that won international acclaim. A story set in Australia's future — urban society in terminal decay — see the unbelievable death game between nomad bikies and cops in souped-up pursuit cars.

## Wednesday, 7th July —

5.30 pm: EZI-WINNA

## Thursday, 8th July —

8.00 pm: AUDITORIUM — Special Dance Evening —  
See Notice in Foyer.

## Friday, 9th July —

11.00 am: BINGO

8.00 pm: CABARET — Featuring . . .

CITYLIMITS

Top-rating Australian Group

## Saturday, 10th July —

8.00 pm: CLUB NIGHT — Featuring . . .

DON JARRY & SYLVANA

Versatile Vocal/Instrumental Duo

## Sunday, 11th July —

10.00 am: MOVIE

"VAN NUYS BOULEVARDE" (R)

If you're good lookin' and steering the hottest, sharpest cruising van north of south pole, head for Van Nuys Boulevard. Starring Bill Adler.

4.00 pm: SHOWTIME — Featuring . . .

GOOD OLD TIME MUSIC HALL

"ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON"

8.00 pm: DISCO in the Auditorium. (Tickets \$2.00 each).

8.00 pm: Old Bark Hut "SINGALONG" with selected artist.

side of the Mersing-Jemaluang road near the spot where most of our mates fell.

(See illustration on page 30)

The Mersing Cross is now installed in the St. John's Anglican Garrison Church, Gordon, next to the Poziers Cross of the 18th Bn., 1914-18 war.

Continuing the previous action, the Battalion withdrew to Sungei Ulu Sedili. Don Company was reformed and from there on this one Battalion strength carried out a defensive rear guard action covering East Force in a series of delaying engagements against a numerically superior force, who were still licking their wounds, until East Force crossed the causeway.

Colonel Varley reported to East Force Headquarters and assumed Command of the Brigade in place of Brigadier Taylor who was moved to Johore Bharu to organize a bridge head force covering the causeway. Ironically, the AIF now and later on Singapore Island, were to be placed in the most vital positions to defend in a desperate "last fling". The 2/18th then moved to Sungei Dohol Lombong area and took up a defensive position.

Later the 2/18th less A and C Companies, which remained in a de-

fensive rearguard position, moved to another defensive position south of Sungei Johore and at all times remained organized. Major O'Brien, B Company, occupied a rear guard position on the Tebrau bridges ahead of the outer bridge on the causeway which was necessary to troops withdrawing from the Mainland. By now the 2/18th Bn. had filled their rearguard role and was ordered to withdraw to the North West corner of Singapore Island, the Bren gun carriers now carrying out the protective role. Upon arrival at the allotted Battalion dispositions facing the Straits of Johore the Colonel rejoined the unit.

Meanwhile in the centre area Brigadier Maxwell's 27th Brigade, with some British units, was fighting bitterly as they fell back and the 2/30th Bn., was involved in a severe single action on the Namazie Estate.

A pause now while the dispositions of the "Broken Eight" are given at this stage. The third brigade of the 8th Division, the 23rd Brigade consisting of the 2/21st Bn. was sent to Ambon, the 22nd Bn. went to Rabaul, small token forces also were placed on Nauru, Ocean Island, The Solomons, New Ireland, The Admiralty Islands and New Caledonia, and the 2/40th was sent to Timor.

## J. G. COLUMNS & BALUSTRADES

PHONE  
604-5349



2197 HORSLEY DRIVE, WETHERILL PARK, 2164

Chief of Staff, General Sturdee, in a prepared paper on the 15th February, 1942 (the day Singapore fell) said the "splitting of the 23rd Brigade violated every principle of concentration of forces, in efforts to hold numerous small localities with totally inadequate forces, which were progressively overwhelmed by vastly superior forces."

It is ironic that he should make such a statement when he continually ignored requests and pleas by General Bennett to send the third Brigade to strengthen the 8th Division in Malaya, then standing by while the six Battalions in Malaya were split into different single attack forces and not allowed to function on a combined front as a Brigade till it was too late on Singapore Island when their numbers were sadly depleted by actions on the Mainland.

These factors did little to enhance the 8th Division as a complete fighting unit and the many months of tough arduous jungle training was not put to the use it should have been.

In my opinion he was the victim of "military politics" which overall, turned out to be detrimental to the AIF in Malaya.

Now the remnants of the 22nd and the 27th AIF Brigades were to receive the full brunt of the enemy forces, the 2/18th and the 2/20th Bn. of less than 2,000 troops made up of "survivors" from the mainland actions and "support" troops were to have the first wave of 13,000 Japanese troops thrown against them at night followed by a second wave of 10,000 at dawn. At the customs check point near the Causeway, in 1974, I heard one of our

touring party, Ex HMAS Hobart, tell his friends that "token forces" were thrown against Singapore, maybe the AIF was unlucky in their allotment as the "token force".

I hope a wrong interpretation is not given to the following facts and that readers think that they are written in self-praise. That is not the intention. The facts are stated because of pride in one's comrades, pride in one's unit and pride in one's commanding officers.

Before the final battle of Singapore it seems appropriate to mention the potential of these two Brigades and support troops, had they been given a reasonable chance, and of the capabilities of the men who led them.

The rank and file consisted mainly of men from the country who were good bushmen and so did not take long to adjust to the jungle.

At the outbreak of hostilities the AIF was an efficient force fully trained in the art of jungle warfare.

Add to this the important factor that we had good platoon and Company Commanding officers who had the confidence and respect of all men under their Command.

Divisional Commander, Brigade and Battalion Commanders were seasoned front line soldiers who had kept abreast with up-dated military procedures by serving in Militia units between wars backed by regular soldiers in staff positions.

**Major General Gordon Bennett,  
C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.**

A recruit officer at the age of 21, commencement of a dedicated military career. Promoted to Major prior to 1914, served and was legen-

## EZI-WINNA

Now Super Prize No. 2 has commenced and due to popular request the prize will be another colour TV and video.

Ezi-Winna commences at 5.30 every Wednesday, with over 100 prizes plus the Major Prize.

Be early to ensure you participate in this atmosphere of real good fun and enjoyment.

"Ezi-Winna sure is great, you can't get a ticket if you're late."

dary for tenacity and courage as a Major with the 6th Battalion on Gallipoli at the age of 27. He was promoted to Lt. Colonel in the field in 1915 at the age of 28. It was while he commanded a battalion that he received the C.M.G., a rare honour for that position, for outstanding leadership in the field. He was promoted to Brigadier of the 3rd Brigade at the age of 29, being the youngest Brigadier in the British Armies up to the end of the war.

Further he added to his military achievement by holding temporary Command of the 1st Division at the age of 30.

Colonel Brudenell White was Staff Officer III and Major T. Blamey was the "I" Officer of the 1st Division and both were in close touch with outspoken field soldier, Brigadier Bennett who was always impatient to "get on with the job" and did not make a secret of it. He always wanted action, not words or "red tape".

On one occasion, whilst in one of his temporary Commands of the 1st Division, G.S.O. T. Blamey (who had succeeded Colonel B. White) issued orders for the capture of three villages which Divisional Commander Bennett had reported captured the previous day. "Field soldier" Bennett stormed into H.Q. and gave his report to Blamey first hand, once again coming into bitter conflict with G.S.O. Blamey. Both were originally Victorians and this conflict over military matters went back to 1908 when Gordon Bennett was accepted as a recruit officer with the 5th Australian Infantry Regiment and by 1912 had been promoted to Major and was Adjutant of his Regiment at the age of 25.

During the three years prior to World War I Major Bennett had a

serious brush with regular Staff Officer, Captain T. Blamey, when Blamey, who was in charge of Cadet Corps Training in Victoria, criticized the training methods of cadets in a school run by George Bennett, Gordon Bennett's father and both reacted with some vigor, but the "professional" soldier was not moved by the opinion of a militia officer who had "come up through the ranks".

Both men were strong willed and this small incident smouldered between them for the rest of their lives.

There was a more personal rift between Gordon Bennett and Blamey when Miss Bess Buchanan arrived in England from Australia to marry Gordon Bennett. General Birdwood had promised him 14 days leave from France, but when his leave voucher arrived it only had 10 days leave on it. Bennett was sure that Blamey was to blame for the reduced leave.

The feeling caused by these two bitter incidents continued until General Bennett resigned in 1944, much to the joy of Blamey and people Bennett had offended with his direct, blunt approach.

Brigadier Bennett went on to add the C.B. and D.S.O. won on the field of battle, to his C.M.G.

Major Blamey, later promoted to Brigadier by holding temporary Command of a Brigade for three weeks before being recalled to a staff position, was awarded the same as Brigadier Bennett, the C.B., C.M.G. and D.S.O.

Between the end of World War I and World War II Gordon Bennett maintained an interest in the Militia and Commanded the 2nd Division with the rank of Major General at the age of 36 for five years till 1923 when he was placed on the unattached list.

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Gordon Bennett became a successful business man and as the rumbles of war came in the 1930s, he became a vigorous critic of Australian defense policies which did little to endear him to Government ministers and regular Army officers who were operating on a "shoe string" budget. The mystery appears to be; where does all the money come from when we eventually go to war??

When World War II broke out in 1939 he offered his services immediately, but was passed over for the 6th and 7th Divisions. His strong outbursts against Regular Staff Officers did not enhance his chances of getting him into the "inner circle". General Brudenell White himself, as Chief of Staff, commented that Bennett had "certain qualities and certain disqualities" for higher Command.

The tragic death of General Brudenell White gave Bennett his opportunity. General Sturdee had been appointed to lead the 8th Division, but upon General White's death he was promoted to Chief of Staff. After being overlooked to Command the 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions originally, on 24th October, 1940, Major General Bennett was, at last, given Command of the 8th Division.



*A heart-broken mother mourns her child's death.*

I had left my unit as I had a badly infected leg which was swollen from the foot to the groin through lack of attention owing to the situation and I was wearing a cut-down sandshoe as I could not fit my army boot on the swollen foot. I found a new use for my rifle as I used it as a crutch. At the same time I contacted a severe fever and bronchial condition and could not sleep with this distressing coughing and pain in my leg.

As I hadn't suffered illness before I could not understand how serious this illness was and for this reason refused to leave my unit as every man was needed now. When I could no longer be of any service to the section, I was ordered back to the Advanced Dressing Station who could do little for me so I "walked" back to the Regimental Aid Post as men could not be spared to "escort" me.

When I reached the RAP I collapsed and was placed in bed immediately and ran such a fever that my pyjamas and sheets were changed three times during the night. The next morning Dr. Barrett ordered me back to the Casualty Clearing Station as I required more treatment than he could provide.

The ambulance conveyed me to the CCS at Kota Tinggi, 60 miles away. The Major there would not treat me as he said I was a hospital case, so the same day I was sent as a stretcher case by ambulance



*Top: Fire-fighters, Singapore.  
Above: Native quarters, Singapore.*

to the 13th AGH at Johore Bahru where, by this time I was semi-delirious as I had not slept for three weeks and was in a lot of pain.

The next day Dr. Hunt examined me and said he would recommend that I be ordered out but I requested him to defer his decision and let me rest a week or two as I wished to return to my unit. He agreed but said: "Suit yourself but I don't think it will do any good."

The Japs were over Singapore day and night. The planes flew directly over the hospital, would bomb Singapore and then return over the hospital. We watched the bombing through the windows and, at night, saw the searchlights pick up the raiders for the anti-aircraft batteries.

Owing to the shortage of planes there was never much opposition for the Japs but, at this stage, the anti-aircraft batteries kept the raiders at a high altitude. The airmen who did take off gave a good account of themselves, but from the start, it was hopeless as the Japs had numerous and superior planes. Our only quality was our pilots.

It can be summed up in the experience of a Brewster Buffalo pilot. One day he shot down a Jap and was about to pat himself on the back when six Zeros came out of a cloud with guns blazing, and shot him down. He was one of the lucky ones who landed in friendly territory.

One day I saw 14 Brewster Buffaloes engage approximately 60 Jap planes; I had often heard of this in the Battle of Britain and wondered how much was truth and how much was propaganda but seeing is believing.

A short distance from the hospital was a Reinforcement Receiving Depot which was a military objective, so, had the area been bombed the hospital would surely be hit, for which the Japs could not be

blamed although it would have made world headlines.

As I showed some improvement I was happy. I was sent to Batu Pahat convalescent camp and from there I was to rejoin my unit, but the day I landed I had a recurrence of my fever and bronchial condition. The illness was to last six weeks. I couldn't walk at all and food upset me. I knew I was losing weight and dreaded weighing myself.

Japanese planes were continually overhead. At the rate of four flights a day and as bombs fell quite close it could hardly be called a rest camp. Watches could be set for the different waves of planes, they were so regular. We were told to go into slit trenches when the alert sounded but I was to the stage where I didn't care what happened and when the alert was sounded, I just lay there, the only one left in the hut. I was so sick and distressed that I couldn't care less if a bomb hit the hut. I could not sleep and my body was so sore from coughing that even the touch of my pyjamas hurt.

Owing to my deteriorating condition, the Colonel in charge ordered me back to Base Hospital. I was examined by Specialist Dr. Hunt who asked me if I was satisfied now that my condition was critical and he said this time I had no choice. He was ordering me out. I was to learn later that the hut where I was quartered at Batu Pahat was blown to pieces by a direct hit two days after I had left, so someone was watching out for me. I was paraded before a Medical Board consisting of Colonel Osborne, Colonel Byes and a Major. These three doctors had to agree whether a soldier was to be boarded out or not. It was unanimous that I be returned to Australia. Our pay books were collected and finalized and now we were waiting for a ship home.

\*\*\*\*\*  
DOES YOUR CLUB HAVE A REPORT IN THIS EDITION?

IF NOT — WHY NOT ASK YOUR SECRETARY OR  
PUBLICITY OFFICER WHY?

\*\*\*\*\*





*Fire-fighters attempting to quell fires on Singapore docks.*



*"Scorched Earth" of Malayan rubber. Black clouds rise from stacked rubber outside an Estate Rubber Factory.*

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## **JOHN HORSLEY DINING ROOM**

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Different complaints caused heavy casualties among our boys. There were wards of chest cases, broken limbs, skin diseases, malaria, typhus, dysentery and pneumonia cases to mention a few. There was the best part of a ward of Don Rs (despatch riders) with breaks to various parts of the body which occurred when they were "accidentally" run off the road by native truck drivers and there were others who, while speeding down the road had hit a wire which had been stretched across the road from bordering trees. The typhus cases were pitiful, especially when they became delirious. So many troops were dying that it was decided to cease playing the Last Post as it was upsetting to all in the hospital.

Some Hurricane fighters arrived in Singapore and gave moral support to the civilian population but this was short lived. They were equipped for Western Desert conditions and as the native workers had fled there was the problem of having them assembled. Not enough could be assembled to be effective. It was a case of too much too late which was the situation throughout the Malayan Campaign.

As I said before watches could be set by the Jap bombers arrival, they were so consistent. One day I saw 125 planes come over in three raids. The first wave consisted of 50 planes and in all I saw three Brewster Buffaloes slowly spiral to intercept. They fought at high altitudes and at times the only indication that a plane was above was the roar of the engine and the occasional

flash as the sun caught the wings as they banked.

Of these three planes, one was shot down, the pilot going down with his plane, the second was disabled and the pilot bailed out, the third run out of ammunition and circled the pilot who had bailed out as a protection against being machine-gunned on the way down. No sooner had the first wave left then the second wave came over and as they were leaving over came the third wave. Singapore was sure getting a pasting.

The native quarters of Singapore, the docks and the airfields were under constant attack from the Japanese bombers. The airfield at Seletar had been subject to bombing day and night by large formations of Japanese bombers and nearly all the buildings were blackened shells. The field was littered with burnt out Brewster Buffaloes, Hurricanes and Blenheim bombers. In some of the hangars spared from the bombings, there were aircraft parts still in crates.

By now all fighter aircraft had been withdrawn to Sumatra together with some anti-aircraft units. A small token force of Hurricanes was left in Singapore and the civilian population asked why aircraft were being withdrawn if Singapore was to be defended? It was explained that these aircraft could operate more satisfactorily based at Palembang as the aerodromes around Singapore were being battered by continuous raids by the Japanese.

## R.S.L. SUB-BRANCH

Any person who has been appointed, enlisted or posted for service in the Armed Forces may apply for Service Membership of the City of Fairfield RSL Sub-Branch.

All enquiries to Records Office or the Hon. Secretary, R. T. Thompson, M.B.E.

The Japanese bombers came over in perfect formation as there was little or no opposition from our planes and they were coming down much lower now. I watched one dive bomber which made run after run at the Naval Base, coming in at terrific speed bombing and strafing. We nick-named it Charlie. Ack-ack guns were on him but he completed all his runs safely. In all six Jap planes were brought down that day.

We were told to stay indoors and all confined to bed. Bed cases were placed under their beds for some protection in case a stray bomb hit the hospital. The nurses would put on their steel hats at a rakish angle, put their hands on their hips and swagger down the centre of the ward singing, telling jokes and laughing. They were really wonderful. The sister in charge of the ward I was in was Sister Bullwinkle who was the sole survivor of the mass murder on Banka beach by Japanese troops at a later date.

Day and night these raiders reminded me of great hawks circling above their prey, picking their targets at leisure, there being no opposition. One day one of our few planes took off with a New Zealand pilot. He brought his plane to base, then died in the cockpit. How he got back amazed all as both his wrists were almost severed. For weeks it was the same, the Japs coming over,

dropping their bombs and returning unmolested. By now the bombs were exploding before the sirens sounded.

**Next: Repatriated.**

**M. MULLENS**

### THE MERSING CROSS

At present resting at St. John's Church, Gordon, New South Wales.



*Erected at Mersing by Members of 2/18 Bn. while in Japanese hands.*

## PIONEER LOUNGE...

Have you been to the Club's Pioneer Lounge — the best Lounge in the Club. Pleasant Pioneer decor for you and your friends. The Lounge is directly up the front stairs. Open Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday from 4.30 pm.

## THE HORSLEY DEN...

And if you don't wish to go upstairs we have "The Horsley Den" Cocktail Bar — at the rear entrance to the Club. Open from 6.00 pm (Friday-Saturday), 3.30 pm (Sunday).

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# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 20)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

We now received word that we were to be repatriated from Malaya on the Indian hospital ship "Talamba", prior to the fall of Singapore. There were 42 AIF troops to be evacuated on this ship from 22 different units plus wounded from the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse". Naturally the bulk of the wounded were Indian troops.

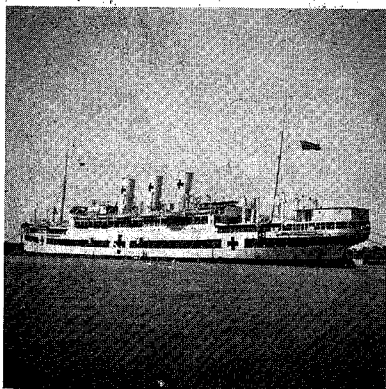
On the way from the hospital to the Quay we came to a fork in the road and ran into the middle of an army convoy which was on its way from the Mainland to Singapore. This could not be helped but it was a bad coincidence as it left the ambulances open to attack and the Japanese would not be blamed as the convoy was a military objective. As expected, an air raid developed as the Japs had spotter planes everywhere and anything that moved was bombed and strafed. Remember that, at this stage, the Japanese were using airfields captured on the Malayan Mainland right on our "doorstep".

The sky became thick with enemy planes and they came from all angles, bombing and strafing the convoy. A Jap fighter swept in from the rear of our ambulance, machine-gunned and blew up the truck behind us. The ambulances kept on going and we watched the bullets kicking up the dust and coming towards us. Strangely no one showed any concern as we thought if this is going to be it so be it. At the last minute, whether by luck or design he lifted his fire, flew over our ambulance and knocked out the truck in front of us.

Not one ambulance stopped during the raid and all along the road there was carnage and destruction from this and previous air strikes. Cars were abandoned on the roadside and people were sheltering in the ditches but we rumbled on only deviating to go around wrecked cars or bomb craters in the road.

There were crated aircraft parts which had fallen off wrecked trucks scattered along the road. We survived run after run of strafing Jap fighters and by the Grace of God arrived safely at the docks.

We boarded the "Talamba" hospital ship at 11.30 am and Indian wounded were then loaded. It was drizzling rain and the wounded Indians, in pyjamas and on stretchers had no cover at all. This upset our boys and we became hostile and called to the loading party: "Cover them up, you mugs." But



"TALAMBA" — Indian Hospital Ship 43.

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# *Savoy Travel Talk*

## **"SITMAR CRUISES SUPER SAVER"**



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despite our verbal protests the loading continued in the same manner. I suppose the main concern was to load the wounded as soon as possible as Jap planes were overhead all day and could turn their attention to the docks, which they did not, thank the good Lord at that particular time.

Upon settling down we inquired re our destination and the word from N. 1 seat, normally reliable, was that the hospital ship was to take us to Australia then proceed to India. This did not prove correct as there were only 42 Australians all told. Incidentally, the "Talamba" was sunk by the Germans later on in the Middle East area.

The crew were lascars with British officers. The hospital staff consisted of Indian nurses in the main plus orderlies and four English nursing sisters who attended to the more seriously wounded Australian and British troops. The doctors were Indian with a British Colonel in charge. We were in a bay with wounded survivors from the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse" who were on their way home.

We were still in the harbour that night and the usual Jap planes came over to bomb Singapore again and, once again by luck or design, not a bomb fell near the hospital ship. Now the word was that our destination was to be Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the next morning we weighed anchor and sailed from Singapore. We were to learn later that the night after we left the docks received a pasting.

We watched Singapore disappear from sight and there was many a damp eye and heavy heart as our thoughts were with our mates that we had left behind and we were wondering how they were and what were they doing. We had a "guilt" feeling that we were letting them down, although from no fault of our own. For this reason there was no joy in our hearts for they were to bursting point. Personal safety was far from our thoughts.

A Zero roared in from out of the sun and came so low that we could see the pilot quite plainly. He waved, banked and left us without any further action. The "Talamba" proceeded on a longer route than nec-

essary to avoid the Malayan Mainland. Had we sailed from Singapore past Penang then across to Ceylon the distance would have been 1,577 miles and taken five days but the roundabout trip took us past Sumatra, through the Sunda Straits, past Batavia then across to Ceylon which entailed seven days and a distance of 2,000 miles.

The sea was fairly calm except for a few days when there were heavy swells.

Another day we passed a fleet of Dutch warships moving in to engage the Japs. Later, in Ceylon, we learned they were led into a trap of minefields and Jap vessels and they were destroyed before they became effective.

The same day we were "buzzed" by Jap planes who came in near mast level but they took no action when they saw it was a well marked hospital ship.

Six days out of Singapore a Jap submarine surfaced, at midnight, and inspected the ship. By the way of explanation the "Talamba" was brilliantly lit from mast to deck at night time so giving no doubt as to her being a non-combatant hospital ship.

A location call, normally sent at this time, was cancelled in case the Japs thought it was an attempt to give their location. All British troops were told to stay in their bunks and not to talk during the "inspection". In my own mind I am sure we were allowed to proceed without action because it was an Indian hospital ship. I firmly believe that a British ship would not have been so lucky as the Japanese seemed to have a mania to destroy European servicemen.

We eventually landed in Ceylon and were met at the wharf by the Red Cross who gave us an issue of cigarettes, tea and sandwiches. Being land lubbers we were glad to have our feet on mother earth again. Ambulances transported us to the 12th AGH where we were greeted with open arms and a warm welcome as this was a new hospital and we were among their first "customers".

We soon settled into our wards and quite near us we had the "bomb

happy" men, some of whom were from our units. Others were from Butterworth aerodrome in Malaya and some were from the "Prince of Wales" and HMAS Australia. I have described these pitiful cases previously and will only add it was heart breaking to see these young men with a lifetime ahead of them in such a condition.

The first week in the 12th AGH was not much interest to me as I was semi-delirious the whole time through a relapse I suffered soon after I arrived in Ceylon. I was feverish and found breathing difficult. Anyone near me seemed blurred and I could not focus my eyes properly. The pain was very bad. One night I was very ill and suddenly I had no pain or gasping for breath and I drifted into the most peaceful feeling anyone could ever wish for.

