BUSTED BUGLE

CARDIFF RSL SUB-BRANCH NEWSLETTER

August 2025

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Busted Bugle invites and encourages submissions to the magazine, however articles should be relevant to the 'Bugle' audience.

Articles will need to be vetted before publication and we do reserve the right to edit the length of articles.

For submissions to the magazine please contact the editor Paul Feenan at Editor@cardiffrslsubbranch.org.au

ON THE COVER

The Christmas Truce Memorial in Messines (Mesen), Belgium, commemorates the remarkable event of the 1914 Christmas Truce during World War One. This truce saw soldiers from opposing sides lay down their arms to celebrate Christmas together, famously playing football in no -man's land.

The memorial, created by sculptor Andrew Edwards, depicts British and German soldiers shaking hands, symbolizing peace and humanity amidst the horrors of war. It's located near the tourist office in Messines, close to the site where one of the most famous football matches of the truce took place.

(See article on page 24)

LAST POST

The following members of the Cardiff RSL sub Branch passed away from XXXX.

Private	*Ronald Keith*	*JACKSON*	*2/2nd Bn AIF Last member of Battalion*

Cardiff RSL sub Branch RSL Auxiliary

Co-Ordinator	Kerry Forrrester
Deputy Co-Ordinator	Ruth Crawford
Secretary	Paul Brien JP
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Private Richard Norden VC: Courage Forged at Fire Support Base Coral

Richard Leslie Norden was born on 24 August 1948 in Gundagai, New South Wales. The youngest son of Walter Norden and Rita Crane, he helped on the family farm and became known for his quiet determination. In April 1966, at age 18, he enlisted in the Australian Army. After recruit training he joined 7RAR before transferring to 1RAR in early 1968. His mates remembered him as dependable, humble, and fiercely loyal.

Fire Support Base Coral – Australia's Fiercest Battle

On 12 May 1968, Fire Support Base Coral opened 7 km north of Tan Uyen in Bien Hoa province. Its goal was to interdict North Vietnamese Army (NVA) supply routes and shield Saigon's approaches. Three weeks later, Coral became Australia's longest and bloodiest Vietnam engagement:

- 13 May: Night assault overran sections of the perimeter.
- 16 May: Three NVA battalions attacked under heavy mortar and small-arms fire.

Late May: Repeated bombardments and probing raids tested defenders' resolve.

Despite surprise tactics, Australian infantry, Centurion tanks and artillery crews repelled every assault. Twenty-six Australians fell and over 100 were wounded, yet they inflicted some 300 enemy fatalities. Coral stands as a textbook example of combined-arms warfare.

Amid the chaos of Coral, 19-year-old Private Norden performed acts of extraordinary gallantry:

He dashed 60 metres across open ground under direct fire to rescue his wounded section commander.

Having expended his ammunition, he seized a fallen enemy rifle and rejoined the fight.

When a forward scout was used as a human shield, Norden—already wounded—advanced twice more: first to secure the scout's body, then to clear the area with grenades so the remains could be recovered.

These actions saved lives and bolstered his platoon's morale. For this, he was recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal rather than the Victoria Cross.

"He ran into the heaviest fire we'd ever seen, with no thought for his own safety—just mateship."

— Lance Corporal Stephen Hart, 1RAR veteran.

Distinguished Conduct Medal and Its Threshold

On 22 November 1968, Norden was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for "acts of courage under fire" at Coral. At that time, Army headquarters judged his deeds to fit the DCM's criteria of "distinguished conduct in the field," reserving the Victoria Cross (VC) for "most conspicuous gallantry."

Governor General Sam Mostyn congratulates Robynn Freeman, widow of Private Richard Norden.

Key distinctions:

- DCM recognises high gallantry but not necessarily the "most conspicuous" bravery demanded by the VC.
- The VC threshold has always been applied sparingly, honouring only the most extraordinary acts.

For over fifty years, Norden's comrades and family campaigned to upgrade his DCM to a VC:

- September 2020: Retired Lt Col George Hulse lodged a formal application to Defence, arguing Norden's actions "transcend the DCM" criteria.
- November 2021: Chief of Army, Lt Gen Rick Burr AO DSC MVO, reviewed evidence and upheld the DCM, agreeing it matched the statutory threshold.
- Early 2022: Brigadier Mark Bornholt AM (Retd), Army Historical Honours Officer, reported that *"while exceptionally brave, Norden's conduct did not meet the 'most conspicuous gallantry' required for VC."*
- June 2022: Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal heard fresh testimony and unanimously recommended a posthumous VC for Norden.

November 2024: King Charles III approved the recommendation.

On Remembrance Day 2024, Governor-General Sam Mostyn announced the upgrade. The VC investiture took place on 15 July 2025 in Rockhampton, where Norden's widow, Robynn Freeman, accepted the

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

medal.

Official Victoria Cross Citation

For most conspicuous acts of gallantry in action in the presence of the enemy in the 'AO Surfers' Area of Operations in Bien Hoa province, Vietnam, on 14 May 1968 during the Battle of Fire Support Base Coral. During Operation Toan Thang, 5th Platoon, B Company were ambushed and came under heavy fire from an estimated squad of seven to ten North Vietnamese Army regular soldiers. Private Norden, a member of the leading section, ran forward under heavy enemy fire to the Section Commander and forward scout who were wounded during the initial contact. Private Norden killed one North Vietnamese Army soldier whilst moving forward and, having expended his ammunition, recovered that enemy's automatic weapon which he used against further North Vietnamese Army soldiers. He then half-carried, half-dragged the severely wounded Section Commander back to the section. Private Norden, seriously wounded, again advanced to the forward scout. He pressed forward under enemy fire and reached the scout, killing the North Vietnamese Army soldier who had been using the scout as a shield. Having determined that the scout was dead, Private Norden returned to the section to collect grenades and moved forward for a third time. He cleared the area to enable the body of the scout to be recovered. Private Norden showed a complete disregard for his own personal safety, and his courage and selfless acts resulted in the enemy position being secured and likely saved the lives of other members of the platoon.

Key statistics:

- 102 Australians have been awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia
- Only 5 recipients from the Vietnam War
- Over 55 years elapsed between Norden's actions and his investiture.

Legacy and Reflection

Private Richard Norden VC embodies the finest values of Australian service—selflessness, mateship, and steadfast courage. From his Gundagai farm childhood to his final moments on the battlefield, he demonstrated that ordinary individuals can perform extraordinary deeds.

As today's veterans and future generations reflect on his story, may his legacy continue to inspire. In Norden's own words, written home from Vietnam:

"*All I think about is getting my mates out of here alive.*"

President's Report

Cardiff sub-Branch: Growth, Reflection, and Community

Dear Members, Families and Supporters.

I'm proud to share our Spring edition of the Cardiff sub-Branch magazine. This issue honours our past, celebrates our people, and looks forward with purpose.

We're growing with intention, honouring our proud legacy, and shaping a future that supports every member. Cardiff stands out for its spirit of service, connection, and professionalism, qualities often praised by other sub-Branches.

Honouring Our Veterans

At our General Meetings, we marked:

Middle East Area of Operations Day (11 July): Paid tribute to those who served in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the broader Middle East from 2001 to 2021. It's inspiring to see MEAO veterans join our sub-Branch, *shaping our future with their commitment.*

Korea Veterans Day (27 June): Commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Korean War, honouring veterans like sub-Branch member **Jim George,** 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment*, whose service reflects the bravery of all who fought for freedom.*

Vietnam Veterans Day (18 August): We observed the 52nd anniversary of the Vietnam War. I attended the Newcastle and **Hunter Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Service**, laying a wreath on behalf of the sub-Branch. Later, I joined their Remembrance Dinner with my father, **Laurie Kelly**, a Vietnam veteran.