Previously my thoughts were for my wife and family and home but now my mind was blank and I felt as though I was floating on air. Now and then I would become conscious of my surroundings and vaguely remember a sister by my bedside and Dr. Spence in his pyjamas. The next morning I was told that the doctor had said I was to be under constant observation, a qualified sister to sit by my bed all night, and that he be informed of any change. The next day I was told he was called three times during the night.

On the 15th February, 1942, the sister in charge of the ward came to the door and simply said: "Singapore has fallen." Personal suffering was forgotten and there was complete silence in the ward as Malayan men sat on their bedside

or just lay there staring at the ceiling as though no one had heard.

Our early bush life and Colonel Varley's training had taught us that it was "infra dig" to show one's inner feelings. But thoughts flashed through my mind of the men I had gone to school with, had grown up and hunted with and had lived off the land as teenagers, had worked with as drovers, shearing shed hands, fencers and station workers.

We had formed a close comradeship. We then served within the 35th Battalion Militia pre-war whose motto was Nil Desperandum (Despair of Nothing). Then finally we served with the 2/18th Battalion and Colonel Varley moulded us into a fighting unit as our Colonel in the 35th and the 2/18th Bn. The officers and men of the 2/18th were and are to this very day a very close knit body of men which can be readily seen at their reunions on Anzac Day and reunions at Tamworth which are well attended.

I will never cease to be proud to have served with these men. At that time laying in bed made me feel helpless and useless and in view of this I am not ashamed to admit a tear rolled down my cheek to the pillow.

After weeks of being confined to bed my leg healed but the fever I had is still a mystery as not a great lot was known about tropical diseases at that time. I was allowed up and went down like a new born calf when I attempted to stand for the first time. My weight had increased to eight stone by then so, under the circumstances, I thank God I was not taken prisoner of war.

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## EZI-WINNA

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The survivors of the "HMAS Yarra" were in the 12th AGH while I was confined there and they told me of acts of heroism and related heart rendering accounts. Only 13 out of a total of 200 men survived the initial action. Then followed the horrors of being confined to open rafts with many dying daily from wounds, exposure, thirst and delirium. In the latter case they could not be controlled.

Imagine the mental anguish of having to push your mates overboard as they died and watch them float away in the sea. Some, in delirium, left the raft to swim to a shore which was a figment of their confused minds. They could not be helped and ended up being drowned.

It was quite obvious that only the young survived as, except for Stoker Cairncross who was approximately in his mid twenties, the rest of the survivors would be no more than 19 or 20 years old, they looked just boys. All the survivors were "Yarra" crew, some of the crew which had been picked from the Dutch ship survived the action only to succumb to conditions on the rafts.

Following is an account of the action:

Leading Stoker Cairncross said the "Yarra" left Tjilatjap late in February, 1942, and she was accompanied by an Indian sloop, a corvette, an auxiliary mine sweeper and several ships in convoy. In the Sunda Straits they were attacked by a number of enemy aircraft, three of which were shot down. The enemy contrived to harass the convoy and a submarine, which made its appearance later, torpedoed one of the convoy.

The corvette however remained behind with the crippled ship. Upon returning to Tjilatjap the "Yarra" received instructions not to enter port where upon the convoy continued towards Australia. At this stage the Indian sloop left the convoy.

Approximately 24 hours later the "Yarra" picked up some forty survivors from a Dutch ship which had been sunk by Japanese destroyers. The survivors, who were found in two lifeboats, consisted of five

Dutch and thirty-five Javanese seamen. Two days later the convoy sighted a number of vessels on the horizon and it did not take long to discover it was an enemy fleet whose actual strength was later found to be three heavy cruisers and four destroyers.

The "Yarra" had no intention of running despite the superior force and most of all the convoy had to be protected. Ordering the convoy to scatter the "Yarra" steamed at full steam under cover of a smoke screen, to engage the enemy with her four-inch guns blazing.

Although she was facing heavy odds and out-gunned, the "Yarra" put up a stiff fight which lasted one and a half hours and got close enough to score hits, including one on the bridge of one of the heavy cruisers. She exchanged blow for blow before she succumbed to the superior force and the crew was ordered to abandon ship.

The "Yarra" carried a crew of one hundred and sixty plus the forty survivors previously mentioned. She had received so many shells that all her life boats were smashed so there were only rafts and life jackets to depend on. Cairncross was in a group on two floats and rafts with thirty-three survivors. They drifted in the sea for a week without food and with only one jar of water. At last they were sighted by an Allied warship but by this time there were only 13 left out of the original 200.

On account of being repatriated to Ceylon, to compensate for my absence from Malaya in the final stages, the following are facts of the function of the two AIF Brigades towards the end as per recorded information and the official history of the 2/18th Bn., as recorded in the final edition of "Men May Smoke" which was our Battalion magazine throughout the existence of the Battalion.

The remnants of the two Australian Brigades were allotted the Western sector of Singapore Island, which General Wavell and General Bennett regarded as the most logical front for the Japanese to launch their offensive against Singapore. As was the case in other important matters General Percival did not agree, saying that the northern area



East of the causeway would be the point of the attack. Later he changed his mind and recorded that he thought the attack would be to the West and stated: "I had specially selected for it the AIF, because I thought of the troops which had had experience of fighting on the Mainland, it was the freshest and most likely to give a good account of itself."

What General Percival seemed oblivious of (don't ask me why as he was in a position to know) was that the two Brigades were sadly depleted by their fighting on the Mainland and had been reinforced by raw recruits hurriedly sent from Australia, and untrained.

In January, '42, the 2/4th Machine Gun Battalion — well trained and expertly Commanded, arrived in Singapore — the unit fought with tremendous courage and suffered extremely heavy casualties in the battle for Singapore.

The 27th Brigade was responsible for a front of 4,000 yards, extending west from the causeway, and the 22nd Brigade held a front of 16,000 yards on the left. The allotment was out of all proportion to the strength of the Brigade. It would have been unreasonable to even well equipped fresh troops. Their artillery consisted of three Regiments, three batteries of anti-tank and one fixed battery.

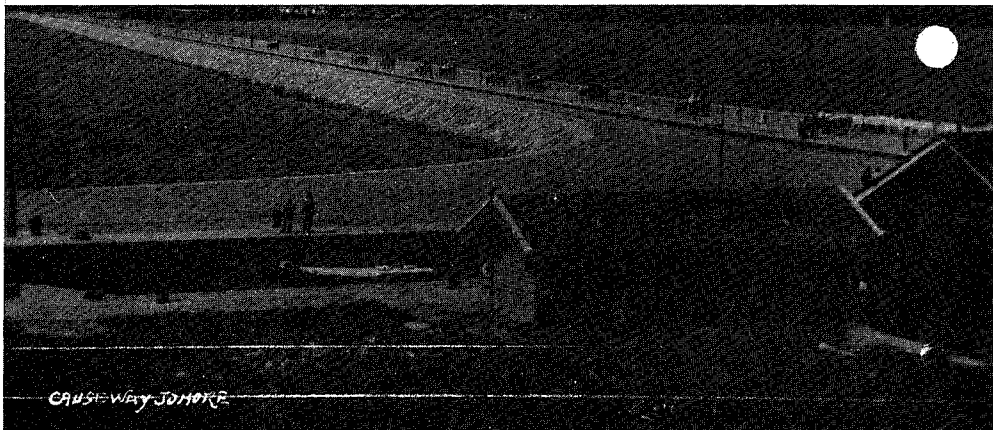
By contrast General Percival had the 11th Indian Division and the

18th British Division packed into the Northern area on a front of about 1,700 yards. Here he also had eight artillery Regiments and three fixed Batteries. To add to this lopsided deployment of troops and supporting artillery, it was the AIF who erected the defences held by these troops whereas on the thin line of the Australian front not one inch of defence work had been erected pre-war.

Geographically wise the two AIF Brigades were given half the area in which the expected assault would come from. The 2/18th Battalion area was the most difficult area to defend having a frontage of 6,000 yards of deeply indented coastline. Because of the lack of defences was necessary to compensate for this fact and, as a result a full reconnaissance was carried out, adjustments were made in some Company areas and a system of "paddock patrols" were introduced to deal with infiltrators. Because of the extent of the Battalion area a system of "fluid defence" was also introduced as mutual fire support between Companies was impracticable because of the lay of the land.

On Saturday, 31st January, '42, the demolition party "blew" the Causeway connecting the Malayan Mainland with Singapore Island. This was not an easy task as the following construction details and figures show.

It was not a bridge or viaduct



Causeway connecting Malaya with Singapore.

with trestles and piers but a long stretch of concrete 1,100 yards long and 40 yards wide and built on a foundation of enormous boulders weighing five to ten tons. It had taken several years to build and cost £4,000,000 (sterling). To completely blow the whole structure several tons of dynamite would have been required.

The demolition crew blew a breach thirty yards wide and the water mains, which supplied Singapore from Johore via the causeway, the roadway, railway lines and the lock gates were sent sky high. There were no reservoirs on the Island and, although they were brimming full initially, water was rationed — three or four houses had to use one common tap only. The Japanese used pontoons for their tanks to cross the breach for the battle of Singapore proper till they had time to repair it.

The Straits near the causeway was so narrow that soldiers, who had been cut off from their units or were on the Mainland when the breach was effected, swam across with little or no effort. Initially, food was plentiful in Singapore but this was to change when there was a large influx of civilians who flocked down from the Mainland and when food dumps were bombed and shell-  
ed continually, so destroying stocks. No new supplies were reaching Singapore from the outside world by sea or air as the Japanese bombed, shelled and strafed anything which moved in the surrounding waters and air space.

During the next few days enemy aircraft were continually over the Battalion area and Fifth Column activity was in evidence everywhere. As the Battalion area was devoid of any defence work, a colossal work programme was faced by all Companies. To add to this all work had to be carried out under cover of darkness to avoid observance. Coolie work forces, provided by Malayan Command, were ineffective owing to the continual bombing of the area.

On the 4th February while Companies were consolidating their localities, the enemy planes were making a detailed reconnaissance of the Battalion area without inter-

ruption. Battalion observation posts observed signs of enemy activity on the Mainland; trucks could be heard moving about and hammering could be heard clearly. Harassing fire from our artillery was requested but not given, reason not known. The following morning large flights of enemy bombers flew over the Battalion area carrying out blanket bombing. These conditions continued for the next few days.

The main weight of the artillery of the Japanese 5th, 18th, and Guards Divisions were concentrated on the Australian front which was to be the centre of the assault on Singapore. Subsequent information from Japanese sources indicated that 500 guns and heavy mortars were used in the blitz.

From 0700 hours on Saturday morning, 8th February, the whole Brigade was submitted to an intense artillery and mortar barrage. Companies reported as many as 80 shells per minute falling in their area. Despite this heavy bombardment our casualties were extremely light; communications were repeatedly cut and much credit went to the signal platoon which maintained the lines despite this barrage. The stretcher bearers did excellent work evacuating casualties.

The battle for Singapore had begun and Lt. Colonel Varley (M.C. and Bar, 45th Bn. 1914-18) of the 2/18th Bn. wrote: "During my four years of service in 1914-18, I never experienced such concentrated shell fire over such a period. Poziers was the heaviest shelling I experienced in that war in which I lost 50 out of 56 men in two and a half days. The German shells seemed more effective in causing casualties. On Singapore 80 shells were counted falling in "D" Company area in one minute. Lieut. Jack Vernon's platoon area had 67 shells in 10 minutes and this was typical of the whole Battalion area. Battalion H.Q. had 45 shells in 10 minutes, half an hour spell, then another similar dose and so on throughout the whole area all day."

Two Australian patrols slipped across to the Mainland and returned with news that the invasion would be that night. In an attempt to deter the expected invasion, harass-

sing artillery fire was once again called for but not given and so made the Japanese attack more effective. I am sure the Japanese were as puzzled as the Australians were. Suddenly the Japanese bombardment ceased and an attack was expected.

At approximately 2230 hours the first wave of Japanese troops came ashore in armoured landing craft — 13,000 hit the Australian front which met the Japs on the shore line and fought fiercely to repulse the enemy on this sparsely held front. More troops followed and when held up in one area the enemy infiltrated gaps which were impossible to fully cover because of this spacious area held by a thin line of 4,000 troops.

The 2/4th Machine Battalion swept the invasion fleet with Vickers fire sinking landing craft after landing craft. One, filled with ammunition, caught fire and exploded and helped illuminate the area making the Japanese good targets. One post of machine gunners fought a super-human battle for two hours against encircling enemy. They continued to sink landing craft crammed with troops till their ammunition ran out.

Then, led by Lieutenant J. Meiklejohn, they withdrew along a track in the swamp. Encountering several parties of Japanese the Australians charged leaving their trail littered with enemy dead. Finally even their small arms ammunition was exhausted so Meiklejohn grabbed the machine gun tripod and began club-

bing Japanese with it till he was shot dead. Another of the group killed a Japanese officer with his bare hands, then snatched the sword from his body and killed several more Japs with it and then charged some remaining Japanese who promptly fled leaving the small party to go through.

The few Japanese who managed to reach the shore in the first wave were quickly killed but nothing could stop this mass attack and soon the invaders had established beach heads. Quickly the Japanese moored landing craft close inshore and used them to give their troops mortar support. As the invaders moved up from the beach in mass formation the Australians charged them inflicting further heavy casualties but their lines were very thin with no real depth for support.

Finally the 22nd Brigade had no option but to withdraw which left some platoons of the 2/18th cut off on the small tidal islands between the Mainland and Singapore Island.

One such island was held by a platoon of the 2/18th led by Lieutenant Jack Vernon. After his position was mortared and shelled for 15 hours the enemy landed and, although outnumbered, he led his platoon in an attack and successfully cleared the island. Enemy mortar fire covered the second assault in which the platoon suffered 13 casualties.

With the remainder of his platoon he still continued to resist until he

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was forced to withdraw owing to weight of numbers. Many times Lt. Vernon swam the channel separating the tidal island from Singapore Island giving help to those wounded and unable to swim across. Swimming, wading and fighting their way across they finally forced their way through the enemy lines to link up with the rest of the Battalion. During this phase and subsequent stands made by Lt. Vernon's unit on Singapore, his courage, devotion to duty, example and initiative was outstanding. He was later awarded the Military Cross.

The action developed into a series of platoon and section engagements, both units being by-passed on all sides by numerically stronger infiltrating enemy. With their numbers the Japanese staged suicidal charges, suffering heavy casualties in this mass attack and finally overwhelmed the Australians by sheer weight of numbers.

By dawn the outnumbered forward posts were overrun and annihilated. Then another wave of approximately 10,000 again hit the Australian front. The 2/18th attempted to close their perimeter but this was prevented by rapidly infiltrating enemy troops. The 2/20th Bn. lost 334 killed in action and 214 wounded in the night's fighting out of a total of 1,005 committed to battle, losing one forward Company completely. Lt. Colonel Assheton's 2/20th Bn. found they had been encircled and the withdrawal path was barred by a concentration of machine guns. The Colonel led three Bren gun carriers forward and engaged the enemy at point blank range. One by one the Colonel and his men fell but the sole survivor silenced the last gun so allowing the rest of the 2/20th to pass through. The 2/18th, who also bore the brunt of the attack suffered severe casualties.

Meantime on the 27th Brigade (AIF) front, to the right of the 22nd Brigade, the men could clearly hear the sounds of battle though so far no enemy landing craft had approached their front. To check the Japanese intentions a patrol, dressed in shorts only and with their bodies blackened, crept out in a small boat to the Mainland. After pinpointing the enemy posts and concentrations

it came across another boat on the way back. Thinking it was another Australian patrol Lieutenant V. Smith challenged from a few feet. The answer was an attempt to ram them. As the enemy boat passed Lt. Smith jumped on to it and threw a grenade among the crew then quickly returned to his own boat before it exploded.

The next night the Japanese landed on the 27th Brigade front and were met on the shore line and suffered appalling casualties, the first wave being wiped out. Further mass attacks forced the 27th to withdraw. During this action the 2/30th trapped a large enemy force in a swamp bottleneck and systematically wiped them out. The Australians ignited several tanks of oil and watched the blazing fluid flow into the creeks thick with Japanese. When the flames subsided charred bodies choked the streams.

Space does not allow for full coverage of individual actions but the following is indicative of these actions. Lieutenant D. Mentiplay lay hidden in the undergrowth while enemy swarmed all around him. He was the survivor of a group he had led in a charge to escape an enemy ambush. The Lt. was thinking of making a break for it when he suddenly saw a Japanese soldier bayoneting Australian wounded. Enraged he jumped from his cover brandishing a bayonet and rushed the Japanese to make a silent killing. The Japanese was standing on higher ground and plunged his bayonet into the Lieutenant's throat which came out the back of his neck. Forcing himself backwards off the bayonet the Lt. fell to the ground, drew his revolver and killed the Jap. With blood flowing from his terrible wound he stalked and killed five more Japanese before his ammunition ran out. He then decided to make it to the main lines.

Coming across a machine gun post he threw his empty revolver at it. The Japanese thought it was a grenade and fled. Almost exhausted and weak from the loss of blood

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he flung himself into a duck pond and hid under overhanging branches with Japanese all around him. Some time later, with his strength restored, he dressed in native clothes found in a deserted hut and set out for the Australian lines. Upon reaching the lines he fell unconscious at his comrade's feet.

During the remaining hours of darkness bitter hand to hand fight-

ing was in progress, both sides suffering numerous casualties. Later, statements in the Singapore press by the Japanese claimed they had landed 30,000 troops on the Australian front before dawn. They also stated that 50% of casualties sustained in the battle for Singapore occurred on the Australian front.

Next: Singapore Island continued.

M. MULLENS



# Younger Set

## Members Wanted

**MALE/FEMALE 12 to 25 years**

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GRASS SKI-ING ☐ SNOW SKI-ING  
 BUSH WALKING ☐ CAMPING ☐ SAILING  
 HORSE RIDING ☐ GLIDING ☐ CAVING  
 FIRST AID ☐ ORIENTEERING  
 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ☐ CANOEING  
 OR ANY OTHER INTEREST YOU MAY  
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All Welcome. Please contact 727 2674, 604 4463, 609 1024 for any information.



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# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 21)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*



An attempt was made to form a close perimeter about Battalion Headquarters, but this was prevented by parties of infiltrating enemy and the Battalion fell back to Ama Keng village. Here the Colonel and 130 men made a stand but this force was not sufficient to hold this portion of the perimeter which was, by this time, cut off from the main force. This small force comprising 80 infantrymen and 50 engineers, hurled themselves at the Japanese in a heroic bayonet charge. Contact was made with the C.O. and he instructed the whole Battalion to fall back to Ama Keng village proper.

As enemy pressure was increasing Colonel Varley decided to withdraw, reorganize the elements of the Battalion he had to hand, and recapture Ama Keng village. As the men moved up for the attack on the village it soon became apparent that the starting line was held in strength by the enemy. Upon observing this the Brigade Commander cancelled the attack orders and ordered the Battalion to take up defensive positions.

Throughout the day the 22nd Brigade was gradually forced back. Battalions were divided by mass formations of infiltrating enemy and Companies and Platoons formed their own perimeters. Most of these small units become encircled and in a series of violent engagements, had to fight their way clear. Finally they reached their new positions covering the Tengah airstrip covered by the Carrier Platoon who engaged and wiped out a Company of enemy in close formation and successfully

engaged a further force estimated at two Companies. Colonel Varley somehow managed to collect a third of his men for a stand at dawn. Japanese troops attacked while enemy aircraft swept in at treetop level straffing at will. Inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy the Australians hacked their way clear. Then, carrying their wounded, they staggered back to the airstrip.

By now the 2/19th Bn. was all but obliterated. Surrounded, with their transport captured and carriers destroyed, the men fought to a standstill leaving only 50 survivors to reach the temporary safety of the airstrip. At the airstrip barely 1,000 men were assembled including some raw Indian troops. The few Bren gun carriers left were formed into a striking force which sped from one position to another plugging holes in the defences. At the day's end Bren Gun Carriers supported by special squads of men with tommy guns, managed to blast an escape route through the encircling Japanese and created a gap for a withdrawal closer to Singapore.

It was not till 0900 hours on the 9th February that General Percival belatedly realized that the Japanese had thrown their full weight of the offensive on Singapore at the thin line of Australians and not where he had anticipated it, on the strongly held British-Indian front.

The key to the Island's defences was Krangi-Jurong Switch Line between the headwaters of the Krangi-Jurong rivers. The Japanese, now well established, attacked this sector held by the Australians and heavy fighting ensued. If the Jap-

By next month Mr and Mrs. Latter and Mr. and Mrs. Mathers will be on their second honeymoons in Tasmania. This had been postponed till after Parramatta appeared in the Grand Final.

Our Fairfield Princess is working hard organising functions to raise funds for "Talking Books for the Blind". Anyone interested should contact Julie Chambers or Dot Sherlock. She will hold a meeting at 11 Kambala Crescent, Fairfield West on 11th August at 7.30 pm.

Remember half the money raised is returned to our Youth Club.

The next meeting of the Youth Club is on Tuesday, 17th August at 8 pm in the Bowls Lounge. All are welcome.

Congratulations to Sharon Clifford on her engagement to Graham Morrow. A party was held at Long Bay to celebrate this. Why there? Well, her parents are both inmates there.

Yours in Sport,

J. BURGESS,  
Publicity Officer



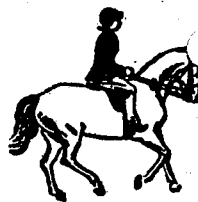
# Younger Set

## Members Wanted

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anese seized Bukit Timah Road they could advance on Singapore so General Percival brought the British and Indian troops to reinforce the Australians but the Japanese were having the better of success at this stage.

The Battalion occupied a position in Bulim village during the night of the 9th and 10th of February. At first light, in accordance with instructions from Brigade, the Battalion withdrew to the 11-mile stone on the Koa Kang Road to reorganise. The withdrawal was covered by the Carrier Platoon, who once again engaged the enemy inflicting heavy casualties at close range. At this stage the Battalion came within the perimeter of the 12th Indian Brigade. Colonel Varley, after a liaison with the Commander of the Brigade, decided to move the Battalion to the Bukit Panjang area as he had not received fresh instructions from Brigade and a threat to the southern flank of the 2/29th Bn., was developing.

In the meantime, orders were received from Brigade to move the Battalion to Reformatory Road and to occupy a defensive position astride the road. During the latter stage of this move and during the occupation the Battalion was subject to severe bombing and straffing by enemy aircraft. During the afternoon of the 10th February the dispositions of the Battalion were altered slightly to conform with the movements of "X" Battalion.

On this day on the Reformatory Road Sector, Pte. E. S. Bersford (C COY.) manned a Light Machine Gun as No. 1 for several hours, firing from a ridge which was under continuous enemy Mortar and machine gun fire. He remained at his post, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy from an exposed position which he had placed himself where he would be more effective. Five men were sent to him in succession to act as his No. 2. All of whom were killed or wounded. He only ceased fire when his L.M.G. was destroyed by a mortar shell. His exemplary courage and devotion to duty by remaining at his post under heavy fire, regardless of casualties all round him, was an inspiration to all ranks of his unit. For this action he was awarded the Military Medal.

Just prior to daylight on the morning of the 11th February, 1942, a further move to conform to the general situation was ordered. Before the move could commence, the enemy opened fire on the Battalion area from Feature 127 at the rear of the Battalion but, after an exchange of fire, the Companies deployed and then moved off to their new positions. The Japanese were numerous and everywhere and if a unit stayed in one place for any time they were bypassed on the flanks and hit from front, flanks and rear. Weak flanks seemed to be the dominating factor in the Malayan Campaign.

Owing to heavy fire from the enemy, now at a closer range, and a large number of Indian troops on the road, the position became somewhat confused. In order to stabilize the situation Colonel Varley ordered a section of Carriers, armed with machine guns and grenades, to charge along Reformatory Road and engage the enemy on both sides of the road. The Carriers carried out this task efficiently and effectively.