We honour your service—**Lest we forget.**

Recognising Service and Leadership

On 23 August, we welcomed The **Hon. Jodie Harrison MP,** Member for Charlestown and Minister for Women, Seniors, and the Prevention of Domestic Violence. During the visit, **Ben Coutman**, our long-serving Honorary Treasurer and Vietnam War veteran, received the **2025 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award.** *Ben's dedication exemplifies the values that make our sub-Branch strong.*

Celebrating Community Contributions

I'm grateful to the **Auxiliary** for their tireless **fundraising efforts**, including their recent work at the Bunnings Glendale fundraiser. We also thank Vice President **Jamie Purdon** and Secretary **Garry James** for drafting important motions for the **RSL NSW Congress**, ensuring our voice is heard at the state level.

Looking Ahead

We're preparing for the bus trip to **Rathmines Heritage Centre** (14 October), our **Remembrance Day Commemoration** (11 November), and the **Christmas Lunch** (14 December), along with expanding **yoga classes** and **new volunteer** roles. *Your continued involvement keeps us thriving.*

Gratitude to Our Members

Thank you for your continued support. We're not changing who we are, we're building on it together. *Cardiff remains strong and ready for what's next*.

Why I Run: A Veteran's Call to Community

As President of the Cardiff RSL Sub-Branch, I know there are veterans out there who could benefit from this kind of community. So, I'm inviting you: join me any Saturday morning. Come down to Carrington or your local parkrun. You don't need to be fit. You don't need to know anyone. You just need to come.

I run for my health—mental, physical, and social. But I also run for my mates. As veterans, we carry a lot with us. And sometimes, what we need most is a way to connect, to move forward together, and to know we're not alone.

That's what parkrun gives us. It's not just about how fast you go—it's about showing up. Walk, jog, run, volunteer, or just come for a chat over coffee afterwards. It's simple, it's free, and it's welcoming.

We acknowledge everyone who's served, and we stand ready to support each other in new ways—ways that build us up, one step at a time.

Hope to see you soon. **Geoff.**

#VeteranHealth #parkrunfamily #StrongerTogether

Cardiff Sub Branch welcomed our new Auxiliary member for the Bugle, Janice Williamson, also Jane Williamson's mother.

Japan surrenders

EXTRA!

Los Angeles Times

WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 15, 1945

DAILY, FIVE CENTS

PEACE!

Japs Accept Allies' Terms Unreservedly

WASHINGTON, Aug. 14. (U.P.)—President Truman announced tonight that the Japanese government has accepted the surrender terms without qualifications.

He made the announcement at a press conference. He read a statement which said:

"I deem this reply a full acceptance of the Potsdam declaration which specified the unconditional surrender of Japan. In the reply there are no qualifications."

The President also revealed that he had named Gen. Douglas MacArthur the supreme commander to receive the Japanese surrender.

Meanwhile, he said, Allied armed forces have been ordered to suspend offensive operations.

VJ-Day will not be proclaimed until after the formal signing of the surrender terms by Japan.

The three Allies in the Pacific war—Great Britain, Russia and China—will be represented at the signing by high ranking officers.

The Japanese government's message accepting the Allied terms said that Emperor Hirohito is prepared "to authorize and insure the signature" by the Japanese government and the imperial general headquarters of the necessary terms for carrying out provisions of the Potsdam declaration.

Air Onslaughts Continue Around Clock on Japan

President Declares Two-Day Holiday—Wednesday and Thursday

On 15 August 2025, the world commemorated 80 years since Emperor Hirohito's radio address that marked the surrender of Japanese forces and the end of the Second World War.

NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award Recipient – To Cardiff sub-Branch member—Mr. Ben Coutman.

On 23 August 2025, the Cardiff RSL sub-Branch celebrated a significant occasion with the visit of The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP, Member for Charlestown and Minister for Women, Seniors, and the Prevention of Domestic Violence. The event marked the presentation of the 2025 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award to Mr. Ben Coutman, a Vietnam veteran, and long-serving Honorary Treasurer.

Ben has been a resolute volunteer for over a decade, contributing significantly to the strength and continuity of the Cardiff RSL sub-Branch. His meticulous management of the Sub-Branch's finances has ensured transparency, continuity, and trust. Beyond his financial duties, Ben has been a steady presence, supporting commemorative events, mentoring new members, and championing veteran welfare with humility and resolve.

Reflecting on his service, Ben shared*, "Volunteering has given me a sense of purpose and connection."* His legacy is measured in the lives touched and traditions upheld, embodying the spirit of service that defines the RSL.

The event was made even more special by the efforts of the Auxiliary, who hosted a morning tea and presented Minister Harrison with a floral arrangement, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The occasion was also supported by Mr. Peter Stephenson, President of the District Council, and Mr. Greg McColl, President of Cardiff RSL Club, along with members of the Cardiff Board. Their presence highlighted the unity and shared purpose among the local organizations.

Congratulations and thankyou Ben Coutman for your outstanding voluntary service to veterans and the wider community. Your example continues to guide and inspire the next generation of volunteers.

Honouring Private Ronald Keith Jackson - Possibly the last member of the 2/2nd Battalion AIF.

Private Ronald Keith Jackson passed peacefully on 15 July 2025, aged 104. Though not a formal member of Cardiff RSL sub-Branch, his later years fostered a close connection with its members. At the family's request, Cardiff RSL proudly conducted his funeral tribute, reflecting the respect he earned throughout his life.

Ron enlisted on 12 August 1941, serving until 14 March 1946. He began with the 5th Training Battalion and later joined the 2/2nd Australian Infantry Battalion (16th Brigade, 6th Division). His service included roles in the 2/4th Transport Company, 58 and 64 Transport Platoons, and concluded with the 4th Infantry Battalion.

Deployed to New Guinea, Ron endured jungle warfare and illness with quiet resilience. His service was recognised with the 1939–45 Star, Pacific Star, War Medal, Defence Medal, Australia Service Medal, and the Returned from Active Service Badge.

Post-war, Ron settled in Narromine, NSW, as an orchard farmer and active member of the Narromine RSL sub-Branch. In retirement, he moved to Belmont, maintaining ties with Narromine and attending ANZAC and Remembrance Day services hosted by Cardiff RSL at his aged-care home.

(L-R): Doug Baldock, Gerrard Wall, Barry Copas, & Ron Jackson

A Growing Bond

Cardiff RSL's annual commemorative visits to aged care facilities deepened Ron's connection to the sub-Branch. These gatherings brought shared stories, laughter, and reflection—honouring a veteran who embodied the spirit of service and camaraderie.

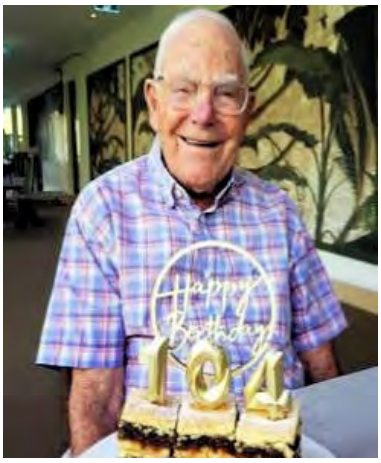
Funeral Tribute

Ron's funeral was held on 25 July 2025 at Pettigrew's Funeral Home, Belmont. The Australian Armed Forces Re-enactment Heritage Unit – Newcastle provided a ceremonial catafalque party, and Warrant Officer Thomas of the 2nd/17th Battalion,

Royal NSW Regiment, represented the Australian Defence Force.

Ron was acknowledged as possibly the last surviving member of the 2/2nd Battalion by the Friends of the 2nd Infantry Battalions Association. Diane Sharpe, Secretary of Narromine RSL, travelled over five hours to pay her respects, reflecting the unity of RSL sub-Branches across NSW.

The Cardiff RSL Tribute team—President Geoff Kelly, Doug Baldock, Barry Copas, and Des Abberfield—played a significant role. Geoff Kelly delivered a heartfelt tribute; Doug presented the Australian National Flag to Ron's next of kin; and Des formally presented Ron's Record of Service.



Ron's children expressed deep appreciation:
"We sincerely thank the Cardiff RSL Tribute team and catafalque party for their dignified presentation. Warrant Officer Thomas's presence added further honour. Together, they made the service truly memorable."

Ron's battalion motto, *Second to None*, reflected his character. His legacy lives on in the RSL community, through every story shared and every service attended. **Les we forget.**

Reconsidering Eligibility for the Vietnam Campaign Medal

The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, awarded by the former South Vietnamese government, was issued to allied troops—including Australians—who served in the Vietnam War. Under current Australian policy, eligibility requires 181 days of service in the Vietnam operational area, unless the veteran was:

- Killed in action.
- Wounded and evacuated.

Captured and later released.

This rule has excluded approximately 2,500 Australian veterans, many of whom served under hazardous conditions but were reassigned or discharged before reaching the threshold.

In 2025, marking the 50th anniversary of the war's end, the Vietnam Veterans Association and the RSL renewed calls for the federal government to reconsider the 181-day rule. Advocates argue that:

- The requirement is administrative, not reflective of service intensity.
- Veterans with shorter deployments often faced equal risk and trauma.
- Recognition should reflect contribution, not just duration.

Hon Pat Conroy MP

Member for Shortland

Back to Parliament – and Back to Work for our Community

Parliament is back, and we've hit the ground running to deliver on the things locals told me matter most - bringing down everyday costs and building a fairer future for everyone.

One of the first big wins is for students. We've cut student debt by 20%, giving young people and graduates in our community a better chance to get ahead.

Next, we're making medicines more affordable for everyone. From 1 January next year, the cost of prescriptions on the PBS will be capped at $25 - the lowest it's been since 2004.

For our local pensioners and concession card holders, the news is even better. We're locking in the current $7.70 price for PBS medicines until 2030, so you can plan ahead knowing those costs won't go up for years to come.

I know how much this will mean to families, older residents, and people who rely on regular medication. Every dollar saved makes a difference.

My team and I are also here to help with Federal Government services - whether it's Centrelink, the NDIS, ATO, immigration, citizenship, Medicare, passports, My Aged Care, or Veterans' Affairs. You're always welcome to drop into the office or give us a call on (02) 4947 9546.

Never use a big word when a singularly unloquacious and diminutive linguistic expression will satisfactorily accomplish the contemporary necessity.

Christmas in July

From Milla our Travel coordinator who writes, *"Great day, very sociable day, delicious food, lots of fun and laughter. Thanks to Ray for his organisation.* PS Milla won best dressed! *WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED!*

Special thank you to chef Richard and supervisor Kirsty for their efforts on the day.


Merry Christmas

Honouring Our Vietnam Veterans

Vietnam Veterans Day is observed annually on August 18, marking the anniversary of the **Battle of Long Tan** in 1966—Australia's costliest engagement of the Vietnam War. On that day, 105 men from D Company, 6RAR, alongside three New Zealand artillery observers, faced more than 2,000 Viet Cong troops in a rubber plantation near Nui Dat. Despite being outnumbered ten to one, the Australians held their ground. **Seventeen Australians were killed,** and **25 wounded**, with one later dying of his injuries.

This solemn day now serves as a national moment of reflection, honouring the 60,000 Australians who served during the decade-long conflict from 1962 to 1972. Of those, **523 lost their** lives, and nearly 3,000 were wounded. It is a time to acknowledge not only the fallen, but also the resilience of those who returned, and the families who stood beside them.

This year's commemorations at Civic Park were a moving tribute to courage, sacrifice, and enduring mateship. The RSL NSW Cardiff sub-Branch was proudly represented throughout the day's events, which included a Remembrance Service and a commemorative dinner held at Wallsend Diggers.

Among those in attendance were Vietnam veterans Syd Lynch, Brian Goddard (representing TPI), Jos Dohmen, Jim Davies, and Laurie Kelly—each a proud member of our sub-Branch. Fellow member Peter Taylor also joined in support, reinforcing the spirit of solidarity that defines our community.

Sub-Branch President Geoff Kelly laid a wreath in honour of all who served, a gesture of remembrance that resonated deeply with those gathered. The presentation of 19 Australian National Flags, each representing a Newcastle and Hunter veteran killed in action, offered a solemn and powerful reminder of the lives lost and the legacy they left behind.

These flags stood not only as symbols of sacrifice but as enduring markers of our collective memory. They remind us that behind every name is a story of service, courage, and commitment to country.

We honour their service. We remember their sacrifice.
Lest we forget.

Six Degrees of Separation—and a Brush with History

The theory of *Six Degrees of Separation* suggests that any two people on Earth are connected by no more than six social links. For our member Derek Kenyon, that theory holds water.

Back in 1964–65, Derek was a student on the basic parachuting course at RAAF Williamtown. The cohort was a curious mix: four Australian Army personnel and the remainder from the New Zealand Army Special Air Service. A spirited bunch, to say the least—rumour has it they were led by none other than Derek himself for their antics earned them a collective ban from entering Newcastle after the city's Mayor lodged a formal complaint during a visit to the Base.

In the course photo, Captain Harry Smith is seated front row, fourth from the right. Derek appears in the centre row, third from the left.

So who was Captain Harry Smith—and why does his presence matter?

Smith would go on to become Major Harry Smith, Commanding Officer of Delta Company, 6RAR. Under his leadership, the company fought in the Battle of Long Tan—one of the most significant and hard-fought engagements involving Australian troops during the Vietnam War.

(Harry Smith's dedication to his soldiers—on page 18)

Lieutenant Colonel Harry Arthur Smith, SG, MC (1933–2023), was the commanding officer of D Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment during the pivotal Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966. His leadership under extreme conditions—facing a vastly superior Viet Cong force in a rubber plantation near Nui Dat—was instrumental in one of Australia's most storied military engagements.

Smith led 105 soldiers and a 3-man New Zealand artillery team into a patrol that turned into a fierce four-hour battle against an estimated 2,000 enemy troops.

Despite torrential rain and overwhelming odds, Smith coordinated artillery support and reinforcements that helped D Company hold their ground.

The battle resulted in 18 Australian deaths and 24 wounded, but inflicted over 245 confirmed enemy fatalities, with hundreds more believed wounded or killed.

After the battle, Smith recommended 20 of his men for gallantry awards. However, many of these were rejected, downgraded, or ignored—prompting a decades-long fight for recognition:

- Smith alleged that senior officers embellished their own roles to secure higher honours while sidelining the contributions of frontline soldiers.
- In 2015, he formally applied for a review of 13 individual cases through the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal.
- The Tribunal's 2016 report led to upgrades or new awards for 10 soldiers, including Medals for Gallantry and Commendations for Gallantry.

Here's a question. How come there is enough asphalt for speed humps but not enough to fill in potholes?

On 15 August 1945, Australians took to the streets after hearing news of Japan's surrender and an end to six years of war.

Eighty years have passed since Victory in the Pacific, or VP Day. I was honoured to join the Newcastle Military Vehicle Club for their Victory Day Drive to mark this historic milestone.

I travelled through the streets of western Lake Macquarie behind the wheel of a Scout Car as part of a convoy of military vehicles, SES Swansea and Cooranbong units, Dora Creek Rural Fire Service and Wangi Fire and Rescue. It was great to chat with veterans and family members of armed service personnel, and see Dave Edmond, former President of the Wangi Wangi RSL Sub-branch, in such good health.

VP Day is a chance for us to remember the sacrifices of our servicemen and women. More than a million Australians served in World War Two and over 39,000 were killed. With the eightieth anniversary of Sandakan Memorial Day also falling on 15 August, we also remember the bravery of more than 30,000 Australians who became prisoners of war in the conflict.

Lest We Forget.

Local Lake Macquarie organisations have also secured $450,000 in funding for 18 projects through the State Government's Community Building Partnership program. Projects include the Toronto District and Brass Brand purchasing much-needed instruments for its members to use, and installation of a solar PV system and battery at Wyee Point Rural Fire Station so it can remain operational even when the power grid is down.

These projects will make a real difference in Lake Macquarie, and I congratulate all of the successful organisations.

If you have questions or issues with State Government matters such as public housing, health or police matters, you can contact my Electorate Office. My staff can also help you if you need JP services or would like to arrange congratulatory messages for significant anniversaries and birthdays. Please visit us at 126A Cary Street, Toronto, or phone: 4953 3200, or email: lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au.Kind regards

Australian Infantry radios: From Vietnam to today

During the Vietnam War, Australian infantry relied on basic radio systems like the AN/PRC-25 and AN/PRC-77, typically carried by the signals (Sigs) team. Operating on Very High Frequency (VHF) bands, these radios enabled short-range communication between ground troops—but only just.