Brigade Headquarters personnel, under the Brigade Major, assisted some of the men of the Battalion in a bayonet charge against the enemy attacking Brigade H.Q. and routed the Japanese and drove them back. The Battalion then went into a perimeter around Brigade H.Q. and feature 127. Brigade then ordered that previous Battalion positions be retaken. Accordingly, small parties moved into the old Battalion area which, for some reason, was not occupied by the enemy at this stage but was under heavy fire.

Lieutenant McDonald and a party of 14 men held one locality for some hours and drove off attack after attack but were subject to very heavy enemy fire. Meanwhile a threat was developing on "C" Company front and in two other sections of the Battalion perimeter. As the Japanese attacks were being repulsed with heavy losses and the Battalion did not concede an inch, the Japanese brought heavy mortar, machine gun and sniper fire on the whole Battalion area which was also bombed by enemy planes intermittently throughout the day.



The Japanese launched two attacks against feature 127 at 0800 hours and at 1300 hours, and the Battalions casualties were heavy. The position was held only by courageous and determined fighting under the leadership of Captain R. S. Griffin.

The Battalion had, by this time, been in action since the landing on Singapore Island and also throughout the day had been engaged in heavy fighting in a position which was the spearhead of the AIF defence on the left flank. Accordingly, and under instructions from Brigade Commander, the Battalion moved into a reserve position during the afternoon. Early in the evening the Battalion was formed into a close perimeter adjacent to Brigade Headquarters, with the Carrier Platoon astride Holland Road and B Company, which was detached, in a position between Holland Road and the railway line. No contact was made with the enemy during the night but firing was heard in the forward area and the area of No. 10 Platoon (B Company) was heavily shelled several times.

On the 12th February the 22nd Brigade AIF, held an advanced position in the Pandan area, despite repeated attacks by the Japanese to dislodge them. General Percival later recorded: "The 22nd Brigade fought a gallant action for forty-eight hours, and did much to hold up the enemy's advance in this area."

Active patrolling was carried out in all Company areas and at all times the Battalion was an orderly well organized unit. Brigadier Taylor, Commander of the 22nd Brigade was evacuated to hospital and handed over Command to Colonel Varley. Later General Bennett informed Lt. Colonel Varley that he was to Command the Brigade with the promotion to Brigadier, Major O'Brien, who was the senior officer then present with the Battalion, was appointed Acting Colonel, with Captain Doug Okey (later Major) acting as 2.I.C.

During the afternoon a platoon of "C" Company under Lt. Gibson occupied Hill 130 on the left flank of the Battalion. Enemy activity over the Battalion was very marked and heavy bombing and strafing occurred. Shortly after the occupation of Hill 130, heavy mortar fire blanketed the area. This was followed by an attack and "C" Company was forced to withdraw through sheer weight of numbers. At about this time a composite Company of about 80 reinforcements, mostly from the 2/19th and 2/20th Bns. arrived under Captain Gavin and came under the Command of the Colonel of the 2/18th Bn.

Under instructions from Brigade the dispositions of the Battalion, in particular the left flank, were changed. During the change some of the Companies were held up by heavy fire from the vicinity of Hill 130. Just before dusk, an enemy

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truck drove along the road forward of Battalion H.Q. It was engaged by machine guns of the Carrier Platoon and the three occupants were shot. The truck, which was heavily laden with ammunition, caught fire and exploded.

"A" and "D" Companies were combined under the Command of Captain J. Chisholm and moved into a position overlooking Hill 130 and was able to direct our mortar and later our artillery on the enemy positions. During the early part of the night, enemy machine gun fire and small arms fire came from the left flank of the Battalion and parties of Japanese infiltrated but our patrols quickly eliminated them. At 2200 hours, the Brigade Commander ordered a general withdrawal of the Brigade into a tighter perimeter, slightly to the south. On account of the deteriorating situation no reconnaissance was possible and localities and routes were allotted to Companies from map reference. The occupation of the new perimeter was to be completed by first light on the following morning.

The withdrawal was carried out independently by Companies without interference except in the case of one patrol from the Composite Company under the Command of Lieut. Jack Varley who was held up for a few hours. All Companies were in position on time at first light on the 13th February, 1942. The dispositions of the Battalion was Combined "A", "D" and "B" Companies on bare cemetery hills about Feature 794115 Singapore sheet, "C" Company astride the railway line to the west, the Composite Company on the east side of Holland Road.

One Company of the 2/29th Bn., under Captain R. Salier came under the Command of the 2/18th Battalion and were placed in reserve rear of Buona Vista Road. The RAP was in a house off Holland Road, with Battalion H.Q. in the vicinity of Buona Vista Road. On the right flank was the 2nd Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders, and on the left was a Punjab Battalion.

During the morning harassing mortar fire fell in the Battalion area. Towards evening, a fairly large scale attack appeared to be developing on the right flank of the Bat-

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talion, but, apart from a few scattered shots, nothing developed in our sector. It was ascertained later that the Gordon Highlanders and the 2/26th Battalion had been attacked, but had beaten off the mass enemy attack.

During the night of the 13th-14th February, active patrolling was maintained in the Battalion area and road blocks were installed. A barrage of shells fell in "B" Company's area, but no casualties resulted. No contact was made with the Punjabis during patrols and at the first light it was found that they had withdrawn so once again exposing a flank as happened on the Mainland time and time again. Luckily the right flank was held by dependable troops in the Gordons and the 2/26th Bn. and they stood their ground.

To compensate for the unexplained withdrawal of the Punjabi Battalion the left flank was accordingly adjusted to bring "C" Company into a closer perimeter and to link up with the 2/4th Machine Gun Battalion on our left, so giving the Battalion the strongest flanks of the whole Malayan Campaign. At 0600 hours, on the 14th February, with no thought of surrender, the 2/18th laid anti-tank minefields astride Holland Road. About two hours later, a car containing two natives, despite warnings from our patrols, ran into the minefields and were blown up.

Enemy air movement had intensified over the Battalion area, coming down as low as 400 feet and circling the area. During the morning intermittent mortar fire fell in various parts of the Battalion area and Battalion Headquarters was moved 100 yards eastward, into a creek bed, where better cover was available. On the extreme left flank, a section of No. 15 Platoon came under extremely heavy mortar fire. The left flank was strengthened and the mortar Platoon was reformed with Lt. John Fuller in Command, who established a position in a gully near "A" and "D" Companies.

Heavy mortar fire fell on "A" and "D" area causing casualties, so two sections were formed from H.Q. personnel, mostly Sigs. and Q.M., to strengthen that area. There were

times when, even the Padres fought shoulder to shoulder with the troops, and fought well.

The 2/4th Machine Gun Battalion fought with great courage on the left flank, a credit to the name of AIF, inflicting heavy casualties on the mass formation attacks of the enemy each time they met, but a Battalion can only do so much against superior numbers, and were virtually wiped out.

About 1500 hours, on the 14th February, heavy enemy mortar fire once again came down on the area occupied by "A" and "D" Company and the Composite Company astride Holland Road received a battering of heavy fire in their sector.

About 400 men from the AIF Ordnance, H.Q., Sigs. and Quartermaster and other Corps, joined the Battalion and formed a tighter perimeter to stand and fight on as the thought of surrender could not be understood making, in this area, 4,500 "fit" men plus 3,000 sick and wounded. Japanese patrols attempted to infiltrate along Holland Road and were eliminated. Maps and documents taken from the dead Japanese officers had the original dispositions of all AIF Battalions on the Straits of Johore, the scene of the initial landing on Singapore, down to Platoons. No wonder the Japanese artillery fire was so accurate at the initial "softening up" prior to the landing. Fifth Column was always a great disadvantage in Malaya. On the Mainland I heard of a ten-year-old boy, an Englishman and numerous of the native population, who were shot by the authorities as spies.

Enemy moved along Buona Vista Road, were engaged and scattered.

Enemy aircraft were still very active and flew very low having no fear of effective retaliation.

Following this reconnaissance enemy artillery opened up on the Battalion area. The accuracy and intensity of the fire was such that it seemed they were shooting over open sights. The forward Platoon was withdrawn after heavy casualties had been sustained, then the 2/18th mortars, artillery and machine guns of the Carrier Platoon, engaged and silenced the enemy.

The night of the 14th-15th February was quiet, except for spasmodic bursts of enemy mortar fire and our patrols were active. On the morning of the 15th February some adjustments were made in the dispositions of "B" and "C" Companies owing to the withdrawal of the Company of the 2/29th to their Battalion area. Enemy aircraft were again very active, though fewer than normal. They came closer to the ground than usual and circled the Battalion area at a height of 200 feet and, as usual a heavy barrage on the Battalion area followed. Most of the aerial activity and artillery fire appeared to be directed at the rear of the Battalion. The area around the R.A.P. was shelled and bombed several times during the day. The stretcher bearers, under the R.M.O. (Captain Barrett), worked continuously under heavy fire evacuating wounded troops and civilians.

Our artillery, mortars and machine gun Carrier Platoon frequently engaged enemy mortar positions and silenced them.

At 1530 hours on the 15th February, Battalion was informed of the result of negotiations between

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Malaya Command and the Japanese Army. Orders for the action to be taken in the event of a "Cease Fire" being effected, were made known.

At 1730 hours the mortar observation post observed two parties of the enemy, each estimated about a Platoon strength, moving immediately south of the railway line. Permission to engage this target was given by Brigade. Our mortar bombs inflicted very heavy casualties on this enemy party — of an estimated 25 strong, into which several bombs fell, only four men were seen to move away. At this stage the Battalion perimeter was very close and enemy movement could be clearly seen no more than 500 yards away.

In reply to this mortar shoot, at about 1815 hours a heavy barrage by enemy artillery commenced, blanketing the whole Battalion area for 30 minutes. Our casualties were light but communications were cut once again and the Signal Platoon did excellent work repairing the lines.

G.O.C. Malayan Command received a message from the Japanese that Singapore would be razed to the ground and its civilian population wiped out if the troops did not surrender immediately. On the other hand a message from General Wavell said for the troops to fight on and that the plight of the civilians could not be allowed to interfere with duty.

Ironically, little did the Japanese realize at the time, that the same situation would apply on the Japanese Mainland Islands of Honshu and Kyushu in the closing stages of the war when their civilians would be on the receiving end of some of the heaviest bombing and destruction of the Pacific War. In these attacks they were to suffer numerous civilian casualties because of their fanaticism not to concede. Sadly it took two "A" Bombs to force them to submit.

Even with the heavy bombing of Japan, the Allies showed more compassion than we would have received from the Japanese in a reverse situation. Kyoto was one of the three cities named for the dropping of the second "A" Bomb but

was passed over because of its cultural and religious associations. They also refrained from bombing Nara which, like Kyoto, had age-old Temples and Shrines, places of historical interest which my wife and I visited in 1970.

With all the troops and civilians on the small space of Singapore Island the situation had worsened day by day and now the city was hemmed in. Supplies of ammunition, food and petrol were demolished by constant artillery and aerial bombardment.

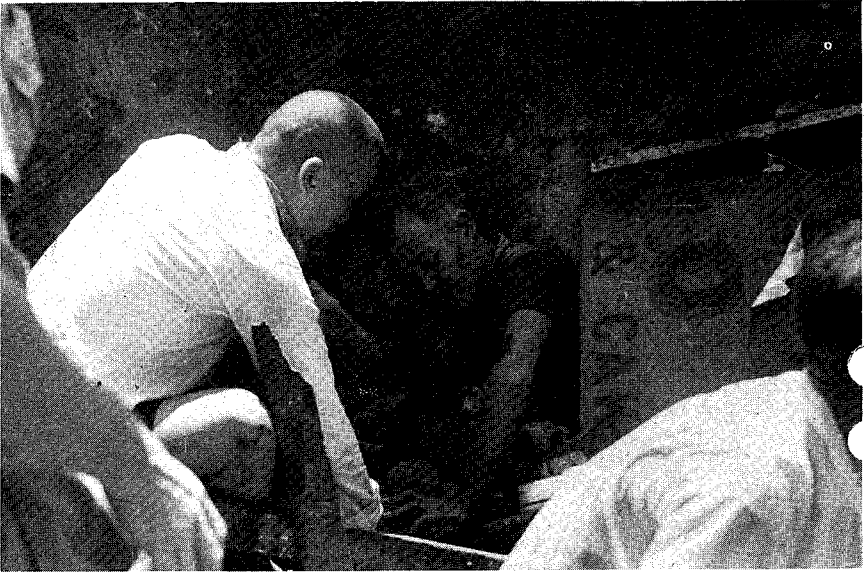
The Japanese concentrated most attention on the city, causing heavy casualties among the civilian population in an attempt to force the troops to submit. In fact so great was the destruction that the collection of civilian casualties got out of control.

The attacks on Singapore continued and by the 15th February, the civilian hospital had been without water for 24 hours. The Japanese were in control of the city's water supply and so the supply of water had ceased to exist altogether.

The civilian casualties caused by constant artillery and aerial bombardment were occurring faster than they could be collected. Many houses had collapsed on occupants and no labour was available to release them. There were also insufficient medical supplies for civilian casualties and there were limited supplies of food left for the civilian population and the troops. There was no artillery ammunition left for the Army and, as can be seen, the end was near. The senseless slaughter of civilians had to be avoided as the price to pay for another one or two days would have run into thousands of civilians maimed and killed.

One of the many atrocities by the Japanese was the massacre of the bed-ridden inmates of the Alexandra Barracks Hospital. The Japanese spared a small number of the patients who were returned to the Allied lines with a message that there would be similar massacres and that the civilian population would be unmercifully bombed and strafed if there was not an unconditional surrender.

A top level meeting was called and it was the unanimous opinions



*A doctor attends to a buried civilian casualty.*



*Fire Fighters — Singapore.*

of Lt. General Percival, Brigadier Torrance, Brigadier Lucas, Brigadier Newbiggin, Malayan Command, Lt. General Heath (3rd Indian Corps), Major General K. Simmons (Singapore Fortress Command), Major General G. Bennett (AIF), Brigadier Simpson (Military Liaison Officer with Civil Administration) and Inspector Dickinson (Police) that further resistance was useless and that they should surrender.

Many troops wanted to fight on in a last ditch stand but were told that hostilities would cease. A time was given but a certain amount of confusion existed. The cease fire was eventually affected at 2030 hours (8.30 pm) on the 15th February, 1942. Company Commanders, were informed and instructed to pass the order to all ranks.

The men of the 8th Division had fought with desperate courage and suffered 1,789 killed in action and 1,306 reported wounded. Many carried on despite their wounds. They had acquitted themselves well against the superior numbers of the enemy troops.

The two main points of the orders were as follows:

(A) All attempts to escape were forbidden. (B) No interference with Japanese troops was to be permitted and minor incidents caused by enemy fire were to be ignored, but men must remain in position where they must be prepared to defend themselves in the event of an attack.

The end had come, it was now 2030 hours. The din of artillery and machine gun fire and the crack of sniper fire gradually died down, and after a discussion about what the future held, the men settled down in their positions. The sky was red with the glow of many fires. At this stage the fighting strength of the Battalion was 359, of which our own personnel comprised 22 officers and 227 other ranks. Some idea of the confused nature of the fighting can be gained from the fact that the additional personnel with the Battalion came from 13 other units, both AIF and British.

General Bennett, Major Charles Moses and the General's Aide-de-Camp, Lt. Walker made a tour of inspection of the 2/18th, 2/20th, 2/26th AIF Battalions and the Gordon Highlanders. In this sector the troops wanted to fight on and some

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**Appointments can be made by ringing the Club.**

suggested a combined counter attack, but this was pointed out as impossible and disallowed.

General Bennett conferred with his next in Command, Brigadier Callaghan (artillery), Brigadier Taylor, Colonel Kent Hughs, Staff Officer Colonel Thyer and Battalion Commanders re his intentions of not being captured. What was the use of General Bennett remaining as the Japanese refused to deal with Brigadier Newbiggin who was sent to negotiate, or any other officer? The Japanese would only discuss terms with General Percival.

Bren gun carriers remained in position to the last, with their guns loaded in case the Japs "went mad" and tried to kill the POW. After the cease fire all men were disarmed. The Japanese ordered the carrier drivers to drive their carriers to a given point away from the main body of the AIF. These unarmed drivers were shot by the Japanese on the 19th February, 1942. This was the first of a long list of atrocities suffered by POW.

Atrocities on the field of battle were numerous, such as mutilation by swords, using men for bayonet practice, tying men together with wire and pouring petrol over them

and setting them alight, bayonetting and beheading wounded men in the field. Some may say this is the chance a soldier takes in war.

Granted, but the incident the Japanese will never live down was the cold-blooded MURDER of 21 Australian nurses when the "Vyner Brooke", with 65 Australian nurses and some troops were being evacuated from Malaya, was bombed and ran aground. Twelve nurses were killed in action and the Japanese captured 22 on Banka Island. They were forced to walk out into the water on Banka Beach and were machine gunned to death. There was one survivor, Sister Bullwinkle, who was wounded and saved herself by feigning to be dead, lying among her comrades in the water. She escaped only to be captured later and survived to return from the POW camps.

Soldiers taken prisoner at the same time were taken and machine gunned to death. Some were tied to trees and used for bayonet practice, being struck in the vital parts such as the neck, heart and groin till they mercifully died.

**Next: General Bennett's decision.**

M. MULLENS

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# CELLAR XMAS CLUB

To assist members with the financial burden of the festive season, the Club has introduced its own XMAS CLUB.

Members wishing to avail themselves of this service should contact Mrs. Val Chubb in the Cellar in the front foyer of the Club.

Members of the XMAS Club may deposit small amounts as they wish whenever they wish. At Xmas time the deposits are made available to you for your purchase in the Cellar.

**Excellent wine and spirit stock**



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# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 22)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

The 8th Division suffered over 3000 casualties killed and wounded and approximately 5000 were to die in P.O.W. camps and in the Pacific Islands where the 23rd Brigade of the "Broken Eight" suffered extremely high casualties.

Incidentally, in November, 1941, British troops were issued with "Digger hats" as it was found their pith helmets were not suitable for the tropics. The Japanese claimed to have taken many Australians prisoner early in the campaign which was incorrect. They received the impression these British troops were Australians because of their headgear. Because of this, in some cases, it also was debatable which troops were seen wandering around Singapore at the final stage. I will not try to hide facts and, according to General Bennett, do say some A.I.F. were mixed up in this blot on the integrity of the front line troops who bore the brunt of the Japanese onslaught.

These other Australian troops were reinforcements who had landed in Singapore just prior to the fall. The men and their officers were untrained and should never have left Australia. They were raw troops and had not been in the army long enough to have discipline or pride in their unit. Under the circumstances I say they could not be wholly blamed as it takes more than a week or two to cement the comradeship which existed in all A.I.F. units which formed them into efficient fighting units. Comradeship is earned over a period, not created over night. When the Provost Marshal asked General Bennett how he should act if he found A.I.F. troops looting,

General Bennett gave a typical answer, "Shoot them".

After the final message was received that the surrender would be effected at 2030 hours, and after finalizing all matters with his senior officers, at 2200 hours, General Bennett, Major Charles Moses and Lieutenant Gordon Walker made their way through Jap lines to the Mainland of Malaya and, after some narrow shaves, by sheer luck found a small boat which enabled them to leave the shore line. Further luck came their way when they came across a sampan with opium smoking Chinese aboard who were "persuaded" to take the party to Sumatra. After many near misses, near sinkings, being lost in a maze of islands and not knowing who was friendly and who was pro-Jap, the party landed safely.

At dawn on the 25th February, 1942, the General's party left Padang by Catalina flying boat arriving at Batavia during an air raid. On the 26th February they left Tjilatjap and on the 27th February a Qantas plane flew the General's party to Broome and Australia.

General Bennett was called to Victoria Barracks in Melbourne where his reception was nothing short of hostile from military circles. Their ideas appeared to be based on the outdated feeling that a defeated Commander should die with his troops. Why was General Bennett so different from General Blamey who left Greece or General MacArthur who left his men at the Philippines. They were ordered out because they were valuable officers and rightly so. General Bennett was also a valuable



Western Suburbs Leagues Club. A great night was had by all, even R.T.T. managed to laugh at some of the new faces acts. The trip home was quite pleasant with John Carter being told to stay at the back of the bus — for obvious reasons.

Our second outing was to a place I thoroughly recommend. It's a place called the "Major Oak" at St. Marys. The outing was organised by our Mrs Jean Latter, who has yet to fail to come up with a good night. I cannot help but mention the star of the night, none other than Bob Peppercorn. What with pink suit, white tie and pink shirt memories of the "55 chiko roll years" came rolling back. Other stars on the night were Don Rinkin who we all thought could handle a beer, but was beaten in a "jug-a-lug" and Jim Clifton who was doing a "John Travolta" on the dance floor. A great evening was had by all and thanks again Jean.

The club held a raffle on the 13th and 15th August, at the R.S.L. Results were:

Friday, 13th August, 1982:

1st: Meat Tray: B61. R. Cavanagh (I.D. 4836).

2nd: Panda: D78. I.D. 9509.

Sunday, 15th August, 1982:

1st: Hand Bag: A89. P. Hammond (724 5424).

2nd: Silver Tray: A27. D. Brown (I.D. 6252).

3rd: Tupperware: B97. M. Mill (I.D. 2163).

4th: Teddy Bear: B46. T. Speth (727 6620).

5th: Vase: E22. Andy Arnold (Staff 11).

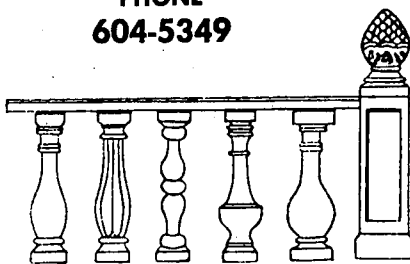
Thank you for your support in the raffle. See you next month.

Yours in sport,

GROUTCHO

## J. G. COLUMNS & BALUSTRADES

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## EZI-WINNA

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Be early to ensure you participate in this atmosphere of real good fun and enjoyment.

"Ezi-Winna sure is great, you can't get a ticket if you're late."

officer. His experience in jungle warfare could be put to better use in the defense of his Homeland than "rotting away" in a P.O.W. camp. By contrast the Prime Minister and Cabinet thanked him for a job well done under difficult circumstances as have previously been explained.

General Sturdee told him his escape was ill-advised. He then continued with his paper work and left General Bennett standing aside in his office not dismissing him but ignoring him. He was not treated with the respect and dignity due to his rank but rather was left standing "in the corner like some naughty school boy", it was as childish as that.

As mentioned before, General Sturdee was the original Commander of the 8th Division. How would he have acted under the circumstances which General Bennett had been subjected to? I will take a punt and say he would have been ordered out.

The Military Board, who a few months earlier issued a circular instructing all ranks that their first duty was to escape rather than be captured after a surrender had been effected, condemned him. The circular also stated that it was easier to escape in the early stages after surrender. General Bennett escaped after the surrender had been effected. In most theatres of war, troops who avoided capture in the same situation, were treated as using good initiatives as they were trained men and lived to fight again. An instance was some 8th Division men who escaped after the fall of Singapore and ended up fighting in the closing stages of El Alamein with the 2/13th Battalion, others ended up in New Guinea. No action was taken against them, and rightly so. General Bennett's main aim in leaving Singapore was to pass on valuable knowledge of jungle warfare and of how the Japanese operated and, for this, he should have been ordered out. The knowledge he had gained by 11 months training for jungle warfare, plus actual jungle warfare under combat conditions made him the most Senior officer qualified to do so as jungle warfare was entirely different from the type of warfare which other Generals and troops were trained.

Like General MacArthur and Blamey he could serve his country

better by bringing out this valuable information, but personal feelings appeared to prevail over more constructive military matters and the importance of the defence of Australia.

General Bennett faced two courts of inquiry alone. The courts found that his decision in leaving Singapore, although after the surrender, was unwise; he should have stayed with his men. General Bennett was a fighting soldier through and through and his action of escaping was along military lines of thought, not personal safety. To me this blunt talking General, who had offended many in high places, was once again a victim of "Military Politics" and there were many who were glad to "kick him when he was down" and alone.