Despite their utility, the limitations were stark:

- **Limited range**: VHF signals struggled to penetrate the dense jungle, often failing beyond a few kilometres.
- **Cumbersome design**: The radios were bulky and heavy, adding to the physical burden of soldiers already weighed down with weapons, ammunition, and essential gear.

Fast forward to today, and the contrast is striking. Modern Australian soldiers use the **Enhanced Personal Role Radio (EZPRR)**—a lightweight, handheld device that delivers:

- **Secure, hands-free communication**
- **Improved combat effectiveness**

Freedom to operate weapons without interruption.

How times change! From jungle static to seamless battlefield chatter, the evolution of infantry radios reflects the broader transformation of military technology—and the lives of those who rely on it.

Sometimes I just want someone to hug me, and say, "I know it's hard, but you are going to be okay. Here's a coffee and ten million dollars.

Cop: The coffee in this place is garbage.

Me: You ever had lukewarm International roast from the same cup you saved in?

.Passing the Torch

ANZACS by an original digger. Published in 1941.

Time was when queries were put concerning the calibre of the new A.I.F. Will they measure up to standards set by the 1914-18 contingent? Will they emulate the deeds of their fathers' generation? Will they display the same fighting spirit, Initiative, and determination?

They have been decisively answered — in the affirmative.

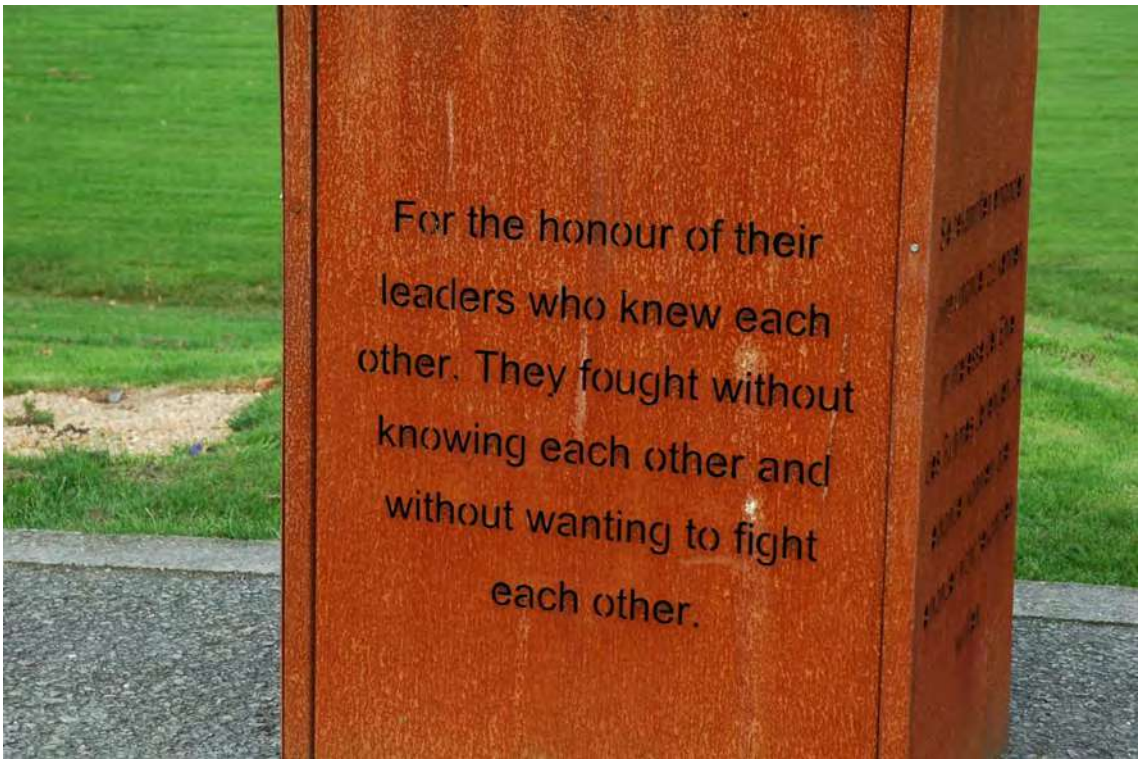
Heavily outnumbered, not so well equipped as the enemy and assuming the more arduous attacking role our fellows showed in Libya, Greece, and Crete, that they are *"100 per centers."*

There is not an old hand who does not concede they are worthy of the title, Anzacs. One returned man was heard to remark: "I have never before felt so proud of being a Digger' I should say there is not one of us who does not now feel doubly proud to be a Digger. On behalf of the old brigade I dips me lid. — "Crescent." Toowoomba fQld.).

Peace tower in Diksmuide Belgium known as the Yser Tower.

Rising to a height of 84 metres, the tower houses a poignant museum honouring Flemish soldiers who perished in World War One. Within its walls, a 24-bell carillon echoes on days of remembrance, lending solemn resonance to commemorative events. Among its exhibits is a moving portrayal of an encounter between a French medic and a German soldier—an intimate glimpse into humanity amid conflict.

So far I have opened three Christmas cards and got $80.00.
I just love being a postman.



Above is the sign at the entrance to the Peace Tower.

It relates to the leaders of the major powers engaged in World War One who were closely related. King George V of Great Britain, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, and Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany were all first cousins, linked through their shared lineage to Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom.

King George V

Tsar Nicholas II

Kaiser Wilhelm II

Queen Victoria was the grandmother of George and Wilhelm, and the great -grandmother of Nicholas through his mother, who was a Danish princess.

Despite their familial connections, the complex web of alliances, national interests, and political tensions ultimately led to the outbreak of World War I. This demonstrates how familial ties could not prevent the larger geopolitical forces that pushed the major powers into conflict.

A statement attributed to Kaiser Wilhelm II was, *"If my Grandmother Queen Victoria were alive, she would never have allowed us to go to war with each other".*

Christmas Truce of 1914—not as peaceful as believed.

On a cold clear winter morning during Christmas 1914 only a few months into World War 1, thousands of British, Belgium and French soldiers left the trenches and mingled with their German foe, who also came forward exchanged gifts and wishings of good will.

The peaceful interaction commenced on Christmas Eve and extended into Christmas day to become something of a problem for the commanders on both sides who were concerned that hostilities may be difficult to recommence.

While this story has been well reported in history, but opposed to the beliefs held by many, while the truce was wide spread it was not over the entire battlefield area. Historians are united in the opinion that the truce was instantaneous and no one is sure as to where it began or how it spread along the trench locations.

While the truce was extensive, it was not universal, and in at least two occasions' soldiers attempting the Christmas truce were shot by opposing forces.

Private Percy Huggins of the D Company 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment was on sentry duty on Christmas Day 1914 at a forward listening post just 20 yards from the enemy, when he was killed by a sniper's single bullet to the head.

News of the 23-year-old soldier's death enraged his comrades in the regiment, especially his platoon Sergeant Tom Gregory; an experienced 36 year old veteran of the Boer War who then took Private Huggins' sentry place so he could avenge his comrade's death. He immediately set about scanning the frost-covered ground before identifying the sniper, and killed him with a single shot.

Unfortunately, that was not the end of the deadly exchange. Sergeant Gregory continued scouring the enemy lines and located a second sniper in his sights, but by that time the German marksman had already spotted him and in a split-second action, he shot and killed Sergeant Gregory. The two men were buried side by side at Le Touret Military Cemetery in Bethune, France.

The two British men made up the 149 Commonwealth servicemen who lost their lives during the truce on December 25, 1914.

While accusations have been made against the Germans for their aggression during the truce, later Investigations suggest that the truce did take part in the area north of the Hertfordshire regiment, but it probably bypassed the Hertfordshire Regiment because they were with the Guards Brigade who were incredibly professional and were highly unlikely to have fraternised with the enemy.