General Bennett received no punishment, only unofficial banishment from a career he had devoted his life to, much to the joy of some "top brass". With General Blamey's "I won't touch him, he is on his own" attitude General Bennett applied for another Command. He was given Command of the III Corps in Western Australia which consisted of the 4th Divisions, 1st Armoured Division and the 19th Brigade, which was regarded as an important Command in 1942 when the Australian Mainland was threatened but, as the danger diminished, to General Bennett it was not a fitting Command for a fighting soldier. He could see he could achieve no useful purpose by remaining in the service in an inactive role, so in 1944 he resigned from the Army.

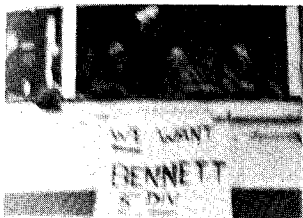
The most appropriate men to pass "judgement" on him were the men he left behind in the barbaric hell conditions of the P.O.W. camps, the ones the Chief of Staff and Courts of Inquiry were so "concerned" about because he did not stay with them.

Unlike some Generals, General Bennett had the blessing of the majority (allowing for a minority of die hards) of these P.O.W. as was clearly demonstrated when they returned home from those years of ill-treatment at the hands of the Japanese. On their return home the first thing these men did was to call out, "we want Bennet 8th Div.", he was still their No. 1 General.

At the first combined reunion of the 8th Division, at the Sydney Town Hall, General Bennett received a standing ovation from the men he had "deserted". This was a fitting tribute to a fighting General which would not be bestowed on *some of the Generals who condemned him* by men of their particular Divisions.

In spite of the Courts of Inquiry and the Generals who let their personal feelings cloud their better judgement this was, no doubt, one of the General's proudest moments by the fact that his men had accepted him and all his actions without question.

General Bennett's booklet on Japanese methods, learnt in the Malayan Campaign, was published and used with success in the New Guinea Campaign by senior officers and A.I.F. units returning from the Middle East.



The sign was placed outside of the 8th Division's headquarters in Sydney, Australia, after General Bennett's return from the Middle East. It was a sign of the welcome he received from the men of his former division.



General Bennett (in civilian clothes) being greeted by men of the 8th Division as he boards a transport to return home.

Centre: General Bennett (in civilian clothes) boarding a transport to greet homecoming P.O.W.

My main aim in compiling 'Birth of a Battalion' was to state the facts and so clear up some points re the part the A.I.F. played in the Malayan Campaign. For various reasons people in some quarters were guessing and did not give the benefit of doubt to these men who deserved a better deal. These people formed opinions, not based on actual on-the-spot facts, but on what some "knocker arm chair Generals" wanted to believe for reasons of their own.

Even as late as the past few years an article, written by John Edwards, was printed in the National Times, 30th January, 1978, in which it stated mistruths made by bigoted, biased people. All these detrimental statements appear to originate from the American "Richardson Report". General R. Richardson, who, like General MacArthur, was not partial towards Australian soldiers.

The "Richardson Report" referred to the A.I.F. as "stooped shouldered, underfed and of a low mentality" and stated that our leaders were "Non professional drunks" and an American Intelligence "expert" (for the use of a better word) reported that, "the A.I.F. in Malaya were the first to break and run, had no discipline and seemed nothing but rabble."

General Robert Eichelberger, South West Pacific Command, who replaced General R. Richardson, was an entirely different person and his reports back to the United States had nothing but praise for the Australian soldier, but his reports were not included in the "Richardson Report".

Pearl Harbour was a tragic disaster and many good people lost their lives there but, by the same token Malaya was a worse disaster in property and the number of people who lost their lives. Many men died gallantly there and now this "Richardson Report" and American Intelligence sets out to rubbish our troops. This is the same Intelligence which let their people down at Pearl Harbour by not being "on the ball". They should have been aware, as we "rabble" were, of the build up of Japanese strength in Indo-China, as previously covered in "Birth of a Battalion" prior to the instalment "War Declared".

In spite of all this knowledge

which their Intelligence should have been aware of Pearl Harbour was carrying on as in peace time and radar units were inefficiently manned or not manned at all as they had "knocked off for the weekend" and while their parties were in full swing on Saturday night we "rabble" were lying out in the rain and mud in our trenches at Mersing on full alert.

Besides the discrepancy of the radar units, action concerning a large force of planes approaching was not taken with the result the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour was 100% effective.

We who survived do not care what the "Yanks" say about us, because we know the statements are false, but we speak for our dead who died with honour.

There is no point in repeating all our 'stand to' exercises and describing the efficient strong defence at Mersing as the reader already has these episodes clear in his mind.

As the detrimental remarks in the Richardson Report "The A.I.F. in Malaya were the first to break and run." (I think they got this mixed up with one of their Airborne Divisions in New Guinea which did break and run) would apply to the initial clashes between the A.I.F. and the Japanese Forces, I will make only brief mention of these as they have been well covered in the chapter "War Declared".

#### *Initial Actions:*

2/18th Battalion:—

Japanese losses 1,000 killed, 2/18th losses 98 killed.

2/19th, 2/29th Battalions:—

Japanese losses 3,000 killed, 2/19th, 2/29th losses no exact figure known.

2/30th Battalion:—

Japanese losses 800 killed, 2/30th losses 47 killed.

Above figures are plus wounded, plus 27 Jap tanks knocked out.

Awards to the 2/18th, 2/19th and 2/30th Battalions were: Victoria Cross: 1; Distinguished Service Order: 1; Military Cross: 6; Distinguished Conduct Medal: 4; Military Medal: 3; plus many Mentioned in Despatches to my certain knowledge.

Naturally awards were not presented till after the men came back from P.O.W. camps so I would not know the awards to the 2/29th Bat-

talion or the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment as they were Victorians. I am also not aware of the awards to the 2/20th (N.S.W.) or the 2/15th Field Regiment R.A.A. (N.S.W.). The latter fought with distinction with the 27th Brigade. I am also not aware of awards to the 2/26th Battalion (Queensland) or the 2/10th Field Regiment R.A.A. (Queensland), the latter ably supported the 22nd Brigade or the 2/4th Machine Gun Battalion (Western Australia) who fought with great courage. I have no doubt that the awards to them would equal the 2/18th, 2/19th and 2/30th Battalions. Some may have deserved the V.C. as they fought well, suffering and inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

The low casualty rate previously mentioned could only be made possible by good pre-war jungle training and disciplined fire control by units which remained organised at all times. This sharply conflicts with the "Richardson Report". No Purple Hearts were awarded as no one cut their hand peeling potatoes. As on all fronts there are the unsung heroes such as the men who volunteered to stay behind with the wounded men of the 2/19th, 2/29th Battalions and the 45th Indian Brigade after the Muar engagement.

To enlarge on the fire control of the A.I.F., statistics show that, on the Mainland, 8 out of 10 bullets fired by the A.I.F. found their mark and for every Australian who fell in action in the Malayan campaign he took no less than 4 of the enemy with him.

Allied P.O.W. were treated in an inhuman way in most cases, as the time honoured custom and sentiments of the Japanese could not recognize existence of prisoners of war. To them capture was feared more than death for capture meant disgrace to the family and the Homeland. Rather than surrender to the enemy and spend a lifetime of shame the Japanese considered that, after continuous defeats, they should look for means of an honourable and glorious death. However, this attitude was to change.

In view of their contempt for P.O.W. what was their attitude to their traditional ideals when seventy fully armed and equipped divisions,

plus 28,000,000 local defence Corps on the Mainlands of Honshu and Kyushu, *surrendered on Japanese soil without firing a single shot*, plus the thousands of P.O.W. taken in the Pacific area. There is no evidence of mass Hara-Kiri although there were individual cases. To me it's laughable when a soldier turns up 30 years after the war as a National hero because he did not surrender. He had stayed on in the Philippines. I say it was a test of patience in a land of food and plenty, no board, tax free, good thinking. The above seems to prove to me that their original contempt for P.O.W., which they appeared to use for their barbaric treatment, was a hollow excuse to condone their actions.

Nearly one-third of A.I.F. taken P.O.W. died of starvation and untended diseases. There was little or no treatment because of lack of medical supplies. Rifle butt bashing, kicking in the shins with army boots by the guards, breaking the limbs of men who would not bow to them or who hit the guards when they slapped the P.O.W. faces, twitching together of arms using barbed wire, hanging by the thumbs and being flogged with bamboo rods, placed in death pits, standing to attention in the heat of the day for long periods, and if one fell he would be shot, shooting or beheading men who fell out of "death marches" or of men too ill to work, of unarmed men not in a position to defend themselves are but a few of the atrocities carried out on P.O.W.

Some may think I am a little harsh in my judgement but in view of the above I don't think I am as in my code they were not the acts of honourable people but rather people with an inferior complex who had to prove they were superior as, after all the A.I.F. did maul them badly and was responsible for 50% of their casualties overall in the Malayan and Singapore Campaign.

Japanese philosophy made them masters of twisting situations and circumstances to conform with their traditional ideals. They were never short of an apology to condone their actions and would go to great length to "save face" rather than face facts. There have been great changes in their way of life and thinking since the war with the event of television and closer contact with the Western

way of life. People are thinking more for themselves rather than depending on the old traditional Emperor hero-worship which was very much in evidence pre-war. But despite these radical changes in the Japanese way of life, even in this modern world, there is still many a Westerner who finds it difficult to understand Japanese logic.

Meanwhile the war had followed us to Ceylon as, on the 4th April, 1942, a lone Catalina patrol plane sighted a large aircraft carrier force and managed to report back to base before it was shot down by Zero fighters. The following day the Japanese Task Force launched thirty-six Zeroes, thirty-six Val dive bombers and fifty-three Kate attack bombers to strike at Ceylon. Being warned Allied fighters met this formation and approximately forty engaged the invaders. Both sides lost heavily. The Japanese claimed damage to major installations in their raid but I can only speak of Colombo and the damage was negligible for such a raid. As they had been warned shipping had cleared the harbour. A gun emplacement had received a direct hit, there were shrapnel holes in some of the wharf roofs on the docks, one wharf was slightly damaged, two merchant ships were hit but were still floating, another merchant ship was still burning, a tanker which had made port after being hit previously by a torpedo from a submarine was listing acutely in shallow water, and an old class sloop had only its mast showing above the water line. On the land a wing of a hospital had been hit and the native quarters were damaged.

British ships, alerted about the attack on Ceylon, raced towards the Japanese fleet which by this time were aware of their approach per medium of a scout plane from the carrier force. Admiral Nagumo, Commander of the Task Force which attacked Pearl Harbour, ordered the despatch of 80 Val bombers, which he had held in readiness for such an attack and the result was that the two British cruisers, H.M.S. Cornwall and Dorsetshire, were sunk before they could engage the enemy fleet.

The Task force then turned their attention to Trincomlee. On April 9th, 1942, one hundred and twenty-five bombers and fighters took part.

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Once again the attack was expected and the harbour was clear. This, no doubt, disappointed the Japanese as they wanted another 'Pearl Harbour' with sitting duck targets as their mission was to destroy the British Naval power in the Ceylon area. British losses were about 14 planes, as being prepared, they put on a better show.

As the harbour was empty, Admiral Nagumo ordered planes to fan out and search the sea for British ships and it paid off as the British Aircraft Carrier H.M.S. Hermes accompanied by a lone destroyer, was sighted off Trincomlee. The destroyer was the H.M.A.S. Vampire.

Admiral Nagumo ordered the launching of 80 Val dive bombers and with great accuracy, they blew both ships out of the water.

We finally left Ceylon on the "Katoomba" and headed towards Mauritius and when we landed there was a 'peaceful' occupation of Madagascar by British troops. At that time Madagascar was a French possession. It finally gained its independence in 1960.

The Dutch were the first settlers on Mauritius and left in 1710 when it came under French control. Then the British occupied it in 1814 and finally Mauritius gained its Independence

in 1968 as is present day history.

Mauritius is surrounded by a coral reef and is hilly and of volcanic origin and where the land is not cleared for cultivation there is lush tropical forests.

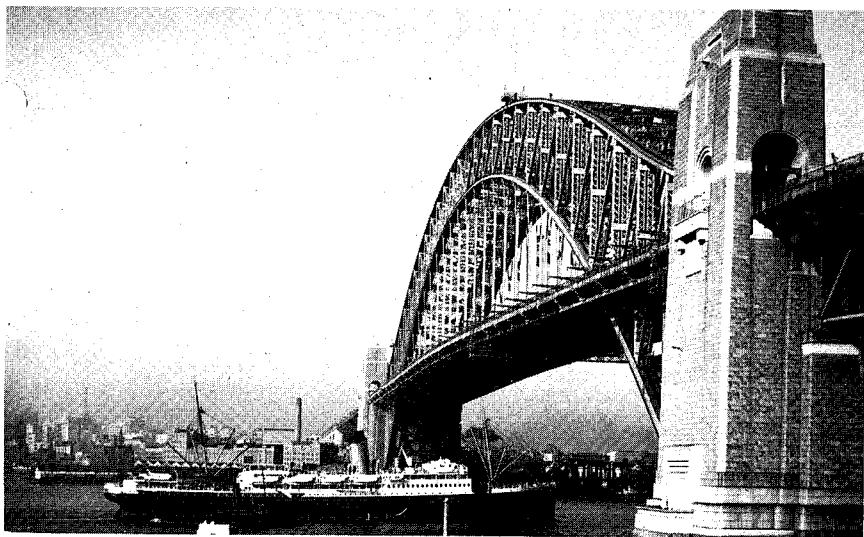
Sugar plantations cover nearly half the Island. Secondary crops include tea (which was in its infancy in 1942), tobacco and vegetables. The main industry are the plants processing the agricultural products. Today there is a distillery for the making of rum and spirits.

The Island's main newspaper was French, which was Le Cerneen. It was founded in 1832 and was actually the second oldest French language paper in the world.

The capital is Port Louis with a population of 137,000. It is a typical French Colonial city with its palm-lined Place d'Arms and French Colonial buildings, especially the 18th century Government House, and the Municipal Theatre.

The island's main towns are Curepipe, population 56,000 and Rose Hill. Mauritius is a beautiful island and generally described as the "Jewel of the Indian Ocean".

The circumference of Mauritius is only 158 km and no place is more than 61 km from another. The



"T.S.S. Katoomba" Pre-war.

African beat is part of the island's culture, full of rhythm and soul and very erotic.

An old fort overlooks Port Louis and still is a tourist attraction with the original signs of Men's mess, Officers mess Headquarters, Arsenal and Storeroom, faint but readable.

I received a shock when I first went into Port Louis when I found that Australian currency was not acceptable, English money, yes, but Australian money, no. As luck had it I had some local money on me so was able to do business. No doubt this problem has been ironed out now. Maybe they did not know where Australia was.

The landscape of Mauritius is scenic, dominated by interesting-shaped mountains. One of them is the ball-balancing Pier Both Mountain, 820 metres high, and may be regarded as the highest summit in Mauritius. The ball is an enormous boulder which forms the knob-shaped summit which is part of the mountain, but appears to rest balanced on it, teetering over in a 360 degree overhang.

As we came home unescorted we had to sail in a wide circle because of enemy subs. and other naval ships and at the same time we had to load up with coal at Mauritius.

A tragic event occurred late in 1944 which claimed the lives of many Allied P.O.W.s as will be seen by the following extracts of reports to the War Crimes Commission.

Brigadier Varley had collected first-hand evidence of the treatment of Ps.O.W. in Changi, Malaya, Burma, Siam (Thailand), and Indo-China (Vietnam) and was considered to have the most extensive knowledge and to be best informed of these happenings which he passed on to a meeting of Senior Officers before he boarded the prison ship "Rokyu Maru".

On 4th September, 1944, 1,000 British troops embarked on the "Kachidoki Maru" and at the same time 600 British, 716 Australians including Brigadier Varley, Group Captain Moone, R.A.F., and Colonel Melton, U.S.A.F., embarked on the "Rokyu Maru", each of approximately 80000 tons in Singapore Harbour.

"The convey left Singapore on the 6th September, and consisted of 6 transports and oil tankers with 5 escorts which were 4 destroyers and one small cruiser.

"The troops on the "Rokyu Maru", 1,316 in all, were placed in a forward hold and on the hatch covering it while the three senior officers travelled with the Korean guard in an after hold.

"On the 9th September, the convoy was joined by three transports and two escorts presumably from Manila.

"About 0100 hours, 12th September, the convoy was attacked by submarine marines. One escort was sunk, one transport and one oil tanker were sunk. The convoy continued in formation and was again attacked at about 0500 hours. Two destroyers, one oil tanker and two transports, including the "Rokyu Maru", were sunk as a result of the attack. The "Rokyu Maru" was struck by two torpedoes, one amidships below the water line and one forward on the water line.

"All Ps.O.W. escaped before the ship sunk some 12 hours later . . . It is believed that the three senior officers went off in a small rowing boat soon after the ship was hit . . .

"On the a.m. on the 13th September, there were two groups of lifeboats containing Ps.O.W. — one of three and one of eight — all sailing in a westerly direction — the Brigadier and other senior officers are believed to have been in some of the 8 lifeboats group which were tied together . . . One of the eight separated from the group on the afternoon of the 13th September, when the remaining seven went about and sailed in an easterly direction.

"On a.m. 14th September, the first group of three boats was joined by one of the eight which was separated from the main body. The remaining seven were not seen again by those on the other four lifeboats who were later picked up by a Nip destroyer and subsequently taken to Japan . . .

"At approximately 0900 hours, 14th September, sounds thought to be gunfire, were heard north of those on the four lifeboats. Shortly after three Jap destroyers appeared. One of them picked up 80 Australians and 56 British survivors. When the sur-

vivors were taken aboard the destroyer, they told one of the Jap Officers that there were a further seven lifeboats to the north of them. He indicated that he already knew and pointed to the other destroyers. At the time it was believed that the Ps.O.W. were aboard the other destroyer, but it was found later that this was not so . . . it is believed without definite proof, that there were no known survivors, those seven lifeboats were sunk by the 'destroyers' Brigadier Varley was among the missing.

It is appropriate to finish off with poem written by an unknown 8th Division member which reflects the thoughts of the troops.

#### JOHORE

There's a little strip of rubber  
To the north of Singapore,  
To the Digger it was a death trap,  
On the map it's called Johore.

It was there against tremendous odds,

The boys turned on a show  
That was equal to the Anzacs  
At Gallipoli long ago.

But men on land can never fight,  
The terrors of the sky  
Without air support they must be  
still

And wait on Earth to die.

Face to face odds matter not,  
The Digger loves a scrap,  
But when the sky is full of planes,  
And every one a Jap.

It's then you start to wonder,  
Or was it in the press you read,  
Air support will soon arrive,  
Production goes ahead

Singapore was no better,  
In fact it proved as tough,  
An island fortress they acclaimed it,  
Just a lot of blinking bluff.

The remnants of a tired force  
Fought on for one full week,  
But they knew they were not nominated,

When the blitz had reached its peak.

There's a little strip of rubber,  
That some day we will retake,  
That is all he would ever ask us  
The guy who was our mate.

Then we will hand over Malaya,  
And with it goes Johore,  
And pray to God we will not be  
called on.

To defend it any more.

M. MULLENS

Next: Singapore to Japan

~~~~~  
**THE CLUB CAR PARKS ARE  
NOW OPEN MONDAY TO  
FRIDAY FROM 10 am**  
~~~~~

## CLUB'S JOHN HORSLEY BISTRO

Situated in the quiet, peaceful and pleasant surrounds of the John Horsley Dining Room, located towards the rear of the Club.

**BISTRO: 12 noon to 2 pm (Monday to Friday)  
5 pm till 8 pm (Monday to Thursday)  
6 pm to 9 pm (Sunday)**

## POKER MACHINE JACKPOT BONUS SCHEME

As reported in November issue of "Field" has now commenced. Conditions applying are displayed in Poker Machine Room, and may be subject to variation according to Treasury requirements.

R. T. THOMPSON,  
Secretary/Manager



# LIST OF DOCTORS

- \*W. J. FERGUSON, 27 Smart Street, Fairfield 2165.
- D. B. SHENSTONE, 56 Hamilton Road, Fairfield 2165. 72 1240.
- G. A. LANG, 122 Railway Parade, Canley Vale 2166.
- J. G. RIGNEY, 2 Alan Street, Fairfield 2165.
- I. L. HARASYMCZUK, 63 Gipps Street, Smithfield.  
Also: 381 Hamilton Road, Fairfield West.
- RAMAHL SINGH, 4A Dale Street, Fairfield 2165.
- B. F. STEVEN-BONIECKI, 144 Wattle Avenue, Carramar 2163.
- JULIAN MARCO, 193 Hamilton Road, Fairfield 2165.
- MICHAEL COLJA, 174 The Boulevarde, Fairfield 2165 (72 1862).  
Also: 36 Station Street, Fairfield 2165.
- Y. C. YEUNG, 13 William Street, Fairfield 2165.  
Also: Cnr. Palmerston Road and Warrumbungle Street, Fairfield West 2165.
- \*L. P. BLASHKI, 940 Woodville Road, Villawood 2163.
- ERNEST NARODETSKY, 15 Nelson Street, Fairfield 2165.
- PREM SIRBADHOO, 265 The Boulevarde, Fairfield 2165.
- D. A. S. MARTIN, 41 Station Street, Fairfield 2165.
- T. J. SEETO, 381 Hamilton Road, Fairfield West. Also: 63 Gipps St., Smithfield.
- S. L. CHURCHWARD, 940 Woodville Road, Villawood 2163.
- JAROSLAV HORNITZKY, 6 Station Street, Fairfield 2165.
- J. J. SPILLANE, 1/1842 Horsley Drive, Horsley Park.  
Also: 770 Horsley Drive, Smithfield.
- A. J. SANKI, 208 The Boulevarde, Fairfield Heights 2165.
- ALI SARFRAZ, Shop 1/54 Park Road, Cabramatta 2166.  
Also: Cnr. Wych Avenue and Hill Road, Lurnea 2170.
- VLADIMIR KOLEDA, 381 Hamilton Road, Fairfield West.  
Also: 31 Neville Street, Smithfield.
- T. S. LAKSHMANAN, 22 Smart Street, Fairfield 2165.
- A. E. G. LOO, 381 Hamilton Road, Fairfield West 2165.  
Also: Cnr. Gipps Street and Horsley Drive, Smithfield 2164.
- I. S. DOUST, 226 The Boulevards, Fairfield 2165.
- SUDHAKAR PAI, 94 Smart Street, Fairfield 2165.
- N. C. PATEL, 693 The Horsley Drive, Smithfield 2164.
- LENKE ADAM, 6 Station Street, Fairfield 2165.
- A. N. CIARDI, 86 Ware Street, Fairfield 2165.
- T. H. YEOH, 1st Floor, Suite 3, 24 Ware Street, Fairfield 2165.

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 23)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

## Singapore to Japan

Call it a reverting situation, poetic justice or whatever you choose, but the same conditions which existed on Singapore when the surrender was forced on the 15th February, 1941, were to be repeated on the 15th August, 1945, on the very shores of the "aggressor", Japan itself.

The Japanese people had joyfully applauded their initial victories and had followed with blind faith their "Son of Heaven" Emperor and Warlords. When I was in Japan in 1970, the people told me this blind faith turned to fear, doubt and frustration when those B29's swarmed over their homeland and cities and "burst their bubble". Parents passed this on to the younger generation and, to a degree, this altered their whole outlook on life.

On the 18th April, 1942, Lieutenant Colonel Doolittle's sixteen Mitchell bombers took off from the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Hornet and flew towards the Japanese mainland so low that they were virtually skimming the water and land catching the Japanese by surprise as this completely fooled their fighter system. In spite of the fact that this was not a "sneak" attack, as the Japanese had ample warning and their fighters were on full alert and circling at 10,000 feet they did not see the low flying B25's. When these planes bombed Tokyo not a single anti-aircraft gun was fired and not a single Japanese plane went in pursuit after the B25's had scattered-bombed North, Central and South Tokyo, Kanazawa, Yokohama, Kobe, Osaka and Nagoya on the Island of Honshu.

This raid was a morale booster to the Allies although the damage was not extensive, but it shocked the Japanese out of their complacency and spurred them on to improve their home defences. This raid was a daring, well organised and most successful practice of what could be done for which full credit went to these men.

On the 15th June, 1944, Superfortresses appeared over Japan for the first time and attacked Yawata with little structural damage. This raid had an immediate psychological effect on the Japanese people who were shocked and discussed what might happen in the near future. On the 8th July, and the 11th and 20th August, 1944, Superfortresses flew from China and attacked Southern Japan. These raids continued and although the Japanese had up to two days notice from their "watchers" their defences seemed ineffective and their fighters proved of little value against these well armed powerful aircraft.

The Japanese Navy had 192 fighters allotted exclusively for the defense of Tokyo and the Army had 200 planes of all types of which 110 were assigned to guard Tokyo and others to guard the Island of Kyushu. Besides these there were 400 Army and Navy fighters assigned for special missions and bomber escorts but which co-operated with the homeland defence when necessary.

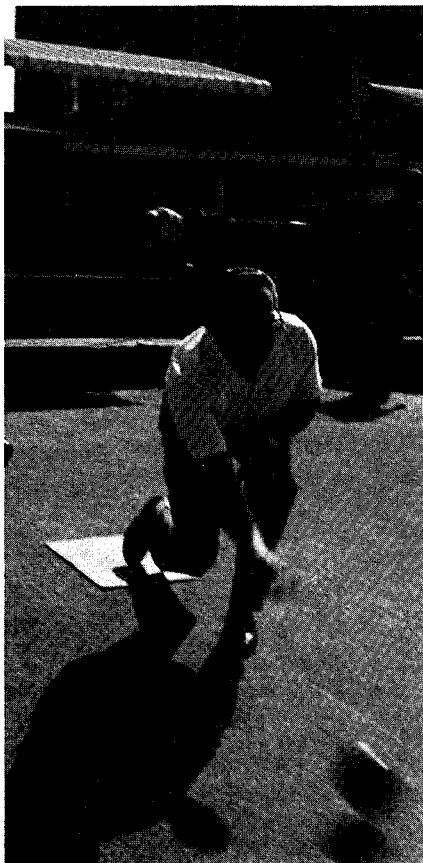
Even at this early stage the war in the Pacific was drifting away from Japan and it was clear to the Japanese that unless they took drastic action Japan would eventually face

Highlight is the 'President's Commercial'. If you haven't heard it you are missing the entertainment of the year. The talent scouts are around, Geoff.

#### Notice Board

Of course, everyone reads the Notice Board. Did you see the interesting letter from the Royal? The State Building Society (previously the R.S.L. Building Society) will be sponsoring the R.S.L. Bowls Section for the next three years. 1984 is the big year for R.S.L. Bowls. Being a Diggers Bowling Club, let's lean a bit their way and support where we can.

E.A.



President Jack Stiles of the Golf Club showing the bowlers a thing or two.



Bert Harrison and Tom Nettley getting the Bowlers versus Golfers Day started.



"Not a bad head — considering," says Bruce. Bowlers v. Golfers Day.

its worst National crisis, its first crushing defeat. From the Japanese point of view it was natural that their fighting men sacrifice their lives for the Emperor and nation. Their patriotism was derived from their deep rooted belief that the entire nation, society and universe were unified by and in the Emperor. With regard to the vital question of life and death, the Japanese based their spiritual beliefs on absolute obedience to the high authority — the Emperor — even to the sacrifice of their lives. So the decision to form the Kamikazes.

The Kamikazes were originally formed in Kyushu and were known as Kamikaze Tokubetsu Kogekitai (Divine Wind Special Attack Squad) because Japanese tradition records that the Kamikaze (Divine Wind) twice wrecked Kublai Khan's Mongolian invasion forces attacking Kyushu in the 13th century — 1273 and 1279 — and so was regarded as a heavenly protection. The whole Japanese structure was and is built

on this and similar deep-rooted traditional and religious beliefs which make their whole outlook on life much different to that of the Western world. Although there have been radical changes in the Japanese way of life and thinking post war, in 1970 when I was in Japan I found that there were many aspects of Japanese thinking that I could not understand because of my western outlook.

The cult of the Kamikaze was influenced by "Bushido", the Japanese warrior's code of conduct based on spiritualism and came under the influence of Buddhism which emphasises both bravery and conscience. It was also their wish to be able to die with a purpose at an appropriate time and place, where there was no public censure about their conduct.

The attitude of the Kamikaze was that they considered their attack mission as part of their duty. They were so enthusiastic about how to hit a target ship successfully that



# THE KAMIKAZES

they gave no thought for their own life. Because in their sub-conscious mind they were deeply involved in the National attitude and psychology which had been matured in the long history and tradition of their country. Initially Kamikaze pilots were well trained but as their numbers diminished and the Allies became more efficient in dealing with them their numbers became depleted and it was necessary to "rush" the training of new recruits.

Any pilot with ordinary skills could carry out these attacks. Short concentrated technical training courses were given so pilots could learn the essentials of Kamikaze attacks. For example, in a seven day course the new Kamikaze pilots spent the first two days in take-off practice, the next two days in formation flying and take-off practice. The last three days were allotted primarily to the study and practice of approaching and attacking the target, including take-off and formation flying again and, if time permitted, the whole schedule would be repeated.

For light and speedy aircraft such as the Zero fighters and the Susei (Judy) carrier bombers, two methods of approach for special attack were found to be the most effective. The approach was to be made at extremely high or extremely low altitudes. From the point of navigational accuracy and range of visibility the medium altitude was not desirable and this was ruled out. An altitude of 18,000 to 20,000 feet was chosen, taking into account two factors:

- (a) the higher the altitude the greater the difficulty in interception;
- (b) the manoeuvrability of an aircraft with a 550 lb. bomb.

When several attack units were used, the high and low altitude methods were used in conjunction, with varying approach methods. In an extremely low altitude approach the aircraft would fly low to the sea surface to prevent early detection by Allied radar units. In late 1944 Allied radar units were estimated to have an effective range of about 100 miles at high altitude, less than 10 miles at medium and 20 to 30 miles at low altitude. In the high altitude

approach the pilot had to take caution to ensure that the final dive angle was not too steep as the plane would be more difficult to pilot and could go out of control under increased force of gravity. It was essential therefore to make the dive as shallow as possible, taking careful note of the tail wind and any evasive action of the target.

In the case of the low altitude approach, upon sighting the target, the pilot would ascend sharply to 12,000 to 15,000 feet before going into a steep dive on to the target. This method required skill since the hit had to be made on the deck of the ship. This steep dive onto the deck was found more effective than hitting the side of the ship. In view of this the Kamikaze pilots were encouraged to employ the steep dive method if their skills were adequate and attack conditions were suitable.

Against aircraft carriers the best point of aim was the central elevator. Against other types of larger ships, the base of the bridge, against destroyers, small ships and transports, a hit any place between the bridge and the centre of the ship was usually most effective.

Ironically, the Japanese Naval General Staff did not wholly approve of the Kamikaze idea as both plane and pilot were a total loss and it was their opinion that the attacks were only 50% effective. Initially, volunteers were easy to come by and some wrote applications and pledges in blood. Applicant's personal and family situations were considered. A pilot's application was ruled out if he was an only son but some mothers wrote and pleaded that their son be accepted.

Most early pilots were university graduates with one year of military education who saw the war slipping away from Japan and believed that Special Attack was the best method of serving their country. Another cause which compelled Kamikaze lay in the widening discrepancy between the productive powers of the two countries, America and Japan, and in the lack of alternative fighting methods. As a result, to even the balance the Kamikaze came to the conclusion that the best method was to kill 1000 men with one pilot by sinking one warship with one

plane. They were convinced that as long as they used ordinary air fighting or bombardment with their now few available planes, it would be impossible to win a victory over the overwhelming Allied forces.

Vice-Admiral Takijiro Ohnishi, originator of the Kamikaze, arrived in Manila on 17th October, 1944, to assume command of the First Fleet Arm. Two days after his arrival he visited the 201 Air Group and addressed a hand-picked group of officers. In an attempt to recruit Kamikaze he said, "I have come to the conclusion that there is only one course open if we are to halt the invasion of Japan. We must organise suicide units of Zero fighters armed with bombs to crash dive into enemy carriers." The plan was relayed to the non-commissioned pilots of the 201 who volunteered to a man.

In the Philippines area at the beginning the pilots had a toast with the Admiral but later it was impossible due to the intense battle situation to take time off for ceremony. Now short instructions were given by the Admiral, some sent letters home and wills made at the time of application to become a Kamikaze.

Although mortally wounded pilots dived their planes into ships and installations, some crashed their planes for personal honour, as was the case with Rear Admiral Masafumi Arima who crash dived his plane into the U.S.S. Franklin causing great damage. The first recognized Japanese Kamikaze attack occurred at 7.25 am on 25th October, 1944, when Lieutenant Yukio Seki, a youthful Commander of the Navy's newly-formed Special Attack Force, took off from Mabalacat airfield, north of Manila, with orders to search for enemy aircraft carriers in the waters east of the Philippines.

Leading his unit of five Zeros, each armed with a 550 lb. bomb, Lt. Seki observed a mauled American carrier escort fleet which was returning to base after a 48 hour engagement with Japanese Naval forces. All hell broke loose at 10.45 am when Lt. Seki's plane rammed through the flight deck of the U.S.S. St. Lo detonating bombs and torpedoes. Seconds later another Kami-

kaze hit the same area with the result the St. Lo was blown apart and quickly sank. Three other escort carriers were hit but managed to keep under way. This was the first of many successful Kamikaze attacks during World War II. They continued for the next 9 months resulting in the sinking of 34 warships and inflicting thousands of casualties in the Allied fleet. The price was heavy as approximately 2530 Japanese planes and pilots of the army and navy were lost in the same period.

Meanwhile the Second Fleet Air Arm, comprising 350 planes, flew into Manila from Formosa the Commander being Vice-Admiral Shigeru Fufudome and they also volunteered to a man to carry out suicide missions. On 1st November, 1944, this unit sunk the destroyer U.S.S. Abner Reed.

On the 1st November, 1944, at 3.30 pm, the first B29's appeared over Tokyo in the form of a reconnaissance mission, high over the city. This astonished the Japanese as they could not believe these planes could fly away uninterrupted, and to further their concern, this was repeated over Nagoya within two weeks.

5th November, 1944, saw two Kamikaze attacks on the carrier U.S.S. Lexington. By mid November continuous suicide attacks had almost exhausted the strength of both Air Fleets so Admiral Ohnishi requested 300 replacement planes from Tokyo but he only managed to get 150 of all types from scattered bases on the homeland.

Meanwhile Japan was being pounded mercilessly at the large naval base on Kyushu. The naval arsenal at Omura (near Nagasaki) was destroyed, Sasebo, Nagoya, Tokyo, Yokahama, Osaka and Kobe of the larger targets were hit again. The frustration at not being able to stop the B29's prompted the Japanese to consider Kamikaze attacks against them when Lt. Mikihiko Sakamoto became recognised as the first pilot to crash his Zero into a B29 over Sasebo on Kyushu where the headquarters of the Kamikaze (Divine Wind) originated. The Japanese were stunned when, on the 24th November, 1944, B29's raided Tokyo again, seventy bombers in all

attacking industrial areas on the outskirts of the city with extreme accuracy. This was followed by incendiary bombing of the city five days later. Damage to industrial sites all over Japan was immense and production was either terminated or seriously curtailed. By the middle of December the Allies changed their tactics of bombing factories and commenced bombing the populated areas.

Experienced Kamikaze pilots were now scarce and new pilots were given only seven days indoctrination. Now the greatest problem was to instil the required aggressiveness and will to die into the "new breed" fresh from training in the homeland. Throughout December, 1944, Kamikaze attacks intensified and targets were not hard to find as the Allies pushed closer to Japan. By the first week in January, 1945, the First and Second Navy Fleet Air Arm Kamikaze units had merged into one. On 4th January, the escort carrier U.S.S. Ommaney Bay was sunk when a twin-engined plane crash into the flight deck.

On 5th January, 16 Kamikaze damaged the cruiser U.S.S. Louisville, H.M.A.S. Australia, two escort carriers and three destroyers. On the same day two battleships, a light cruiser and four destroyers were damaged and a mine layer sunk. In addition the Louisville and the Australia were hit for the second time that day. On 9th January, several more ships were hit including the Australia which received her fifth Kamikaze hit in as many days.

Following more raids on the 27th January, 1945, seventy-five B29's raided and bombed the Ginza and Hibiya area in the heart of Tokyo and on the 16th February American carrier force opened up an offensive on the Japanese Mainland and surprised and shocked the Japanese by directing full attention to the heart of Tokyo. Why wasn't their homeland defence working? This was repeated on the 17th February with little or no opposition from the air defence.

On 21st February, 32 Kamikaze comprising fighters, bombers and torpedo bombers sank the escort carrier U.S.S. Bismark Sea and disabled the heavy cruiser U.S.S. Sara-

toga which put her out of action for the rest of the war.

On the 29th March, 1945, three hundred stripped down B29's swept over Tokyo at a height of 7000 feet and dropped fire bombs. Each plane carried 6 to 8 tons of new petroleum-jelly fire bombs. The Japanese were caught by surprise but the Allies lost 14 planes. This could be classed as the most destructive raid of the war as more than 16½ square miles of the city were burnt out. The pilots reported, "Tokyo caught fire like a forest of pine trees." The loss of life at that time exceeded the two Atomic Bombs. What was happening to their city was unbelievable, the authorities said.

On the 11th March, 1945, Nagoya received tens of thousands of incendiary bombs which set fire to their flimsy wooden framed houses but the casualties were not as heavy as that of Tokyo because people had more room to escape the sheet of flames. These raids were repeated on the 18th and 21st March with still no great aerial resistance. In all missions these great sixty-five ton superfortresses dropped 157,000 tons of bombs of which nearly 100,000 tons of incendiaries were directed against 36 targets and burnt out more than 170 square miles of various cities.

Prior to the formation of the Kamikazes a new unit, designated Finrai Butai (Corps of Divine Thunderclaps) was formed as an emergency development programme of special suicide piloted glide bombs. There was no end to volunteers. There was always strong competition for the personal honour of taking part in these suicide missions and they were disappointed when they were not called upon initially to lead the Kamikaze attacks.

Where the Zero Kamikaze was limited to a maximum of a 550 lb. bomb, the Oka II glide bomb carried a 1640 explosive warhead which was capable of sinking a warship. The giant 68,000 ton aircraft carrier Shinano on her maiden voyage, carrying fifty of the new Oka II bombs was sunk by the submarine Archerfish off Shio Point south of Osaka and all the deadly glide bombs went down with the ship.

Sixteen more plus 15 of 38 Zeros were destroyed by 50 Hellcats off the coast of Kyushu before they could become effective against Allied ships. In the defence of Okinawa, 24 Oka II left shore bases, 56 were released from mother planes. Some were shot down while attached to mother planes but the remaining Oka II caused much damage and these plus the Kamikaze had an adverse effect on the morale of Allied naval crews.

The Allies had their own identification for the Oka II bombs, giving these suicide planes the code name Baka (Japanese for fool) which became their identity. The Japanese also called them "Thunderclap".

Had the Japanese been able to use these piloted bombs on a scale originally planned they would have caused untold damage and loss of life. The Baka II was first used on 21st March, 1945, for combat. Its wing span was 16 feet 5 inches, length 19 feet 11 inches and was powered by three Type 4 Model 20 power rockets. Its launching speed was 175-200 mph, gliding 230 mph to a maximum 535 mph diving to 620 mph with a range of 55 miles and carried a 1640 lb. warhead. Some 755 were built but the Japanese could not get the bulk of them operational in time. Not one capital ship was sunk by them although smaller ships were hit. There were also the Baka models 22 and 43 which were catapult-launched light-weight fighters but, on account of the early termination of the war, were not put into production.

On 6th April, 1945, a total of 198 Kamikazes sortied from Kanoya in Southern Kyushu sinking two destroyers, two small vessels, damaging a further 12 destroyers and a light cruiser. The Okinawa campaign saw the peak of the Kamikaze attacks. During April-May, 1945, the pressure was relentless as both Navy and Army Kamikaze attacks were co-ordinated but by late May, however, there were signs that the Kamikaze operations had lost momentum owing to the fact that volunteers were now hard to come by. The writing was on the wall as on the 25th May, 76 Kamikaze sortied out and 55 returned to base at

a time when the sea was literally crowded with Allied ships. The new breed of Japanese pilots felt they were making a useless sacrifice. Many letters written home by these pilots in the last two months of the war differ completely from those written by pilots a few months earlier. Some expressed sorrow, some fear and some quite often resentment. It is on record that one pilot taking off on a Kamikaze mission clearly showed his feelings by straffing his Commanding Officer's quarters as he took off.

In the final analysis the Kamikazes inflicted more casualties on Allied naval personnel off Okinawa than was suffered by American land forces which stormed ashore to take the Island after weeks of bitter fighting. In addition to the lack of dedication of the new breed of pilots the Japanese were now finding it increasingly difficult to press home a Kamikaze attack in view of the new technique which was literally a wall of gun fire. The real tragedy of Kamikaze as far as the Japanese were concerned was that they failed to sink one heavy cruiser although these ships were their prime targets.

After the war many Japanese, military and civilian, were critical of the suicide operations and denounced their founder. Even the Emperor had, from the outset, queried such an extreme measure. Vice-Admiral Takijiro Onishi of the Naval General Staff and founder of the Kamikaze operations chose Hari-Kiri rather than surrender.

Vice-Admiral Matome Ugaki commanded the Kamikaze from Kyushu, flew the last mission of the war and following his men crash dived his plane into Allied ships off Okinawa.

President Truman set up an "Interim Committee" to advise on the use of the A Bomb and by 1st June, 1945, the Committee's report was ready. Its scientific advisors had discovered widespread doubts among Atomic Scientists over the military use of the A Bomb, but in the end the Committee's recommendations were unanimous: (1) the bomb to be used against Japan as soon as possible; (2) it should be used on a target that is a military installation



or war plant surrounded by or adjacent to houses and other buildings most susceptible to damage; (3) it should be used without prior warning. The idea of warning Japan or of demonstrating the weapon was rejected, in case the demonstration failed, or the Japanese moved

Prisoners of War into the area designated. As far as the Committee was concerned, if the object of using the bomb was to end the war, then there was "no acceptable alternative to direct military use."

NEXT: MASS BOMBING OF JAPAN  
AND THE FIRST A BOMB

**GEMINI**  
Durable. Reliable. Loveable.

Sparkling 5-cylinder engine  
1000 cc  
1600 cc  
1800 cc

Engineered for superior performance  
Fuel injection  
Power windows  
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Power mirrors  
Power seats  
Power windows  
Power locks  
Power mirrors  
Power seats

Australian Value Four

BE IN THIS ONE! Ten draws each Wednesday are put in the pool and the holders are eligible for the Gemini car drawn on Wednesday, 22nd December, 1982. Come to Ezi-Winna and give yourself a chance.

## JOHN HORSLEY DINING ROOM

6 pm to 9 pm (Friday and Saturday)

Ring 727 5000 for bookings.

# Birth of a Battalion

(PART 24)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

June-July was a nightmare of carrier aircraft attacks. Warships attacked shore installations and Allied planes roamed at will to bomb targets. Even at this stage the Japanese knew they could not avoid defeat but despite all this destruction in human lives and property the Japanese were willing to fight to the last no matter the cost. The Warlords said they could not avoid defeat but the enemy would pay dearly for every foot of Japanese soil and so they elected to conclude the war in a human blood

bath by resisting the imminent invasion with every available person, young and old, and using the Kamikazis to dive into the invasion fleet in a last fanatical "fling" using their ace, their hidden planes.

Prior to the A-Bombs the Allies, in an effort to force Japan into an early peace, carried out mass bombing of smaller industrial areas and cities after the larger cities had been reduced to rubble.

Mass bombing was carried out as follows:

Date	Target	Tonnage Bombs	B29s Used
June 17th, 1945	Omuda and other cities	3195	457
June 19th, 1945	Toyohashi	3335	481
June 22nd, 1945	Kure, Wakayama	2290	412
June 26th, 1945	Osaka. Small Cities	3058	468
June 28th, 1945	Okayama, Sasago, Moji	3519	486
July 2nd, 1945	Kure Kumamoto, Small Cities	3709	532
July 4th, 1945	Kochi, Small Cities	3752	483
July 7th, 1945	Chiba, Small Cities	4227	568
July 10th, 1945	Sandai, Small Cities	3876	536
July 13th, 1945	Utsunomiza, Small Cities	3640	517
July 16th, 1945	Kumazu, Small Cities	3678	471
July 20th, 1945	Fifui, Small Cities	3255	473
July 24th, 1945	Osaka and Nagoya	3455	570
July 28th, 1945	Tsu, Small Cities	4427	548

By the end of July, 1945, nearly everything was at a standstill. Supplies were not getting through and, in spite of the traditional Japanese dedication, unscrupulous merchants, industrialists and people in the know were feathering their nests by Government handouts, graft and intrigue while the low income people were homeless and on the starvation line. In short, this whole proud nation was tottering. The Japanese now were not the all-conquering people they were in 1942. To aggravate matters inflation was at an all-time high.

By August, 1945, the Pacific Ocean and waters surrounding Japan had become known as an "American and British Lake". Powerful warships roamed the shoreline hurling shells onto the Mainland while carrier planes flew countless sorties to hit any worthwhile target. B29s and Mustangs, operating from Okinawa, attended to the western part of Japan while the eastern sector reeled under the Allied attacks from planes based at Saipan and Iwo Jima.

In August more heavy raids were carried out on the following localities:

# COMING ENTERTAINMENT

## **Sunday, 5th December (continued)**

8.00 pm: DISCO in the Auditorium (\$2).

8.00 pm: SINGALONG in the Old Bark Hut.  
Guest ... COLIN COOPER.

## **Monday, 6th December —**

5.30 pm: MONSTER MEAT RAFFLE.

## **Tuesday, 7th December —**

11.00 am: BINGO.

8.00 pm: MOVIE.

"KILLING OF ANGEL STREET" (M).

Starring Liz Alexander.

A heart-rending story of the plight of residents forced out of their homes by unscrupulous developers.

## **Wednesday, 8th December —**

5.30 pm: EZI WINNA.

## **Thursday, 9th December —**

8.00 pm: VARIETY NIGHT — featuring ...  
ZIPPITY-DO-DAH.

## **Friday, 10th December —**

11.00 am: BINGO.

8.00 pm: CABARET — featuring ...  
RICHARD ALLEN and the IMPAX.

## **Saturday, 11th December —**

10.00 am and 1.00 pm: PANTOMIME — BABES IN THE WOODS.  
(TICKET HOLDERS ONLY).

2.00 pm: DIGGERS' DERBY in the Old Bark Hut.

8.00 pm: CLUB NIGHT — featuring ...  
MARIA DALLAS,  
Vibrant Country Vocaliste.

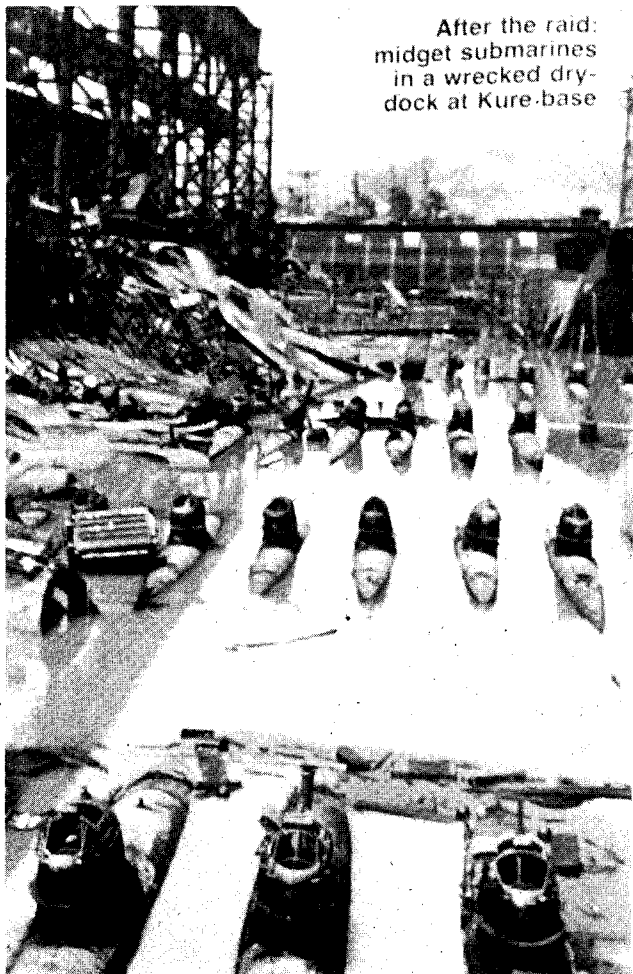
## **Sunday, 12th December —**

10.00 am and 1.00 pm: PANTOMIME — BABES IN THE WOODS.  
(TICKETS ONLY).