Corporal Clifford Lane of H Company Hertfordshire regiment recalled how the Germans on Christmas Eve hoisted their lanterns above the trenches and called out to the British as an overture for a temporary truce, saying, *"The Guards Brigade had the highest discipline in the army and you couldn't expect them to fraternise at all and that is why we were ordered to open fire."*

The British had responded by shooting at the lights, putting an end to any prospect of a Christmas Day ceasefire truce by the Hertfordshire Regiment or the Guards Brigade, one that could have spared the lives of Private Huggins and Sergeant Gregory.

From Soda to Sundae: How Sweet Innovation Skirted Sunday Law

In late 19th-century America, the rise of **blue laws**—strict religious regulations designed to preserve the sanctity of the Christian Sabbath—meant that Sundays were reserved for worship and quiet reflection. Activities deemed too indulgent or distracting, such as shopping, public entertainment, and even soda consumption, were banned in many towns. Soda fountains, once lively social hubs, were suddenly silenced by law.

But in **Two Rivers, Wisconsin**, one enterprising druggist found a delicious loophole. In 1881, **Ed Berners**, owner of a local ice cream Parlor, served a scoop of vanilla ice cream topped with chocolate syrup—minus the fizzy soda that had drawn moral scrutiny. The treat was a hit. A rival shop began offering it exclusively on Sundays, calling it a "Sunday." To avoid offending religious sensibilities, the spelling was soon softened to **"sundae."**

The History of the Military Lanyard:

From Practical Tool to Symbol of Honor Lanyards have a fascinating history that spans centuries, evolving from a practical tool to a symbol of honour and tradition in various military and civilian contexts.

The term "lanyard" originates from the French word "lanière," meaning strap or thong. Lanyards were initially used by sailors in the 15th century to secure items and prevent them from being lost overboard. These early lanyards were simple cords or straps used to attach tools, weapons, or other essential items to a person's body or clothing.

Lanyards became more prominent in military use during the 19th century. Cavalry units used them to secure weapons and other equipment, ensuring they were easily accessible during combat. Artillery units also adopted lanyards to hold implements and tools necessary for operating cannons and other artillery pieces.

In the British Army, lanyards were first mentioned in dress regulations in 1900. They were used to carry items like whistles, keys, and small tools. The practice soon spread to other Commonwealth armies, including the Australian Army.

The Australian Army adopted the use of lanyards from the British tradition. Initially, they served practical purposes, but over time, they became more ceremonial. Today, lanyards in the Australian Army are used to signify various roles, units, and traditions. They are typically worn with certain work and ceremonial uniforms but not with field dress, except by members of the Australian Army Cadets.

Lanyards are usually worn on the right shoulder, except for Infantry Corps units and 'A' Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery, who wear them on the left shoulder. The colours and styles of lanyards can vary, indicating different corps or units. Officer ranks Colonel and above, and senior Regimental Sergeant Majors do not wear lanyards.

In the Australian Army, lanyard colours are used to designate the corps or regiment of the wearer. Some Corps colour examples:

· **Royal Australian Artillery**: White
· **Royal Australian Engineers**: Blue
· **Royal Australian Corps of Signals**: Dark blue
· **Royal Australian Infantry Corps**: Red
· **Royal Australian Army Medical Corps**: Dull cherry
· **Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps**: Maroon
· **Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers**: Yellow
· **Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps**: Dark green

Royal Australian Army Dental Corps: Purple

Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) Colours

- **1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR)**: Blue over green
- **2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR)**: Black over red
- **3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR)**: Black over green
- **4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (4 RAR)**: Black over blue
- **5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (5 RAR)**: Yellow over blue
- **6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (6 RAR)**: Blue over red
- **7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (7 RAR)**: Red over blue

8th/9th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (8/9 RAR): Black over yellow

Reserve Infantry Units Colours

- **1st/19th Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment (1/19 RNSWR)**: Black over green
- **2nd/17th Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment (2/17 RNSWR)**: Black over red
- **3rd Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment (3 RNSWR)**: Black over blue
- **4th/3rd Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment (4/3 RNSWR)**: Black over yellow
- **5th/6th Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment (5/6 RVR)**: Black over white
- **8th/7th Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment (8/7 RVR)**: Black over maroon
- **11th/28th Battalion, Royal Western Australia Regiment (11/28 RWAR)**: Black over light blue
- **12th/40th Battalion, Royal Tasmania Regiment (12/40 RTR)**: Black over purple
- **31st/42nd Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment (31/42 RQR)**: Black over orange
- **41st Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment (41 RNSWR):** Black over brown

British Soldier awarded the Victoria Cross and the German Iron Cross

William George Nicholas Manley, born on December 17, 1831, in Dublin, Ireland, was a distinguished military surgeon who achieved the remarkable feat of being awarded both the Victoria Cross and the Iron Cross, by the Prussian government. His career is a testament to bravery, exceptional skill, and dedication.

Manley joined the British Army as an assistant surgeon and was attached to the Royal Artillery. His first notable act of bravery came during the Waikato-Hauhau Māori War in New Zealand. On February 29, 1864, at Tauranga, he performed an extraordinary act of heroism, where under intense enemy fire, he tended to the wounded. It was during the assault on the Māori positions at Gate Pā that Manley's courage was most evident. Despite the chaos of battle and the deadly environment, he provided critical medical care to the injured soldiers. For his gallantry he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

After his service in New Zealand, he found himself involved in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, serving with the British Ambulance Corps. He distinguished himself by his tireless efforts in attending to the wounded from both sides of the conflict, often under fire. It was for his exceptional service during this war that he was awarded the Iron Cross by the Prussian government. This award is one of the most renowned military decorations in Germany, given for bravery, leadership, or military merit.

Manley's receipt of both the VC and the Iron Cross is significant, symbolizing recognition from two different nations for his dedication to the welfare of soldiers in two separate conflicts. His actions exemplified the highest standards of military medical service and bravery.

He passed away on November 16, 1901.

General Sir Thomas Blamey was the Commander of Australian Forces during the Kokoda campaign in World War Two who upset the diggers.

He did little to endear himself to the diggers who had fought and died stopping the Japanese progress towards Port Moresby.

On the 9 November 1942, a parade was held at the Koitaki camp, for General Blarney who had travelled from his luxurious hotel in Brisbane to talk to the men of the 21st Brigade; the 2/14th, 2/16th and 2/27th battalions. These troops were recovering from their previous gruelling experience on the Kokoda track, and preparing to go back again, despite the dreadful losses the battalions had already suffered.

In the 2/14th, only 73 men remained of the 550 who set off up the track just under three months before.

All three of the battalions were of course devastated by their dreadful losses, while justifiably proud of what they had achieved. As they gathered on parade, they may have been of the opinion that Blarney had gathered them together to tell them so in person.

They were formed up in front of General Blamey, then Australia's highest ranking military officer who standing on a wooden platform began to speak without any empathy, or any warmth.

Instead of praising them for their efforts he criticised them for their fighting withdrawal that inflicted extraordinary unbalanced casualties on the Japanese while stretching their lines of supply, comparing the diggers to rabbits. He said *"it's the rabbit who runs who gets shot, not the man holding the gun".*

The comment was deeply insulting to the soldiers who had endured harsh conditions and heavy fighting. They were expecting recognition for their bravery and resilience, so Blamey's remarks caused significant resentment and anger among them. The diggers of the AIF together with the militia 39th battalion had been part of the Maroubra Force tasked with defending the Kokoda Track against the advancing Japanese forces. Despite being heavily outnumbered and out gunned they managed to delay the Japanese advance on Port Moresby, fighting in difficult jungle terrain and under severe logistical constraints, Fighting in close quarters and suffering from diseases like miliary and dysentery, there efforts were crucial.

General Blamey, operating from his headquarters in Melbourne, had displayed a significant lack of understanding and arrogance regarding the conditions faced by his soldiers in New Guinea. Requests from the diggers for proper uniforms and equipment, particularly camouflage gear, were ignored.

In contrast, the Japanese soldiers had no trouble blending into the jungle, often disappearing right before the eyes of the Australians. They wore jungle green uniforms with camouflage nets on their green-painted helmets and equipment. They were adept at blending into their surroundings, using greasy green paint on their faces and extremities, and covering their bodies with parts of bushes and vines.