4.00 pm: SHOWTIME — featuring ...  
CHRISTMAS MINSTREL MAGIC SHOW.

8.00 pm: DISCO in the Auditorium (\$2.00).

8.00 pm: SINGALONG in the Old Bark Hut.  
Guest ... MICK HOLT.



After the raid:  
midget submarines  
in a wrecked dry-  
dock at Kure-base

Date	Target	Tonnage Bombs	B29s Used
August 2nd, 1945	Toyama, Tackikawa	6600	855
August 6th, 1945	Saga, Small Cities	4122	573
August 7th, 1945	Toyokawa Arsenal	830	131
August 8th, 1945	Yawata	1296	245

One will notice that some of the cities spared from previous bombing were Kyoto, where Japan's 400-year-old Temples and Shrines existed, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Sapporo. At these places Japan tried desperately to organise new works and communications but panic and disorganisation prevented this occurring effectively. From the Allies' point

of view these areas now became primary targets.

Speaking on the effects of the mass bombing, Tokyo newspapermen reported:

"Reports of damage by crews of Superfortresses, when they were briefed on their return to base, were not exag-

gerated. If anything they constitute the most shocking understatement in the history of aerial warfare."

As can be seen by the above bombing of the Primary and Secondary targets, most nations would have conceded defeat rather than see their Homeland reduced to rubble and their population annihilated. However, these fanatical Warlords, by their own words and actions, were willing to turn Japanese soil into a human bloodbath **so it must be conceded that they must accept their share of the blame for those terrible A-Bombs.**

The Japanese Navy and Air Force, at the outbreak of war, was one of the most powerful in the world but ironically the very means Japan had used to attack Pearl Harbour and force Singapore to surrender had been reversed by the fact that now the Allied controlled the seas and skies. Japanese ships remaining effective were two aircraft carriers, one of which was damaged, three damaged cruisers, only a few of the 41 destroyers in docks and harbours and 59 submarines. Although Japan had over 800 ships of all types at the end of the war most were unsuitable or unserviceable except those previously mentioned.

Now that the Allies ruled the sea and air, the land was only a matter of time. Like the situation on Singapore, everything that moved on land or sea was shot up. Despite this the Japanese kept their main aircraft hidden and only a token force was being used in the defence of the Homeland. In all there were 5130 combat planes and 3000 trainers under camouflage, in underground hangars and dispersed over areas as far as five miles from the airfields.

This main air strength was hidden because Japanese tradition was that a small force could achieve victory over a superior force when they knew the enemy's strength and they could use their famous surprise "sneak" aerial attack. Most of these planes were to be manned by Kamikaze pilots who were to dive their planes into the Allied in-

vasion fleet and cause untold casualties in a last ditch stand.

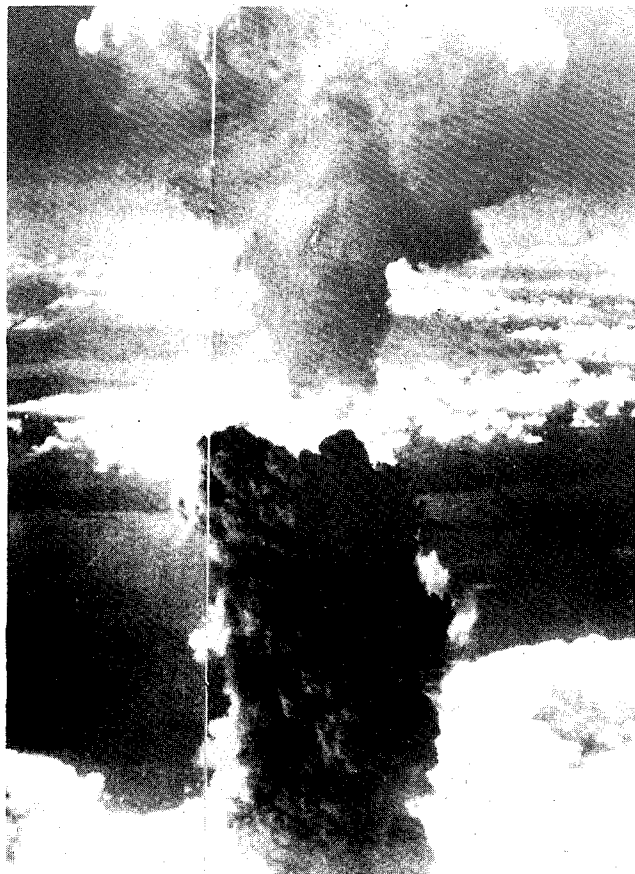
In addition Japan had seventy powerful, well-equipped divisions plus 28,000,000 Local Defence Corps on the Mainland Islands to resist the pending invasion so, to offset this, extreme measures were required. As conventional mass bombing was not the answer it became the sad necessity to use the A-Bomb to bring this war to a close. On account of the A-Bombs the war came to a halt without these troops firing a shot in defence of their Homeland. Yet these troops were similar to those who once yelled "Banzai" and died in battle before their comrades' eyes thus achieving a long cherished desire. These were the troops who would not endanger their own lives to rescue a wounded comrade, for to their way of thinking once he was down he was on his own. Many times the Japanese left wounded Allied soldiers as "bait" so that they could shoot down the comrades who would come to their aid in response to a more humane western tradition.

With all their dedication, something not widely known was that throughout World War II not a living single member of the Japanese armed forces ever received any form of Government honour, award or citation.

Considering the previously mentioned hidden planes plus the well-armed troops on the Mainland Islands, the Allies would suffer thousands of casualties in a final assault on Japan and further, millions of Japanese would be killed or maimed. Further there is documentary evidence that all POW were to be murdered prior to this suicidal stand so there would be no enemy from within. Had this happened then the 8th Division casualties would have risen far in excess of the 49% actually incurred.

After considering all these facts the decision to use the A-Bomb was made. This was the absolute last resort to bring these fanatical people, who were committed to total war by their leaders, to their senses regarding human suffering and misery on both sides. After all total war is not a child's game.

\*\*\*\*\*  
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 \*\*\*\*\*



**The mushroom cloud after the explosion**

I could never condone the dropping of the A-Bomb and the men who issued the orders and air crew who dropped them had some tortured moments for years to come but that is the penalty of being in authority and command. In war time there are many events that the individual does not agree with which have to be carried out without respect to personal feelings. My main aim in the following description is to make people aware of the terrible immediate and lasting effects of the bomb and pray to God the world will never experience such a tragic event again.

Hiroshima contained the 2nd Army Group Headquarters which commanded the ground defences of the southern half of Japan. Tens of thousands of troops

had assembled here during the war, and the city became a major storage point, factory and Communications Centre which to date had only one minor raid. It was now classed as a Primary target. Hiroshima lay on the wide flat delta of the Ota River. The seven river channel outlets divided the city into six islands which jutted out into Hiroshima Bay. Except for a single hill in the centre of the city, about 200 feet high, Hiroshima was almost entirely flat and just above sea level. Only seven square miles of the city's total twenty-six square mile area was built up and 75% of the population was crowded into this area. Except for its centre, which featured a number of reinforced concrete structures, the city overflowed with a dense collection of small wooden houses and

wooden workshops — even the majority of industrial buildings were wood.

At approximately 8.00 am on the 6th August, 1945, a warning was received that three Allied planes were approaching. The radio station came back on the air because it would not be a major attack and merely warned people to take normal cover. People watching the sky saw the parachute of the bomb leave the plane and many cheered as they thought the plane had been shot down and that the crew were bailing out from the stricken plane.

At 8.15 am the bomb exploded over Hiroshima. There was a searing flash, like a fantastic flash of lightning. It was followed by a sudden roaring sound. In the next instant houses collapsed all over the city like a pack of cards. It was described as though a giant steel fist suddenly descended and fire broke out everywhere. The B49 was 15 miles away by this time and saw a ball of fire, with a temperature of 1,000,000 degrees for a fraction of a second, changing to purple clouds with seething, boiling flames which swept skyward. A cloud of dense white smoke mushrooming at the top reached a height of 40,000 feet in the matter of minutes. The whole of the city, with the exception of the docks area on the fringes, lay under a pall of grey, dark dust three miles across.

No wonder buildings collapsed and were set on fire. Where Hiroshima had existed now there was only a dirty brown scar on the face of the land. The people did literally nothing. They could do nothing to extract themselves from this incredible misery thrust upon them. Everything was confused. The raging flames and streams of refugees made it impossible to contact any place closer than Kaidaichi, five miles from the stricken city.

Major General Shuitsu Matsumura was the Chief-of-Staff of the Hiroshima Military District and he was hurled through the roof of his house into a garden. He was bleeding from cuts all over the body, and his clothes were in tattered shreds. There was a red glow over the house, then the house collapsed.

Houses everywhere were falling down and people were crawling out covered in caked blood. On every side there were visions of catastrophe. Cars were overturned and burning; horses were bucking in their death throes; people were screaming in their agony or were dazed by shock or loss of blood.

At the West Parade ground of the Military Headquarters, the Commander-in-Chief's residence was surrounded by fire. The infantry, artillery and medical barracks were ablaze. The Castle, the main administration building of five storeys, was not there any more. On the centre of the main parade ground, where the troops had just came out for physical training exercises, soldiers were blasted down and crushed to death on the ground.

At Asano Sentei Park, where thousands sheltered from the flames, Father Kleinsorge, a German priest from the Jesuit Mission house, himself cut and bleeding from splinters, attended a soldier who could not move and begged for water. Nearby more soldiers lay with their faces completely burned. Their eyes were hollow sockets from which the melted eyes ran out, their mouths were enlarged holes.

General Fujii, of the Military District Headquarters, had just put on his uniform and was about to leave his house, carrying his sword. Later the burned sword was found beside his black, charred remains and the General's gold fillings lay nearby. His Aide, waiting at the porch of the house, had been obliterated, along with the General's horse he was holding. There were naked or near-naked people everywhere as the blast blew off their clothes, literally ripping the skin from their bodies. The blast and shock wave lasted for about a second.

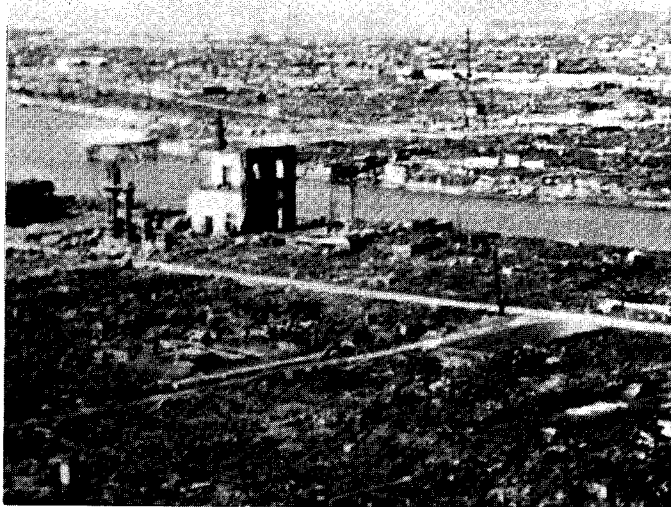
A typical scene was that of a young mother dying in agony, not a sound passing through her blistered lips, her stomach sheared open, her intestines sprawled in the dust, her living unborn infant caked in blood and dirt on the ground beside her.

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## EUCHRE

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**Hiroshima — The Atomic Desert.** There are deserts of sand, deserts of stone but here we have an Atomic Desert where Hiroshima once stood, as seen above.

There were many ways in which people died. Those close to the centre point of the Bomb were vaporised, burnt to nothing in less than an instant. All that remained of people standing near a concrete wall was the imprint of their shadows. The whole centre of Hiroshima, two miles across, became for a brief moment a furnace. More than two miles from the explosion bare skin was burnt and blistered. The Bomb had other effects as those who survived were struck by neutrons and rays and nearly all people within half a mile of the centre of the blast later died from the effects of radiation. Trains were overturned at Hiroshima railway station 2,000 yards away. Trams full of people were hurled into the air and the passengers were just charred corpses. Trees and grass burnt like straw and fire spread rapidly, fanned by a violent draught which swept the city.

Most people were in their offices or on their way to factories in the industrial outskirts of the city when the Bomb fell. Men, unfit for military service, and school children, who had been mobilized for fire break duty, were already at work. Later, troops moved in as the roads had to be cleared of rubble and opened up. The innumerable corpses were removed from beneath collapsed

buildings and walls and with the summer heat the stench became unbearable. Mass cremations took place, but since it was feared fires from the cremation pyres might be seen and used by enemy bombers, they had to be restricted to the daylight hours. Cremations went on day after day.

Even two days after, a ghastly and terrible light flared over the stricken city. The still-burning Hiroshima cast a deep, red, flickering glow which was reflected from the black smoke which belled skyward. An inspection of the shattered city was too awful to relate. It was an appalling spectacle, beyond the power of words to describe — media or film cannot carry the sounds, smells and the "feelings" of the devastated city.

Nothing can reproduce the shuddering and the screaming of the victims who were beyond help, the dust and ashes swirling about the burnt bodies which grovelled and withered in indescribable agony, the twitching and spasmodic jerking of fingers which were the only expressions of their agony, the seeking of water by "things" which only a short time before had been humans.

No media reports could convey the overwhelming choking nauseating



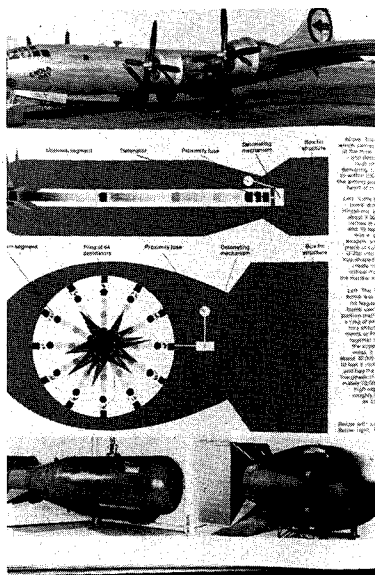
stench, not from the dead, but from the seared living dead. The unharmed or slightly injured survivors placed these burned dying men and women on planks and mats in long rows so that when they died, their bodies would not have to be stacked by people attending to the living.

There was a report of a white soldier, terribly seared, sprawled in the rubble; a prisoner of war? a victim of the Atom of his Allies?

That was Hiroshima and even today the full story remains obscure for it is impossible to tell of many things which the sub-conscious happily refuses to allow the survivors to remember. The casualties at Hiroshima would have been much higher but for the fact that the authorities were expecting an attack. They realised Hiroshima was now a prime military target so they had demolished 70,000 houses to make an east-west fire break across the city. The tenants were removed to other areas which reduced the population from 380,000 to approximately 300,000. Up to the dropping of the A-Bomb only about five bombs had fallen on Hiroshima in 1945 despite its importance as a production—communication—military centre.

The A-Bomb dropped on Hiroshima was known as "Little Boy". It weighed 9,000 lb, was 28 inches in diameter and had a long cylinder shaped object containing approximately 20,000 tons of explosives. The Bomb was dropped from a very high altitude and exploded 1850 feet above the city and only 200 yards from the target point.

When young Kamikaze (Divine Wind) and Kaiten (The Turn Towards Heaven) pilots tried to take off, 1400 of the former and 1600 of the latter, to carry out their do or die before dishonour "blood bath tactics", most were stopped by the moderate Army leaders who had taken control of Japan. As a



Above: The bomber which carried out one of the most accurate and destructive raids of the war, delivering "Little Boy" to within 200 yards of the aiming point in the heart of Hiroshima. Top Bomb is "Little Boy" and one below is "The Fat Man" which was dropped on Nagasaki. The two Bombs are shown again at bottom of picture.

final deterrent the Army destroyed air-worthy planes on the ground to stop the carnage these pilots would have caused to the Allied fleet in the waters around Japan. This clearer-thinking Peace Party realised that had this fanatical plan been effected the Allies would retaliate with an all-out attack on Japan with these terrible weapons they had at their disposal.

NEXT: THE SECOND A-BOMB.

M. MULLEN

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Cause of freedom and  
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## Nagasaki to Japan

Nagasaki lies at the head of a long bay which forms the best natural harbour on the Island of Kyushu. The city is spread across two valleys through which two rivers flow. Separating the residential and industrial area was a mountain spur which contributed to Nagasaki's irregular lay out, and which confined the built up portions of the city to less than four square miles of the city's limits of 35 sq. miles.

Nagasaki was one of the largest seaports in southern Japan and was vitally important to the military forces with its many and varied industries which included production of weapons, ships, military equipment and other products.

To the south along one narrow strip of the city lay the Mitsubishi Steel Works and Dockyards, to the north lay the Mitsubishi-Urakami Torpedo Works. Unlike the industrial portion of the city, the residential area was typical flimsy, tile roofed wooden buildings, jammed into dense concentration particularly susceptible to fire. In view of the above war production plants Nagasaki, like Hiroshima, had been fortunate in escaping the mass bombing carried out on other cities.

Nagasaki was the gateway to Japan for Western civilization and there was a long history of western contacts as it was the port where Spanish and Portuguese ships brought missionaries and later was the scene of the martyrdom of thousands of Japanese Catholics during the persecutions under Shogun Hideyoshi. Opposition to the church

began in 1597 when six Spanish missionaries and 20 Japanese Catholics were crucified on a hill in Nagasaki.

In the following 40 years it is estimated that 6,000 Japanese Catholics died for their faith and it was not until 1890 that religious freedom was granted. Today, an item of interest is the Shrine of the 26 Martyrs plus the monument at the epicentre of the A-Bomb which we saw in 1970 while touring Japan.

Nagasaki still had a large Catholic population centred on the residential and industrial districts of Urakami. This area was to feel the full blast of the Bomb and two priests, 50 sisters and 8,500 Japanese Catholics were among the victims.

An air raid warning was given at 7.50 am on 9th August, 1945, but shortly after the all-clear was given. At 10.53 am, two Superfortresses were spotted high over the city and were assumed to be on a reconnaissance mission so no alarm was sounded but some people still hurried to air raid shelters. Nine days before some high explosive bombs fell on the city, several of them falling into the shipyard and dock area. Others exploded at the Mitsubishi Steel Works and Ordnance Works, and six bombs smashed into the Nagasaki Medical College and Hospital, with three direct hits on the buildings. Little damage was caused but it frightened the people who thought a heavy incendiary raid was in store for the city!

It was the opinions of two Americans — Admiral Purnell and General Groves, who had been respon-

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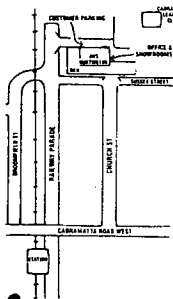


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sible for the A-Bombs, that a "double dose" of Atomic warfare was needed to immediately end the war. Also, the scientists who had tested the other Bomb using Plutonium would know how the device would work in battle. Their assessment was correct for the Bomb on Hiroshima did not alter the Japanese attitude to fight on rather than surrender. Thus sadly, it took the second Bomb to bring the Japanese to their senses as they could foresee more of these terrible Bombs. Which would be the next target — Tokyo perhaps?

11th August, 1945 was the date fixed for the dropping of this Bomb but weather reports showed that good weather could be expected on 9th August. Of the three remaining targets, Kokura was selected as the Primary target. Nagasaki was put on the list when Kyoto was removed because of its cultural and religious associations and Niigata was deleted because extra distance was involved. Now part of the industrial complex known as Kitakyushu, Kokura was a large arsenal extending over 200 acres.

When the plane arrived over Kokura, three runs were made over the city but, owing to heavy cloud, it was impossible to carry out visual bombing. Radar was not to be used for the dropping of the bomb as it was considered not to be accurate, the visual method was to be used. With the extra runs over Kokura more fuel was used than anticipated as they still had to return to base. The plane then switched to the secondary target which was Nagasaki and, upon making calculations how much fuel was left, it was decided that they could make only one run over Nagasaki. So the weather struck a cruel blow for the people of Nagasaki but brought good fortune for the people of Kokura.

The weather over Nagasaki did not improve and the plane was navigated by radar but at the last moment, the bomb aimer found a break in the clouds, lined up a race track and released the bomb at 28,000 ft. The hurried dropping of the Bomb apparently jeopardized the accuracy and as a result the Bomb landed wide of its target and fell on Urakami. On 9th August, 1945, at 11.30

am there occurred a blinding flash and explosion such as destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki joined the long list of Japanese cities already destroyed.

Once again the Japanese were caught napping as two B-29s were reported approaching and the people thought it was to be a minor raid. Air raid alerts had often been sounded when planes were attacking other targets on Kyushu and the citizens of Nagasaki had grown sceptical and careless and as a result very few people went to the air-raid shelters.

As it happened Nagasaki had ample shelters with tunnels dug into the surrounding mountains and these would have been instrumental in the saving of many lives had they been used. The Bomb dropped on Nagasaki was known as the "Fat Man". It weighed 10,000 pounds, was 10 foot 8 inches long and its shape was somewhat like a conventional bomb but only fatter, so the name.

It had the destructive power of 20,000 tons of high explosive. In Nagasaki nearly two square miles of the city were destroyed, a figure smaller than that of the average area for incendiary raids on Japanese cities (2.97 square miles). The Bomb on Hiroshima fell in commercial and Administrative areas where as in Nagasaki, of the industrialized zone, nearly 70% was destroyed. The firestorm which terrorised Hiroshima did not occur at Nagasaki but this Plutonium Bomb was more efficient than the Bomb which devastated Hiroshima. The blast was greater but the individual tragedies were very much like Hiroshima. Another reason the fire did not spread so rapidly was that there was a large water area around Nagasaki.

Matsu Moriuchi, an elderly woman who was in the Yamazato Grade School air raid shelter, saw most of the people all around her killed. She peered out and saw half-naked people, their bodies swollen to monstrous sizes with skin peeling off them like torn rag. Some of the adults were school teachers who had been digging additional air-raid shelters. They were moaning pitifully and asking for water, unable to move.

Sadako Moriyuma, who was in the same shelter, was petrified with horror when she saw two foul croaking lizard-like monsters crawl into the mouth of the shelter. She realized that they were human beings, their skin stripped to the raw flesh by burns and blast and their bodies distorted shapes after being hurled against the wall.

People riding bikes became blackened corpses. Everywhere there were visions of catastrophe. Cars were overturned with blackened corpses in them, horses were bucking in their death throes, people were screaming with agony or were dazed from shock or loss of blood. People, covered in blood, were extricating themselves from under collapsed houses, thousands didn't make it. There were heart-breaking scenes as people searched among the ruins for their family only to find them cut to pieces, blown apart or burnt beyond help.

Children who were playing outside the shelter now lay naked and burned, their skin hanging from their fingertips like gloves turned inside out. The area was filled with dying children, their bodies twitching in the black dust. The wounded commenced to arrive from Urakami; young children with swollen faces, workers from the Mitsubishi Ordnance Plant, naked and sobbing with shock, faces, hands and bodies covered with blisters, with skin peeling off in sheets and flapping in the dust. Words cannot describe the event. The whole situation was that of unparalleled unforgettable horror.