The Australians, however, were not as fortunate. They were outfitted in the same khaki uniforms that had been effective in desert fighting. The irony was that the diggers, when in the Middle East wore khaki that blended with the desert conditions, and where they laughed at the ludicrousness of the Germans wearing their heavy dark grey uniforms, though perfect for Berlin, were hopelessly hot and visible in the desert sands.

To adapt, the diggers of the 2/14th and 2/16th battalions boiled large pots of water, adding chunks of jungle foliage to dye their khaki uniforms a more suitable greenish hue.

Prominent Australian war correspondent Chester Wilmot, who had accompanied the AIF on the Kokoda Track and witnessed their struggles, later questioned General Blamey, asking, *"Do you think that green uniforms are necessary for our soldiers in the jungle of New Guinea?"*

Blamey replied, *"Not at all. It is true that those uniforms were designed specifically for the jungles of India, but I have never seen any evidence that the jungle of New Guinea is any different from the jungle of India. I think the uniforms the soldiers are wearing are quite adequate."*

Wilmot responded, *"Well, I can provide several thousand witnesses who have actually fought in New Guinea who can provide evidence to the contrary."*

The American response.

When the Americans were preparing to leave for New Guinea, they

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(Continued from page 30)

contacted General Blamey to determine whether or not green camouflage uniforms were necessary. Blamey's firm answer came back, *"No".* Then an American General and his staff in Australia went to see the Oscar winning film documentary from Kokoda made by Australian war photographer and cinematographer Damien Parer called KOKODA FRONT LINE. They had their eyes opened on seeing how the khaki uniforms of the Australians clearly stood out in the jungle.

The Americans were so concerned they contacted Damien Parer to get his view. The firm response came back, *"You are mad if you don't".* The Americans ignored Blamey's view and had their uniforms dyed mottled green.

From "Chocolate Soldiers" to Heroes: The only Australian Unit to carry the battle honour 'KOKODA".

The Story of the 39th Battalion Militia (AMF)

The 39th as an Australian Militia Battalion, embodies a tale of transformation, moving from a group met with scepticism to celebrated war heroes. Dubbed "Chocolate Soldiers" or "Chocos" by the seasoned Second Australian Imperial Force (AIF). The nickname implied they would "melt" under pressure. Despite this derogatory start, their journey proved otherwise.

Nearly reformed and mobilised for full-time service in early 1942, the 39th Battalion consisted mainly of young, inexperienced soldiers with an average age of 18 years, 6 months. Armed with World War One weapons they were designated as a passive garrison role in Papua.

As World War Two intensified with Japanese advances in the Pacific, and the Japanese landings at Buna and Gona, with the intentions of crossing the Owen Stanley Range to take Port Moresby, B platoon of the 39th was the first Australians to face the Japanese in Papua.

In July 1942, the 39th Battalion with some members of the PIB confronted the Japanese at Awala. Even though they were outnumbered and faced harsh jungle conditions, engaged in intense fire fight, they were forced to withdraw to Kokoda, where again intense fighting occurred, and due to

lack of ammunition and greatly outnumbered, they retreated to Deniki until the 8th August 1942 when they retook Kokoda. However their requests for reinforcements and resupply were ignored and they were forced by numerically superior numbers to withdraw again.

Their efforts did however delayed the Japanese advance, buying crucial time for reinforcements. When relieved by the 6th Division AIF their unit strength was 185 from the initial deployment strength of 1,068. After returning to Port Moresby they were reinforced by 800 new militia soldiers and again fought at Sanananda, Buna and Gona recapturing the area permanently.

At Soputa on their final withdrawal there were only 5 officers and 27 other ranks of the 39th.

Key Engagements:

- Isurava: In one of the most pivotal battles, the 39th, alongside the 2/14th Battalion, held their ground, marking a turning point in the campaign.

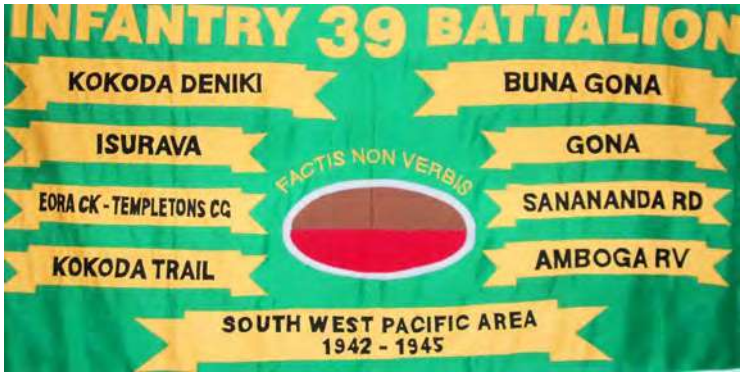
- Eora Creek: The battalion's rear-guard actions significantly slowed the Japanese, allowing other units to regroup and fortify positions.

- Templeton's Crossing: The 39th demonstrated exceptional bravery under relentless attacks.

The 39th Battalion AMF parading after weeks of heavy fighting during the Kokoda campaign. The officer in front is Lieutenant Johnson.

As the campaign progressed, the actions of the 39th Battalion garnered respect and admiration from the AIF. Their bravery and resilience shattered the "Chocolate Soldier" stereotype. Their sacrifices were instrumental in halting the Japanese advance and ultimately pushing them back.

There was only one Battle Honour 'KOKODA' awarded. That went exclusively to the 39th (Militia) Australian Infantry Battalion.



Other units that fought along the Kokoda Track—such as the 2/14th, 2/16th, and 2/27th Battalions of the 7th Division—received honours for broader engagements in the Kokoda Trail Campaign, but not for Kokoda as a standalone battle honour.

These battalions were recognised with honours:

- Kokoda Trail"
- "Isurava"
- "Efogi–Menari"
- ""Ioribaiwa"
- "Oivi–Gorari"

These honours reflect the extended campaign from July to November 1942, rather than the initial stand at Kokoda village, an action that defined the 39th Battalion's legacy.

The Australian War Memorial confirmsd that while many units contributed heroically to the campaign, the 39th Battalion's lone defence of Kokoda village earned it the singular distinction of "Kokoda".

Ancient Lights in England: A Legal Right Etched in Stone and Signs

In many older buildings across England—especially in London, Dorset, and Kent—you'll find curious plaques or signs beneath windows reading **"Ancient Lights."** These are not decorative flourishes; they mark a legal right rooted in centuries-old English property law.

The term refers to the *Right to Light*, a legal easement that allows a property owner to receive natural light through a window if that window has enjoyed uninterrupted daylight for **20 years or more**.

Once established, this right prevents neighbours from obstructing the light—whether by building walls, planting trees, or erecting new structures.

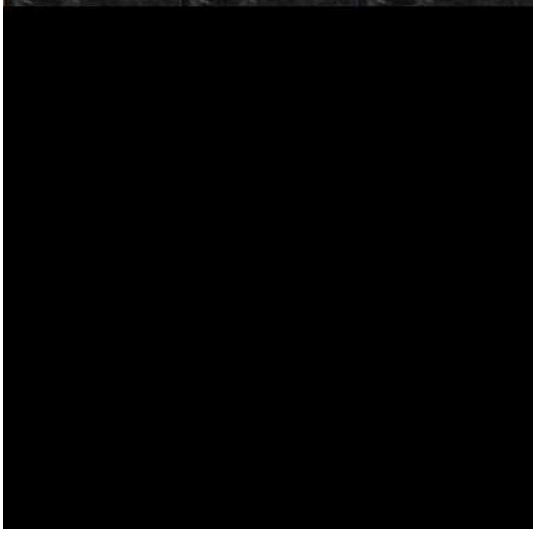
The Execution of Australian commando Sergeant Leonard Siffleet.

Blindfolded or execution. Australian commando Sergeant Leonard Siffleet (left), Private Pattiwahl and Private Reharin of Dutch East Indies Forces

Sergeant Leonard George Siffleet, was an Australian commando during World War Two.