On the Koba hillside Fujie Urate, 3½ miles away, saw a flash of red and a blue light of intense unbearable brilliance. She was protected by a mountain. She watched the black smoke boil skyward. On her way back to Urakami Fujie saw a woman's head lying grotesquely by itself in a pumpkin patch with a gleaming gold tooth in the open mouth and burned blackened holes where the eyes had been. A mile from Urakami, Fujie Urate's sister, Tatsue, came across a dying woman lying on the road with two babies, her face one huge blister, her hair burned to the roots, begging pass-

ers-by to take her dying children with them for treatment.

St. Francis Hospital could be seen blazing and the hills around Urakami were stripped bare of foliage, trees were blasted to stumps. About 30 nuns from the Urakami Orphanage Farm lay in a huddled group behind some rocks saying the Rosary. They had been working in the field when the Bomb fell. They were burned all over and the heat and blast had whipped both clothing and skin from their bodies.

In the hospitals the scenes from Hiroshima were repeated. Living and dead were lying together in heaps of burned mangled flesh and skin. Everywhere there were cases of uncontrollable diarrhoea and excreta covered the floors and the stairs were covered in filth and blood. Although the Nagasaki University and Medical Centre was destroyed by the Bomb there were still good medical facilities and had Hiroshima been as well prepared the casualty rate there would have been much lower.

By what must be a tragic coincidence there were people who had survived Hiroshima, local people who had been working there and returned home in time to be caught in the second blast. There was a newspaper publisher, a naval architect, an accountant, an engineer, a dock labourer and some kite makers to name a few. Their experience in Hiroshima warned them that even a lone plane could be deadly and they and their families sheltered in the air-raid shelters and all survived.

Kenshi Hirata, the accountant, who had been married a few weeks had brought his new bride to Hiroshima 10 days before the event of the Bomb. He had been on duty on the nights of the 5th-6th August and after the Bomb he went searching for his wife and found her dead under their collapsed house. Sadly bearing his wife's ashes back to the city of her birth he arrived in Nagasaki just in time for their second Atomic Bomb.

Members of the 8th Division and other Allied troops were to be caught up in this holocaust as there were 24 Australians interned in

Camp 14, in the grounds of the Mitsubishi Steel Works, which was completely destroyed by the A-Bomb. These men were some of the 772 Allied POW who were shipped from Java to Japan. Their ship was torpedoed by American submarines off Nagasaki and only 213 survived of which 72 were Australians. Eleven Australians were to die the following winter from neglect, 37 were sent to the coal mines at Omine on 30th June, 1944 and the remaining 24 were victims of the A-Bomb.

A rumour was circulated that Japan had perfected the A-Bomb but had refrained from using it but now they had retaliated by sending a Special Naval Squadron across the Pacific and dropped Bombs on San Francisco and Los Angeles. This cheered the patients in hospital and they began to laugh and sing and prayers were offered up for the pilots who were supposed to have made this gallant suicide flight.

No-one in Hiroshima or Nagasaki knew the symptoms or treatment of radiation sickness, a hazard brought by no other weapon of war but which struck at those who had lived through the blast and fire.

Those nearest the epicentre of the Bomb developed Petechiae (subcutaneous haemorrhages of the tiny blood vessels). People who had been within 500 yards of the epicentre began to show a low blood platelet count, leading to fatal haemorrhages. Two to 15 days after the explosion many of those, who had been within 500 yards of it but had been shielded by buildings from flash and burns and the wave shock, began to develop the fatal signs; loss of appetite, vomiting and spitting blood, abnormally low white blood cell counts. In the next 500 yard zone the death rate was high but symptoms developed later.

Even many who were up to 3,000 yards from the centre of the blast fell ill and died. Some people were effected up to a distance of three miles.

Three men who went to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to examine the after-effects of the Bombs, nuclear Physicist Yoshi Nishina (of the Physical and Chemical Research In-

stitute), an expert on medical aspects of radiation, Masao Tsuzuki, and a Radiobiologist, Koichi Murachi, all died. Nishina (who studied the possibility of developing the A-Bomb pre-war) died in 1951 of liver cancer, Tsuzuki in 1960 of lung cancer and Murachi in 1961 of leukemia.

All these men had handled radio active substances for many years in their research and in addition they, no doubt, were subject to high doses of radiation in the bombed cities. These are some of the grim lasting effects which shocked the world and pointed to the concealed dangers of lingering radiation sickness for decades to come.

As calculated by the B29 crew, they ran short of fuel and could not make it back to the base at Tinian, so they landed in Okinawa. The dropping of the A-Bombs to bring the war to an early end was governed by various factors. One object was to force the surrender and save lives on both sides and another was to forestall the expansion of Soviet influence into South East Asia while Russian troops were still on the other side of the Manchurian border. As is known now, there was a race by the Russians and American troops to embrace as much territory as possible in the European Zone which each nation held after the war. One good example of this is East and West Germany as we know it today. The Americans did not want the same situation to exist in Japan. In this way the Bombs were to take extra and very particular significance. In strategic terms the Bombs would bolster the Americans more belligerent diplomacy while tactically they were used to conclude the war and so pre-empt a Russian declaration of war against Japan which, since October 1944, had been promised within three days of VE Day in the European Zone.

Pre-War the Navy had requested Dr. Arakatsu, of the Kyoto University were Japan's scientific Dr. Yukawa worked, to study the possibilities of the A-Bomb. Also Dr. Nishina of the Physical and Chemical Research Institute had studied the matter in detail. But luckily this work was hardly more than a scientific investigation, it was the matter of whom perfected the A-

Bomb first. Had Japan been equipped with this Bomb there is no doubt in my mind we would have felt the effects of it when the war began to slip away from Japan. The Japanese were attempting also to develop jet propulsion rocket powered guided missiles, rocket powered interceptors to combat the ever-increasing Allied air attacks. The Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had little or no effect on the industrial disintegration but it did make the Japanese run out of time and so they were not able to perfect these defensive arms in time before the surrender. Later the Allies were amazed at the progress the Japanese had made in this field and breathed a sigh of relief that time had beaten them.

Before the dropping of the A-Bombs many of the civilians agreed to a "last ditch" stand. One Japanese Commander wrote to the wives of his men in his unit asking them to make the supreme sacrifice for the "glory of Japan" and 46 wives committed suicide so their husbands could turn all their attention to fighting without worrying about their wives at home. Children were trained by poking out the eyes of dummies with sharpened bamboo so they could do their part in this last-ditch stand by poking out the eyes of wounded Allied troops so they could not fight again. No wonder extreme measures were required to force these people to concede.

If the war continued Japan faced a bleak winter in 1945-46 as almost all the important cities — ninety-eight in all — were burnt out. In the Tokyo-Yokohama area 56% of the buildings were gone; 52% in the Nagoya area; and 57% in the Kobe-Osaka area. Other cities suffering varying degrees of loss of residential structure were Nishinomiya losing 9.1% while Fufuyama lost 96%; Kofu and Hamamatsu lost 72% and Hitachi 71%. Overall it was estimated that more than two million buildings were totally destroyed directly effecting more than nine million people.

Japan's communications and transportation were in a chaotic state and there was an extreme shortage of manpower. A fraction of the normal train service was functioning and shipping was critical.

Japan was dangerously short of food and the Government ordered a cut of 10% in staple food rations which meant 312 grammes per adult per day. Non-staple food and seasoning was reduced by 20% in meat, 30% in fish and 50% in seasoning from the amounts as was available in 1941. As against what was available in 1937 the Japanese could only obtain 2% of cotton goods, 1% of woollen goods, 4% of soap and 8% of paper. Coal production was down 29%, iron and other metals 65%, chemicals 48% and liquid fuels 65%. Factories were at a standstill owing to Superfortress raids. Aircraft factories especially had been greatly damaged with many of the larger production plants being 96% destroyed so making general production extremely low.

It was clear to the people of Japan that they could not avoid overwhelming defeat and that an all out defence of the Islands was little more than a delaying operation which would result in hundreds of thousands of lives lost in the bitter fighting which would follow. Despite this realisation, the Government elected to fight to the last man. It is difficult for the Westerner, if not impossible, to explain in logical terms the mental state of Japan's leaders, who insisted upon resisting what certainly would be the greatest invasion force in history.

This determination did not last very long after the impact of the Atomic Bomb, first on Hiroshima then Nagasaki. Even so their reaction was not immediate because it required time before the Government could assay the tremendous machine of destruction which the Allies had hurled at Japan. Once, however, the Government and military leaders gained a fuller appreciation of this fantastic weapon which would make even the horror of an incendiary seem only a minor irritation, they could not commit the people and country to the insane folly of continuing the war.

Poverty-stricken conditions also caused wild and run-away inflation and contributed to lower the morale of the people and to destroy their will to continue the war. Their blind faith in their Emperor and War-

lords, when they were winning the war, had vanished.

On the 15th August, 1945, the Emperor broadcast to the nation to say the Japanese were helpless against the steel ring of the closing invasion fleet. They were literally defeated by total exhaustion of national manpower and production so must accept unconditional surrender. The people were shocked as this was the first defeat the Japanese had suffered but the A-Bombs gave them a face-saving outlet.

The "Peace Party" in Japan had not had much of a hearing since the military extremists came to power, but even as early as 1942 there were signs that the civilian elite and many top-ranking naval commanders were seriously concerned about Japan's comparative weakness. As Japan's position grew more perilous so the power of the peace makers grew, until even the Emperor saw that continued resistance would only result in disaster. But what would follow surrender, Communist revolution of American occupation? Which would be worse? These were the questions which filled the minds of the peacemakers before the event of the A-Bombs. They choose unconditional surrender to the United States of America and Great Britain rather than let the Russians move in. The surrender was signed on board the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Soon after the surrender the Army announced that in Hiroshima 78,150 people died, 51,408 were injured or missing, 10,000 buildings were annihilated by blast and 50,000 destroyed by fire within a two mile radius of the epicentre of the Bomb and at least 176,987 were made homeless. At Nagasaki 23,753 died and 43,020 were injured. The Army then added new figures which came to hand as follows:

| Casualties                     | Dead    | In-<br>jured | Miss-<br>ing |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| Incendiary and<br>Explosive    | 198,961 | 271,617      | 8,064        |
| Atomic Bombs .....             | 109,328 | 74,488       | 15,971       |
| Warship Bombard-<br>ment ..... | 1,739   | 1,497        | 29           |
|                                | 310,028 | 347,602      | 24,064       |

These figures were initial and their accuracy is questionable as shown by the discrepancy above owing to the unstable state of the country and records in the early enforced conclusion of the war. Many Japanese sources openly questioned the announced casualty figures and today best informed Japanese sources believe that at least two or three times as many people were killed or injured than was originally stated.

Allied estimates of casualties from the two initial blasts were also much higher and claim that army casualties were not included which would amount to at least half of the 24,000 troops stationed in Hiroshima at the time. Then there were the hundreds who died from effects in the first few months and the recurring deaths each ensuing year which would run into many more hundreds. Even today scientists are of the opinion that the radiation effects could still be passed on to future generations.

When I was in Japan in 1970 thirty-six deaths were recorded as a result of the Bombs. Although the Japanese caused much suffering and unnecessary misery to Allied troops in bitterly-fought campaigns and in POW camps, and needed bringing to their senses, I could never condone those dreadful bombs and repeat that some blame should be laid at the feet of the extreme Government and Warlords with their initial intention of committing the Japanese nation to a last-ditch fanatical "blood bath" on Japanese soil when they were already a defeated nation.

It is beyond doubt that the A-Bombs were instrumental in concluding the war. The question to be asked, was it better to drop the two Bombs on two vital military targets as previously explained and force these people steeped in military tradition to capitulate or virtually

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**Access to the Barber Shop and  
Ladies Hairdressing Salon can  
only be made through the  
Back Foyer.**  
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wipe Japan off the face of the map by an all-out aerial and naval attack? In such an attack millions more people would be killed or maimed and the remaining cities would be reduced to rubble and ashes which would cripple Japan for innumerable

years to come, all for a war which had already been lost.

*Next—*

**OPERATION OLYMPIC AND  
CORONET**



Some of the victims of the Atomic blast.

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## **TUESDAY MORNING INDOOR BOWLS**

*Ladies and gentlemen are invited to join the indoor bowlers each Tuesday commencing 10 a.m. to approximately 12 noon.*

*Bring your friends.*

*Everybody welcome to an enjoyable morning.*

**SONNY TYDEMAN**  
Publicity Officer

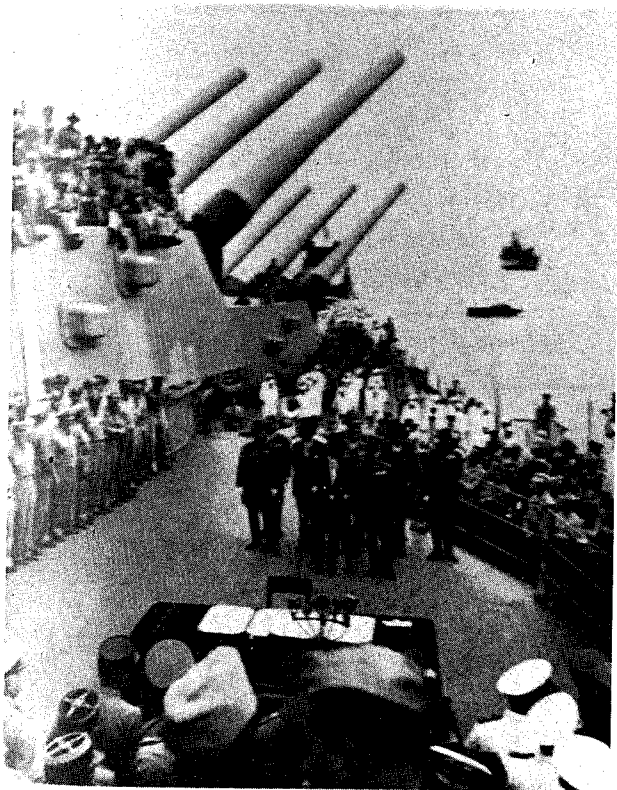
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Some of the victims of the Atomic blast.



The final ignominy — under the watchful eyes of Indian soldiers Jananese Officers surrender their swords.



Signing the Surrender on USS Missouri.

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## EZI-WINNA

Ezi-Winna commences at 5.30 every Wednesday, with over 100 prizes plus the Major Prize.

Be early to ensure you participate in this atmosphere of real good fun and enjoyment.

"Ezi-Winna sure is great, you can't get a ticket if you're late."

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## POKER MACHINE JACKPOT BONUS SCHEME

For holders of "Diggers Dollars" see Val Chubb, Bottle Shop — Monday to Saturday, 2.00 pm-9.00 pm. She may be able to help you select something from the catalogue for Christmas.

# Birth of a Battalion

(Part 26)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
The C.O. of the 2/18th Battalion  
And other members of the Unit  
Who gave their lives in the  
Cause of freedom and  
Democratic Ideals.*

~~~~~

*A final review of the 26 Parts of Birth of a Battalion over the past two months show they are satisfactory except for Part 18 pages 32 and 33, May, 1982. Owing to distressing illness and other problems in March/April, which caused me to withdraw from Pennant Bowls, I neglected to carry out my normal perusal and correction of my draft copy of compiled data before it was sent for publication. As a result this section is out of sequence and there is insufficient information. I apologize for the lack of care and interest shown at that time.*

*Part 18 pages 32 and 33, May, 1982 should read as follows:*

... the rank and file.

As incredible as it may seem the Japanese, operating from Penang, broadcast that our pass word for one period would be "Tiger" before we were officially notified. When the runner came to tell us the pass word we told him we already knew as it had been picked up by our Field Signal Unit within our Battalion area. She also complimented the 2/10th Field Regiment R.A.A. by name and said she was glad they had got rid of their old 18 pounders and now had new 25 pounders.

Jim Oliver, a member of the Fairfield Diggers' Bowling Club and ex-member of the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment, can confirm these statements as the broadcasts referred to them also. They had just received new 2 pounder anti-tank guns and the breeches were tight. The Japanese announcer asked within hours of delivery how their 2 pounders were functioning and had they freed the breeches yet.

She even knew our inner-most thoughts as she said she knew we Australians at Mersing referred to the Japanese as, "Little yellow b——". How right she was. To offset this she referred to us as "Illiterate sons of convicts", but this time their intelligence let them

down as apparently they did not know about the Australian sense of humour. Her opinion became the joke of the Battalion.

There did not seem to be anything they did not know about the defences at Mersing which goes to confirm the fact that the Japanese respected this strongly fortified area and so avoided a frontal attack in this vital logical sector although it finished up being manned by two Battalions. Very heavy rain was falling and the water was cascading down the hills and running two feet through our slit trenches. Sarge said dirty socks or feet would not be excused.

At this stage I was evacuated to Base Hospital at Johore Bahru through illness.

All this time Singapore was under constant aerial attack. Watches were not necessary as the enemy came over at set times in the morning, went home for lunch, then resumed in the afternoon to circle like giant birds of prey just above the flack, carefully bombing selected targets at leisure. To maintain a continuity of the movements of East Force more will be written later.

General Bennett suggested to Malayan Command that the 2/18th and 2/20th Bns be replaced by a Brigade

# EZI-WINNA

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Be early to ensure you participate in this atmosphere of real good fun and enjoyment.

"Ezi-Winna sure is great, you can't get a ticket if you're late."

## PIONEER LOUNGE...

Have you been to the Club's Pioneer Lounge — the best Lounge in the Club. Pleasant Pioneer decor for you and your friends. The Lounge is at the top of the stairs from the Front Foyer. Open Thursday, Friday from 5 p.m.; Saturday, 6 p.m. and Sunday, 5 p.m.

## THE HORSLEY DEN...

And if you don't wish to go upstairs, we have "The Horsley Den" Cocktail Bar — at the rear entrance to the Club. Open Friday, Saturday from 6 p.m. and Sunday, 4.30 p.m.

## EUCHRE

Enjoy a good game of Euchre every Monday afternoon commencing 1.00 pm.

REAL FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE — EVERYONE WELCOME  
INCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

LES MILLS, Organiser

## SPECIAL NOTICE SUB-BRANCH

THE BRANCH MEETS ON THE 4th MONDAY IN EACH MONTH  
unless it is altered on the question of Holidays.

Please note and make it a date

of British troops and that they be swung into the role of assisting the 27th Brigade AIF on the West Coast, but to no avail.

Following is quoted from the final edition of "Men May Smoke":

"The Japanese announcer, from Penang, expressed regret that the brave Japanese airmen were too busy elsewhere to drop presents but not to worry as their turn would come later. Greetings also were extended through the same source to the Battalions at Mersing by name and exact location."

Meanwhile the 2/18th and 2/20th Bns were busy studying intelligence reports on Japanese tactics and their fighting capacity and in sending out patrols to capture Jap airmen who had bailed out when hit by anti-aircraft fire over Singapore

Visibility to sea was less than a 1,000 yards and our area was subject to annoyance bombing and straffing. The Japanese, now firmly established on the Mainland, were concentrating for a further attack by the Japanese 18th Division on the East Coast at Endau near Mersing. Our A.A. opened fire on low level bombing and straffing aircraft which were attacking the 2/18th and 2/20th Bn areas. There were no casualties at first then Pte W. Jolly was killed and Pte G. Brown was wounded, being the first Battalion casualties.

A small detachment of 2/20th Bn made contact with an advance party of Japanese and eliminated them without loss.

Brigade ordered A Company . . .  
M. MULLENS

#### Singapore to Japan

By August, 1945 Japan had approximately 2,350,000 officers and men fully equipped under arms on the Homeland organized into 66 Divisions. These Divisions were deployed as follows: Honshu — 37 infantry Divisions and two tank Divisions; Kyushu — 14 infantry Divisions Shikoku — 4 infantry Divisions Hokkaido and the North East Islands — 5 infantry Divisions. In support there were 4 Anti-Aircraft Divisions. Behind these combat Divisions were 2,250,000 army workers, 250,000 special garrison personnel and a National Volunteer Home

Guard of 28,000,000 armed with spears and makeshift weapons.

They also had 10,700 aircraft which included 5,350 Kamikaze, 19 destroyers (most large ships were either sunk or damaged and unserviceable) and 3,300 special attack Kamikaze sea craft on Kyushu.

As can be seen by the above in the event of an invasion on the Japanese Mainland Islands, and the Japanese decided to push their Busido Code which rejected surrender as dishonourable and made a last ditch stand, the casualties would have been enormous on both sides. This can be estimated by the following statements, facts and figures.

In a final assault on Japan 5,000,000 Allied troops would be involved as well as the largest concentration of planes and ships ever assembled in the history of warfare. American Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, estimated 1,000,000 Allied casualties would be incurred and, in their do-or-die stand Japanese casualties would be trebled. The first operation planned was a landing on the Island of Kyushu, the Southern most Island, by 650,000 troops backed by some 9,000 planes, 20 aircraft carriers, 9 battleships, 22 cruisers and 80 destroyers.

In anticipation of the initial attack being staged on Kyushu the Japanese had built up a formidable defence system. Kyushu, 200 miles long, 80 to 120 miles wide is very mountainous and had a limited rail and highway system compared with the main Island of Honshu. In view of the fact that much of this network passed close to the shore line the advantage would be with the attacker as much as it would be to the defender as all transport systems would be under the guns of the Allied fleet lying offshore. By the same token the Japanese used the mountains to tunnel a massive communication and defence system which favoured them and the broken coastline and harbours were ideal to hide their Kamikaze sea craft which were to harass Allied ships.

The Japanese expected these sea craft to destroy at least half of the Allied ships in the first week and, combined with a no-holds barred beach defence, they hoped to repel

the Allies and convince them that the cost would be so great that Japan could negotiate an honourable peace rather than be forced to accept an unconditional surrender.

Additional troops stood by on Honshu to reinforce Kyushu but it is doubtful as to whether they would have been effective as, with the Allies in full command of the skies and sea they would be under constant air and naval bombardment.

Expecting Kamikaze sea craft attacks the Allies had drawn up plans to deal with them. Whether the sea borne craft, surface and submarine, which the Japanese had placed a lot of reliance in, would have been a problem is unknown as they were not put to use.

Military experts were looking at 30,000 to 50,000 Allied casualties on Kyushu alone. With the advantage of air and sea control the Allies would, no doubt, launch a massive softening up bombardment of the shoreline defences prior to the landing force moving in. Had this secondary attack eventuated and Kyushu had been consolidated, the major attack would have been on the main Island of Honshu resulting in untold casualties on both sides.

The American 1st and 8th Armies, 14 Divisions, were poised to invade Honshu with Tokyo and the key port of Yokohama the main objective. Since the transfer of naval craft from the European zone had been under way for some time, Admiral Nimitz had under his Command some 2,902 vessels.

Kuyukuri beach, about 50 miles from Tokyo, was to be the location for the Allies main thrust. Once a bridgehead had been established the troops would advance West and South to clear the Eastern shores of Tokyo and Sagami Bay. Once this area was under control this force would proceed towards Tokyo. A second force was to attack Kanto Plain which was the largest level area in Japan. On this level countryside the Allies could use their transport and mechanization more effectively.

Once consolidated this force would also sweep towards Tokyo, both forces attacking Tokyo in a pincer movement. With the capture of Tokyo, which was the industrial and political centre of Japan, the Allies expected Japan to surrender but if they still continued to resist the Allies were prepared to systematically mop up the defenders.

Such were the plans had Japan chosen to reject the Allies' unconditional surrender terms. It is beyond doubt that the event of the A-Bombs cancelled all this bloodshed.

Had Japan not surrendered on the 15th August, 1945 operation Olympic and Coronet would have swung into effect.

Plans for operation Olympic centred on Kyushu and was planned for 1st November, 1945.

Plans for operation Coronet centred on Honshu and was planned for 1st March, 1946.

## REMINDER TO ALL PUBLICITY OFFICERS 1983

**JANUARY:** "The Field" is not published.

**FEBRUARY:** The issue of "The Field" is normal — i.e. material to be in by the 25th January.

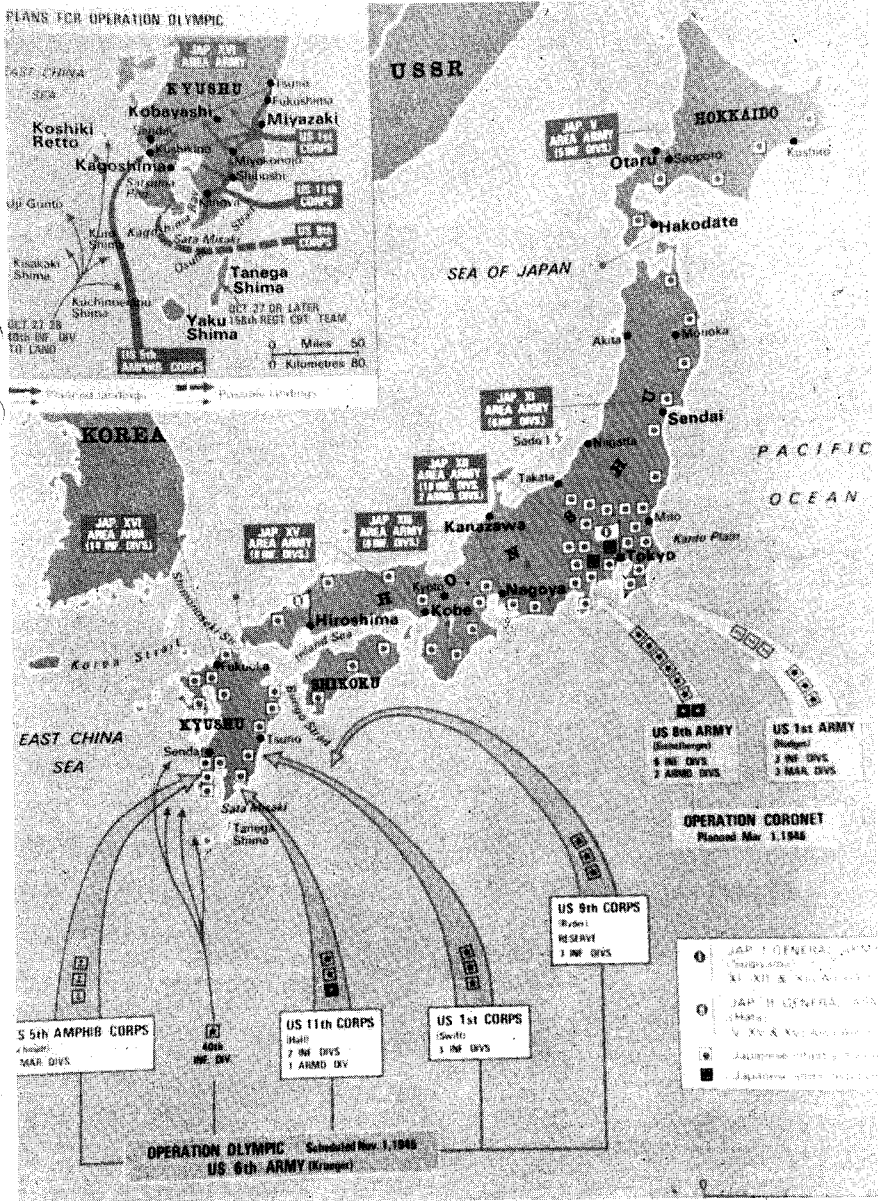
**MARCH:** Material has to be presented by the 14th February. This change is necessary as the Memorial Club's Annual General Meeting is held in March.

Notice of the A.G.M. and information relating to it appear in the March "Field", and by law members must have at least fourteen days' notice of this.

As a result, it is necessary for you to have your material in for the March "Field" by the 14th February in order that "The Field" can be completed and posted so as to reach each member two weeks before the A.G.M.

Editor

Below shows disposition of units which were to be used and their attack points.



Prior to World War II let us go back to events leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbour and Singapore. The full story of Japanese terror in occupied Asia began with their occupation of South Korea in

1910. However it was not until the invasion of China in 1937, followed by the rape of Nanking that the Western World was properly aware of Japanese military expansion plans. In the Sino-Japanese war, which



lasted 14 years, it was estimated the Japanese killed 25,000,000 Chinese who were Oriental like the Japanese as referred to in a pamphlet mentioned later. Uncontrolled slaughter commenced at Nanking when Japanese General Kesago gave the following order to his troops: "I leave their fate in your hands." At first the Chinese were trussed up with barbed wire and machine gunned.

The Japanese Command thought this was too expensive and ordered that the troops use the prisoners for bayonet practice. That the holocaust was official military practice was made clear as officers rode through the city showing how a well-aimed blow by a two-handed Samurai sword would split a victim neatly in two from skull to groin. Thousands of females were rounded up and publicly raped and were eventually bayoneted, shot or incinerated.

A pamphlet to the Japanese army prepared in December, 1941 stated: "The present war is a struggle between races. About 300 million of our colour are being treated as slaves by the white race. We must beat these Westerners into submission and make them change their arrogant ill-mannered behaviour."

What a statement to make after their wanton killing and rape in China, people of their own colour. This and the pamphlet made their soldiers forget what military honour was supposed to be so they did not need any urging, in World War II, to brutally treat wounded Allied soldiers in the field and POW.

The Japanese illustrated to the world that total war is not a child's game as explained above and also by the massive bombing of civilians in Singapore and by the cold-blooded murder of patients and staff, by bayoneting, at the Alexandria Barracks Hospital in Singapore between the 14th and 17th February, 1942 in three days of horror.

Even those on the operating table and the operating staff were bayoneted to death although they were non-combatants. Others in plaster or on crutches were taken away and a short time later the Japanese soldiers came back wiping blood from their bayonets.

This incident was recorded in a

diary of one of the surviving doctors who watched this crazed killing as he lay prostrate in the hospital corridor, feigning death after he was repeatedly bayoneted. Sergeant H. Daley, of the 2/20th Bn AIF, actually saw this diary twelve months later and made a copy of it as it was among Japanese Command H.Q. records and so could not be removed because of his captivity at the time.

This copy, like all other records compiled by POW, was buried in the grounds of Changi and dug up when the war ended and was used in the War Crimes Tribunal. Then there was the unnecessary inhuman barbaric ill treatment of POW in which thousands needlessly lost their lives. The Japanese Commander in Malaya, General Tomoyuki Yamashita, was executed at the end of the war for numerous atrocities including the Alexandria Barracks Hospital horror.

When the Japanese overran Hong Kong in World War II they murdered civilians and subjected British nursing staff and Chinese females to mass rape and then bayoneted or shot them in humiliating circumstances. I have heard it said that the Japanese had a complex that Europeans regarded them as inferior and this explained the mass raping, mutilation and murder which disgraced the capture of Hong Kong on the 25th December, 1941. To contradict this train of thought most of Hong Kong's population were Chinese.

Knowing what happened in Hong Kong General Percival ordered all nursing staff out of Singapore. Three boats left Singapore on the 11th February, 1941, and got away safely but the fourth boat, the Vyner Brooke which left the next day, was not so lucky. It was bombed and sunk off Banka Island and 22 nurses and some wounded soldiers survived the action only to be caught on the beach by a Japanese patrol.

These 22 Angels of Mercy were forced to walk out into waist deep water where they were murdered by machine gun fire. There was only one survivor, Sister Bullwinkle, who feigned death by laying among her dead comrades. The men were taken away and used for bayonet practice.

In the Philippines and most of South Asia similar acts of uncontrolled rape and barbarity by blood-lusting soldiers were reported but in most cases there were no survivors to tell the tale.

Had the Germans attacked England immediately after Dunkirk there was the grave possibility that they would have landed on British soil. Likewise, had the Japanese bypassed the Philippines and other Islands of lesser importance in late 1941-early 1942, and concentrated on their main objective, Australia, there was the distinct possibility that they would have landed on Australian soil. Remember the so-called Brisbane Line? Australia was very vulnerable at the time. This would not be hard to visualize in view of the occupation of New Guinea and the heart stopping Battle of the Coral Sea just off our Northern coastline at a later date.

This was caused by the fact that the American sea and air power in the Pacific had been destroyed at Pearl Harbour, the British land and sea power at Singapore and our Homeland Air Force was not strong. To their credit the Japanese navy, army and air power were at full strength.

This lapse of time by the Japanese allowed our AIF Divisions to return from the Middle East and join our Militia and Volunteer Defence Corps in the defence of our Homeland and for help to arrive from America in the form of naval, air force, troops and equipment for which all Australians should be very grateful.

It is a fact and on record that the Japanese ruled all conquered territories by instilling terror into the population which the Japanese believed made people submit quickly. To those who think there would have been a change of heart in their blood lust attitude had the Japanese set foot in Australia all I can say is that they would be like ostriches burying their heads in the sand to avoid seeing what would be the obvious.

There is no doubt that the dropping of the A-Bombs were extreme measures but it must be conceded that we were dealing with extreme fanatical people who had no value for life as they clearly illustrated in

China and throughout World War II. A-Bombs caused less than 3% structural damage compared with damage to other industrial areas but the philosophy of the Japanese was that at all times they must save face and honour irrespective of conditions or how critical the situation was.

The event of the A-Bombs gave them this face saving excuse but sadly it took two A-Bombs to finally convince the Japanese hierarchy to end a war which had already been lost with no chance of revival. This had been the first time the A-Bombs had been used so it was not known what the side effects or the after effects would be but now the world knows the terrible results which, it is hoped, will be remembered and heeded by future generations.

The following has an established moral to it. What Japan achieved prior to and from 1941 and shows what a nation on the march can do and when presented with territories as a gesture to win its alliance, it backfires as it did in 1941.

Bearing in mind the Japanese population was approximately 100 million in 1941 and the masses were taught and believed Japan could not lose a war and that their soldiers were destined to rule the world. Japan had military success as early as the 19th century and in more modern times in 1905 when the Japanese-Russian war ended with honour intact. Then there was the invasion of South Korea in 1910 and later the successful Sino-Japanese war.

All these conquests led to a fanatical arrogant attitude towards other races. With this background they needed little excuse to confidently enter into another war of expansion against America and Great Britain. From 1941 this appeared correct to the Japanese people in view of the following statistics.

In 1894 the Islands forming Japan proper covered an area of 148,000 square miles. As Japan has or had no raw materials for manufacturing goods or to make war materials, she extended her territory to cover 3,000,000 square miles which embraced 400,000,000 people comprising approximately a fifth of the world's

population, ceded in treaties and later by conquest.

The territories included previously independent countries, besides possessions in China, the United States of America, Great Britain, the Netherlands and France. Japanese gains in raw materials in these conquered territories included the rich sources of rubber, oil, tin, gold, tungsten, graphite, coal, zinc, copper, lead, silk, copra, lumber, jute, camphor, tea, sugar and other materials and agricultural products.

Nearly one-third of China was under Japanese control plus the following territories.

#### **Pacific Islands**

The Marshalls, Carolines and Marianas, mandated to Japan in 1919, population 46,886, area 834 square miles; Philippines, conquered from America in 1941, population 16,000,000 area 115 square miles; Guam, conquered from America 1941, population 22,290, area 211 square miles; Wake, conquered from America 1941, area 2 square miles; Netherlands East Indies, conquered 1942, population 70,000,000, area 768 sq. miles; Bismark Archipelago, conquered from Great Britain 1942, population 247,000, area 20,000 sq. miles; Sarawak, conquered from Great Britain 1942, population 600,000, area 50,000 square miles; North Borneo, conquered from Great Britain 1942, population 270,250, area 31,200 square miles; Bougainville, conquered from Great Britain 1942, population 29,000, area 2,700 square miles; Nauru Islands, conquered from Great Britain 1941, population 3,460, area 8 square miles; Ocean Islands, conquered from Great Britain 1941, population 2,744, area 3 square miles.

#### **Territories taken from China**

Manchuria, conquered 1931, population 39,454,026, area 505,070 square miles; Formosa ceded after the war of 1896, population 5,747,000 area 13,500 square miles; Pescadores Islands, ceded after the war of 1896, population 70,000 area 56 square miles. In addition, Japan had overrun approximately one-third of China from 1932, when Shanghai was attacked and before the actual outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937.

#### **British and French Territories taken by Japan**

Burma conquered from Great Britain in 1942, population 16,824,000, area 261,920 square miles Andaman Islands, conquered from Great Britain in 1942, population 21,400 Europeans, area 2,510 square miles; Nicobar Islands, conquered from Great Britain 1942, population 9,481; Thailand (Siam) Independent, conquered 1941, population 15,718,000, area 199,000 square miles; French Indo China (Vietnam) siezed with the nominal Vichy administration in 1941, population 23,750,000, area 287,250 square miles; Hainan, conquered from France 1939, population 2,500,000, area 13,550 square miles; Malaya (now Malaysia) conquered from Great Britain 1942, population 5,000,000, area 121,650 square miles; Hong Kong, conquered from Great Britain 1941, population 1,505,000, area 386 square miles.

Then there was South Korea, acquired in 1905 by treaty ending the Russo-Japanese War and formally annexed in 1910.

Japan's policy had been to encircle Mongolia as undoubtedly she intended to add it to her Empire — if the Pacific War had gone the way she wished. Under the 1945 surrender terms Japan was required to forego all these mandated and conquered areas, an area greater than Australia or the Continental United States and revert to her territorial boundaries as existed in 1894.

Japan was thus deprived of the basic ingredients for making war of her once strategic bases and of her access to the raw materials required to supply her armed services. Since 1951 many islands Japan lost has been returned under the San Francisco Peace Treaty.

This amazing feat was not probable but as history records, it actually happened because on one hand there was "it won't happen to us" apathetic attitude and on the other hand a determined military nation with expansionist ideas, geared for war and on the march.

Before I conclude, I would like to turn our minds back to the events which plunged the United States and England into conflict with Japan leading up to Pearl Harbour and

the attack on Singapore. An error America made was thinking it could bring Japan to its knees by applying economic pressure. When Japan went to war with China she did so with the tacit permission of America who wanted Japanese ambitions diverted from the Pacific area. The further Japan entered into China the more vehicles they required to move troops, the more mechanization to protect these transports, and also more air cover which meant large quantities of fuel were needed.

Little trouble obtaining these necessities was experienced initially. But by September, 1940, America had placed an embargo on rubber supplies to Japan. Then in July, 1941, America froze all Japanese assets in the United States and announced an oil embargo against all "aggressors" which embraced Japan. Approximately 90% of Japan's oil supplies ceased immediately plus other important essentials. Faced with forfeiting her hard-won gains of years of fighting together with the loss of prestige and face which no Oriental nation could afford, she had to look to obtaining sources of supply elsewhere.

As it happened other sources of supply were not far away. Borneo, Java and Sumatra could supply Japan's immediate needs and there was Burma to the west and to the south there was the rich rubber and tin plus many more raw materials in Malaya. The position was critical and the only way to obtain these supplies quickly was by swift occupation of these areas.

The clearer thinking high officials were against war and argued that Japan could stand the economic squeeze. To refresh memories I will repeat some opinions previously stated.

I quote Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai who stated to the Japanese Assembly: "... at all costs we must avoid war with the United States and Great Britain which means a deterioration in our National situation, we can afford the risk of a gradual loss of our political and economic situation ...".

Ex-Premier Yonai's advice, supported by many high-ranking Naval

and Civil officials, provided an excellent summary of the actual pre-war situation.

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, also realized the pitfalls of war when he frankly informed Premier Konoya, "If you tell me it is necessary that we fight, then in the first six months to a year of the war against the United States and Great Britain I will run wild, and I will show you an uninterrupted succession of victories; I must also tell you that, should the war be prolonged for two or three years, I have no confidence in our ultimate victory."

Admiral Yamamoto not only properly evaluated the early victories, but also foresaw with foreboding clarity the inevitable defeat which lay ahead.

The fanatical war-monger members who were in a majority and whose decision was clouded by power hungry aims towards conquest of the Pacific area and the rich prize at the end of the rainbow, Australia, overruled the sound advice from these high-ranking officials.

Just as the previous embargoes were a fact it was also a fact that the warring members of the Japanese Assembly were contemplating war against America and Great Britain for some time and the Allies were aware of this. This is evident by a summary of Premier Tanka's speech as far back as 1927 when he stated, "Japan cannot remove the difficulties in Eastern Asia unless she adopts a policy of 'Blood and Iron'. If we want to control China we must first crush the United States of America. If we succeed in conquering China, the rest of the Asiatic Countries and the South Sea Countries will fear us and surrender to us. Having China's entire resources at our disposal, we shall proceed to conquer India, but to get control of Manchuria and Mongolia is the first step if the Yamato race wishes to distinguish itself in Continental Asia." This is identical to what happened in China in 1937 and from 1941 onwards.

The Allies were also aware that

the Japanese were negotiating a pact with Germany to the extent that Japan had German technical advisors in Japan and this plus the anticipated Japanese expansion plans for the Pacific were the factors which brought about the embargoes and the freezing of Japanese assets in America which in turn escalated Japan's entry into the war.

Had the "sneak" attack on Pearl Harbour and Singapore by the aggressor, Japan, not occurred then Hiroshima and Nagasaki would not have felt the fury of the Atomic Bombs. In view of these facts Japan must accept some of the blame for these bombs.

Ironically, the name Hiroshima was prominent at the beginning of the war and at the closing stages. The victorious Admiral Nagumo's Pearl Harbour Task Force, with the exception of Rear Admiral Yamaguchi's 2nd Carrier Division, which went direct to the Wake Island operation, returned to Hiroshima Bay on December 23rd, 1941, where Admiral Yamamoto greeted them. Refuelling and re-equipped, the Task Force, under Admiral Nagumo's Command, left Hiroshima Bay on 25th January, 1942, for the main battle areas of the South Pacific. Then on the 6th August, 1945, the Atomic blast destroyed Hiroshima.

Japan paid dearly for the attack on Pearl Harbour, *before war had been officially declared*, on Malaya, Singapore, Philippines, Ceylon, Burma, the South Pacific area and for the very real threat to Australia as can be readily seen by raids on Sydney, Darwin and by the decisive battle of the Coral Sea just off our Northern Coastline.

Even though they were the enemy, most nations had Generals and people in high Command who earned the respect of the Allies. Germany had General Rommel and Japan had Admiral Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of Combined Japanese Fleet. Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto was a perfect military figure and at all times conducted himself with great dignity. Even at Rabaul and Truk, through the uncomfortable tropical heat, he attired himself in a pure white navy officer's uniform which never failed to

impress his officers and men. Yamamoto was not merely an Admiral, he was a personification of the Navy and personally spoke to the assembled attack forces and urged them to endeavour to overcome all obstacles.

He had issued the orders for the attack on Pearl Harbour and to pursue and destroy, either at Singapore Naval Base or the high seas, the British Fleet. The result was the sinking of the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse" off the Malayan coastline.

Ironically the Admiral who devoted his life to the sea was not meant to die on his ship but to counter this the Japanese mentioned he did die on a Naval Air Force plane.

Following the completion of an operation, which was thought to be successful and caused heavy Allied casualties, the Admiral decided to make a personal survey of his forward bases. At 0600 hours on 18th April, 1943, he flew from Rabaul with Commander Ishizaki, his Secretary, Surgeon Rear Admiral Takata and Commander Toibana, his Air Staff Officer. Unfortunately for the Japanese the Allies had cracked their code and were aware of the Admiral's movements. Aware that the Allies would go to any length to discover his whereabouts he discarded his white uniform for the first time and dressed in Navy khaki uniform.

On the way from Rabaul to Buin, via Ballale twenty-four Lockheed Lightnings dived on the bombers. They swept through the protective screen of Japanese fighters and scored a direct hits on the Admiral's plane and another bomber accompanying him which was shot down and crashed into the sea. Flames enveloped the wings and fuselage of the Admiral's plane after the direct hits and it crashed into the jungle along Bougainville's west coast.

On April 19th, 1943, upon information from natives, a Japanese army group found the wrecked plane and Admiral Yamamoto's body, still in his seat, had been hurled from the plane. A sword was tightly held in his hand. Even in death, the Japanese said dignity did not leave the

great Naval Officer. To the Japanese Admiral Yamamoto was a National hero and worshipped by all. He was the greatest Naval Officer in the history of Japan and was afforded a personal loyalty which bordered on the fanatical.

Although not in favour of war, as Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, Yamamoto was obliged to serve his country to the best of his ability. This he did but with his Command went the feeling of guilt that he had failed in his efforts to convince his Government and its ruling hierarchy that the war could only bring disaster.

It was an expensive way to prove a point and post war resulted in a change of heart by most Japanese as, where many favoured war when their armed forces swept all before them, this defeat stopped them with a jolt and made them realise that they were not invincible and that war could result in defeat, destruction and carnage as occurred on their Homeland for the first time in Japanese history. The people's confidence and hero worship of their Emperor, their faith in their armed services, their deep-rooted tradition was shattered. It was unbelievable this could happen to them.

It took some time to adjust after the war but slowly that confidence was restored putting Japan, once again, among the leading nations industrial and defence wise.

Today, the Japanese are a well-organised race. From early childhood they are taught disciplinary mass movement from point A to point B. In 1970 I noticed bus loads of children playing in Temple grounds and three sharp blasts of a whistle by the teacher, standing near each bus, had them lined up in an orderly manner and embussing within minutes. There were 102 buses in all that day and only 10 carried tourists, the balance consisted of Japanese adults and children. Many of these children would now be part of their "new look army" which is more powerful than many people realise.

The troops dress in neat olive coloured uniforms, helmets American style and their rifles are modern semi-automatics — light and effi-

cient. The soldiers' faces are cold, hard and deadly serious. Japan produces most of her war materials and has more arms and manpower than in known. Japan builds her own tanks which mount a 105 mm gun and has rockets with an effective range of 25 kilometres and as powerful as any medium artillery which is free from maintenance problems.

Today Japanese society is changing but very slowly. They have become Westernised but on the surface only. Deep down they are still very traditional, retaining their old ancestral beliefs as was evident by the above mentioned people who are some of the thousands who reverently visit the Shrines and Temples each day of the week. For those who do not make these places of worship they practice Shinto and or Buddhism each day in front of altars in their homes in the rural areas. Japan has ample good soft wood for building and it is not uncommon to find people living in houses 150 years old and in their original condition. In the rural areas they do not paint their houses.

In the war years the attitude of the die-hard Japanese can be briefly illustrated by the action of a Japanese officer, who after the surrender, approached one of our officials and said "Japan has not lost the war, Japan is fighting a 100 year war." Maybe this way he surrendered and saved face and honour in his Oriental attitude or did he really believe what he said?

Although not by design it is ironic that 'Birth of a Battalion' should conclude on the Anniversary of the fall of Singapore which occurred on the 15th February, 1942.

I would like to conclude by saying, as Australians we must think along the following lines:

"But the real and lasting victories are those of peace, not war."

—Emersom.  
M. MULLENS

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**PHONE NUMBER  
FOR CLUB  
727 5000**  
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# COMING ENTERTAINMENT

## Monday, 14th February —

5.30 pm: MONSTER MEAT RAFFLE

## Tuesday, 15th February —

11.00 am: BINGO

8.00 pm: WRESTLING

## Wednesday, 16th February —

5.30 pm: EZI-WINNA

## Thursday, 17th February —

8.30 pm: DISCO IN THE AUDITORIUM. (\$2.00)

## Friday, 18th February —

11.00 am: BINGO

8.00 pm: CABARET — featuring ...  
RICHARD ALLEN AND THE IMPAX

## Saturday, 19th February —

2.00 pm: DIGGERS DERBY

8.00 pm: CLUB NIGHT — featuring ...  
RICHARD ALLEN AND THE IMPAX

## Sunday, 20th February —

10.00 am: MOVIE

"WINTER OF OUR DREAMS" (M)

Starring Judy Davis, Bryan Brown.

One of Australia's leading actresses, Judy Davis won the Best Actress Award for her superb portrayal of a tragic prostitute and the life of despair she lived.

4.00 pm: SHOWTIME — featuring ...

MARIO D'ANDREA,  
Vocalist,  
with FUNGO CHUTNEY,  
Mime/Comedy Sight Act,  
and SYLVIA RAYE,  
Popular TV Vocaliste.

8.00 pm: DISCO IN THE AUDITORIUM. (\$2.00).

8.00 pm: SINGALONG IN THE OLD BARK HUT  
GUEST ... MARION & JOHN

## Monday, 21st February —

5.30 pm: MONSTER MEAT RAFFLE