Born in 1916 in Gunnedah, New South Wales, Siffleet joined the Second Australian Imperial Force in 1941 and later became part of the M Special Unit of the Services Reconnaissance Department.

In 1943, while on a mission in Papua New Guinea, Siffleet and his team were captured by partisan tribesmen and handed over to Japanese forces.



Acknowledgement to Australian War Memorial

After weeks of torture and mistreatment, Siffleet was executed by beheading on October 24, 1943, at Aitape Beach, New Guinea. The execution was carried out by Japanese naval officer Yasuno Chikao.

During the New Guinea campaign Australian soldiers found the undeveloped film on a dead Japanese soldier.

When developed it showed the haunting photograph of Siffleet's execution, ordered by the Japanese officer, captured the grim moment and became an iconic image of the brutality faced by prisoners of war.

Published in Australian Newspapers on Wednesday 19 July 1950,

Charged With Beheading War Prisoners

LOS NEGROS, Tuesday. -The Japanese had probably executed two Australian prisoners of war because they belonged to a commando unit which had been inflicting heavy damage on their forces in Bougainville, Lt. Colonel Kiyoshi Miyakawa told the War Crimes Court here to-day. Miyakawa and three other Japanese soldiers are charged with murder by beheading two A.I.F sergeant of the First Australian Independent (Commando) Company and of an R.A.A.F corporal at Maika, on South Bougainville, in August 1943.

Cross-examined by the Prosecutor (Major Alex McKay) he said the Australian unit had inflicted heavy damages on the 6th Japanese Division, which was under the command of the I7th Army, where he was intelligence officer and responsible for the prisoners.

He thought other reasons for the execution could have been that transportation to the rear had been discontinued; the Americans were about to land on Bougainville and the Japanese forces were expected to fight to the last man; the Army commander Lt General Haruyoshi Hyakutake who ordered the executions, had suffered a miserable defeat on Guadalcanal, and was mentally exhausted.

The prosecution claims that Miyakawa arbitrarily ordered the executions without referring to the commanding general or senior staff officer.

Miyakawa told Major McKay that the Japanese were hostile towards, the Australians because they had caused the deaths of many Japanese soldiers.

Major McKay suggested that the Japanese beheaded the prisoners because they planned to make an all-out suicide attack against the Americans, and no Japanese serving on Bougainville expected to be alive after the war.

Colonel Kiyoshi Miyakawa was found guilty of war Crimes on the 27th July 1950 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

A few forgetton gems of Australian history

Emus – the enemy.

In 1932 in Western Australia, Australia deployed soldiers armed with Lewis guns and ten thousand rounds to defeat the estimated 20,000 emus decimating farming land granted to returned WW1 soldiers. The cull was not as successful as fist thought as the emus spread into small groups in the bush defeating the military that performed a 'tactical' retreat after one month.

Rum was once Australia's currency.

For the first 25 years of the colony Rum was the currency of New South Wales due to the shortage of coins circulating. This prevailed until about 1813 when the purchase of Spanish pesos was made and used with their centre punched out, and this become known as a dump. The dump was worth one shilling while the holy dollar that remained was valued at five shillings.

Australia invented the plastic banknote.

Plastic notes were developed by the Reserve Bank of Australia, in conjunction with the CSIRO and the University of Melbourne and issued in 1988 during Australia's Bicentenary. The technology was adopted by large number of other countries, and while the United States were initially interested, the population turned against the change of the 'green back.'

New Zealand was almost part of Australia.

When the federation of Australia was in the process of self-government of the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia to form one nation, Fiji and New Zealand were originally part of this process, but both declined to join the federation. Shame as we would have then had a better Rugby team.

Exploits of the Australian Army

During World War Two the Australian Army was the first to defeat the Germans in Tobruk in 1941 and the Japanese at Kokoda in 1942.

Woman's Rights

Australia was the first nation to give women both voting rights and the right to sit in office. South Australia gave voting rights in 1895 with Western Australia following in 1899 while Edith Cowan was elected to the Legislative Assembly in Perth in 1921.

Fortune Telling

Up until 2005 it was illegal in Victoria to be a fortune teller, tarot card reader or a witch.

Australia's size.

Australia is such a vast country that it has been assessed it would be conceivable to detonate a nuclear bomb in the inland that few if any occupants of the country would be aware happening.

Tamworth

Electric Street lights replaced gas lights in Tamworth in 1888, to become the first city in Australia and the first in the Southern Hemisphere to use electricity lighting.

Daytime swimming illegal

Until 1902 in Australia it was illegal to beach swim in daylight. This was tested that year when a male entered the water at Manly beach and was arrested, however charges never prevailed, and surf swimming became popular.

Batmania

Before being officially names, Melbourne has several names including Batmania, Bearbrass, Bareport, Bareheep and Barehurp.

Australian Rules

Renowned as a Victorian religion, Aussie Rules was invented by a New South Welshman Thomas Willis born in Queanbeyan. After attended Rugby school in England where he played an early form of Rugby he returned to Melbourne in 1856, he amended to rules of the game he knew from England and Australian Rules was born.

So happy to have the umbrella. Wouldn't want to get wet.

An Australian Who Knew How to Die - a story of Corporal Rodney Breavington published in August 1948. By a digger POW who served with him.

ROD was a Police Constable stationed at Northcote (Vic.), residing at I think Dennis. Enlisting towards the end of 1941, he sailed in January 1942, with the rank of Corporal. He was a likeable chap, and, during action knew no fear.

Before we left Changi on a working party we had many talks of home, past and future, of his wife and little girl. The last time I saw him, he said, "I'll give this life six months." He left for Bukit Timah, a camp from which they were to build a Shrine for the Japanese.

Rod, along with several other men, planned to escape. All gave up the idea, except a young soldier, named Gale, and Rod. Together, they got a boat one night and paddled away with coconuts and a small supply of food. They travelled 200 miles, calling at various small islands scattered through the waters of Java. They were warned not to call at one particular island.
Both men being weak from the effects of malaria and dysentery, they decided they would have to and, upon landing were captured. In due course they were shipped back to Changi and admitted to the camp hospital.

After several weeks, Rod was almost well when the Japs asked our C.O. to get his men to sign a non-escape paper, which was refused as being contrary to the Geneva Convention. That evening, Rod talking to a friend, spoke of his plans for the future, of how he was going to get a country station, a few cows, etc and settle down to a quiet life.

The following morning the Japs took Rod, Gale, and two English soldiers down to the beach to he shot as an example to the men for refusing to sign the non-escape paper. As they lined them up before the Siki firing squad Rod begged for Gale's life, stating that, as a corporal, he had ordered the boy to go with him, but his pleading was of no avail. With his arms supporting the boy they faced the firing squad, and the traitorous Siki let them have it.

After being hit about eleven times Rod fell. As he fell, he half turned and saluted his senior officers. Brigadier Galleghan, now in Berlin, described Rod as the bravest man he ever saw, and a screed, was read to all ranks on the incident.
Footnote: The Jap upon whose orders these men were executed has since been shot at the same place. For his escape attempt and brave stand to save his friend, Breavington was posthumously Mentioned in Dispatches.

The American Lieutenant Who Fought at Shaggy Ridge

The battle for Shaggy Ridge, a razor-thin mountain ridge in New Guinea, was one of the most gruelling engagements of the Pacific War. The Australian 7th Division, tasked with capturing this strategic high ground, faced fierce resistance from entrenched Japanese forces. Amidst the Australian ranks, an unexpected figure stood out—Lieutenant T. Roberts, a U.S. Army Air Force pilot who had temporarily traded his cockpit for the muddy, blood-soaked slopes of Shaggy Ridge.

Roberts, a P-38 Lightning pilot, had been granted a 21-day leave from his air squadron. Instead of resting, he chose to embed himself with the 2/16th Australian Infantry Battalion, 21st Brigade. His decision was driven by a deep admiration for the Australian troops and a desire to experience combat from the ground.

The Australians welcomed him with open arms, amused yet impressed by the American officer's determination. He was issued a rifle and basic infantry gear, and within days, he found himself scaling the treacherous slopes of Shaggy Ridge.

On December 27, 1943, the Australians launched their attack. The ridge was heavily fortified, with Japanese machine-gun nests and bunkers dug into the steep terrain. The battle began with a massive artillery bombardment, followed by airstrikes from Kittyhawk aircraft, manned by both Australian and American pilots.

Roberts fought alongside B Company as they advanced toward The Pimple, a key Japanese stronghold. The fighting was brutal—hand-to-hand combat, grenades tossed into dugouts, and relentless enemy fire. Roberts, despite his lack of infantry training, held his own, firing his rifle and assisting wounded soldiers.

During the assault, Roberts spotted an Australian soldier pinned down by enemy fire. Without hesitation, he crawled forward under a hail of bullets, dragging the wounded man to safety. His actions earned him the

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respect of his Australian comrades, who later joked that he had earned honorary citizenship through sheer bravery.

By December 28, the Australians had secured The Pimple, but the battle was far from over. The Japanese launched counterattacks, forcing Roberts and his unit to dig in and hold their ground. The fighting continued for days, with the Australians slowly pushing forward, capturing McCaughey's Knoll and other key positions.

Roberts survived the battle, exhausted but exhilarated. His brief stint as an infantryman left a lasting impression on him, and he later recounted his experiences to fellow American pilots, praising the grit and determination of the Australian soldiers.

The battle for Shaggy Ridge was ultimately a success, paving the way for further Allied advances in New Guinea. Roberts returned to his air squadron, but his time on the ground remained one of the most defining moments of his military career.

Issue of Medals to a Cardiff sub-Branch Second World War Veteran.

Following the cessation of hostilities, there was considerable debate in the Australian Federal Parliament during the immediate post-war period regarding how to deal with the **7,879 members of the armed forces** who had been declared **illegal absentees** between 1939 and 1945. The key questions centred on whether they were entitled to receive **discharge certificates**, as well as **access to rehabilitation benefits** and **War Service Homes**.

This uncertainty led to conflicting interpretations of regulations — a situation that affected one member of our sub-branch directly. At the end of the war, he was serving time in *"the clink"* — officially known as the **Military Corrections Establishment at Ingleburn** — after several bouts of drunkenness.

One day, a supervising sergeant told him that he would **never receive his war medals** because he was "locked up," and for decades, he didn't. By the 1990s, when someone finally asked him where his medals were, the story emerged. It took no time at all for the **sub-branch executive** to step in and have his long-uncollected medals issued — a small but meaningful gesture of justice, long overdue. Yes, tears flowed.

Fatal Error

By a digger who was there published 1947

Don R (Dispatch rider) heavily goggled, bent low over the handlebars as he roared past the outer sentry post on a Malayan Road.

But the second post warned by telephone from the first, was waiting and the DR rode into a storm of bullets.

British uniform and a Norton motor cycle he could have been one of ours, but he was a Jap. In his pocket were found maps showing the disposition of our troops.

He had made one mistake. Slung across his back he carried a rifle and fixed bayonet, British Don R's are armed with pistols.

Vegan food is not really that bad once you add meat and cheese to it.

REAL HEADLINES PUBLISHED IN NEWSPAPERS.

- MUDDY CREEK PROBLEM – IT'S TOO MUDDY.
- DELIGHT AS MAN GROWS BANANA IN GARDEN.
- TIGHT END RETURNS AFTER COLON SURGERY.
- TIPS TO AVOID ALLIGATOR ATTACKS – DO NOT SWIM IN WATERS INHABITED BY ALLIGATORS.
- WIFE COMPLAINS BECAUSE HUSBAND WON'T WASH UP.
- CHICK ACCUSES SOME OF HER MALE COLLEAGUES OF SEXISM
- REASON FOR MORE BEAR SIGHTINGS: MORE BEARS.

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British Don R's are armed with pistols.

A two income household and a healthy relationship is so important. Make sure you make your husband lunch so he doesn't get hungry at his second job.

Paratrooper Hung Up.

It is well known that the paratroopers deployed on D Day suffered a higher casualties rate that other ground troops, though while unlucky at the start, this soldier was luckier than many.

In the heart of Sainte-Mère-Église, France, a mannequin hangs from the steeple of the village church, commemorating Private John Marvin Steele, an American paratrooper from the 82nd Airborne Division. This poignant memorial serves as a reminder of the extraordinary events that unfolded during the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944.

The D-Day Incident

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY

On that night, Steele and his fellow paratroopers were dropped over Sainte-Mère-Église as part of the Allied invasion of Normandy. Unfortunately, Steele's parachute became entangled on the church steeple, leaving him suspended and vulnerable. For two hours, he pretended to be dead to avoid being shot by German soldiers. Eventually, he was captured by the Germans but managed to escape four hours later and rejoin his unit.

Capture and Escape

Steele was held prisoner along with six other Americans in an enemy command post. Despite the circumstances, he was not mistreated and managed to escape four days later by sneaking through a window. He successfully made it back to the front line and was evacuated to the United Kingdom.

Life After the War

After the war, Steele continued to visit Sainte-Mère-Église and was made an honorary citizen of the village. He maintained a close relationship with its residents until his passing on May 16, 1969, in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Steele was buried in Metropolis, Illinois.

The Legacy

The village of Sainte-Mère-Église honours Steele's bravery with the mannequin on the church steeple, replicating the moment he was caught during the D-Day invasion. The church also features stained glass windows depicting paratroopers, including Steele, and the nearby Airborne Museum commemorates the events of that fateful day.

Visiting the Memorial Today

Today, visitors from around the world come to Sainte-Mère-Église to pay their respects and learn about the history of D-Day. The church, with its mannequin of Steele hanging from the steeple, remains a central attraction. Inside, the stained glass windows serve as a poignant reminder of the paratroopers who landed in the town. The Airborne Museum, located nearby, offers a comprehensive look at the American airborne assault in Normandy, housing relics of the D-Day invasion, including a military transport plane and detailed information on Operation Overlord.

Private John Steele's story is a testament to the courage and determination of the soldiers who fought in World War Two. His legacy lives on in Sainte-Mère-Église, where his memory is preserved for future generations to remember and honour.

Just fired myself from cleaning my house. I don't like my attitude and I got caught drinking on the job.

The Death of George Patton – Was America's most controversial General assassinated?

General George S. Patton was the commanded the U.S. 7th Army in North Africa and Sicily and the U.S. 3rd Army in France and Germany. He died following a road traffic accident in Germany in December 1945, suffering an injury that paralysed him, and he died in hospital some 12 days later, however since the 1970s there have been persistent rumours that he was actually assassinated.

After the German surrender in May 1945, Patton crusaded for a command in the Pacific Theatre of Operations against the Japanese; however the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought the war to an end just three months later. While most of the world celebrated the end of World War Two, Patton was despondent. He wrote in his personal diary on hearing the news of the Japanese surrender, *"Yet another war has come to an end and with it my usefulness to the world."*

He was then appointed Military Governor of Bavaria, but his tenure in that position was short. He retained ex-Nazis in positions of authority in Bavaria, only justifying this by saying it was unavoidable because most people with civil service experience had been forced to join the Nazi party.

Patton's apparent admiration for Germans, referring to them *as "the best race in Europe"*; and his evident anti-Semitism, did not go down well with the majority of Americans immediately after the war and he was outspoken on his favouring continuing the War taking on the USSR. His statements caused outrage in America and on September 28th 1945 Patton was removed as Military Governor of Bavaria. On October 7 he was also relieved of command of the U.S. 3rd Army. Patton was then appointed commander of the U.S. 15th Army, which had no troops and was based in a hotel in Bad Nauheim, Germany. His task looked on as menial, was to compile a history of U.S. involvement in World War Two.

On the morning of Sunday December 9, 1945, Patton set off with his Chief of Staff, Major General Hobart Gay on a pheasant hunting trip near the town of Mannheim. Settings off early in the morning they were being carried in Patton's staff car, a 1938 Model 75 Cadillac driven Patton's regular driver 19 year old Private Horace Woodring and travelling in a convey with a jeep travelling ahead driven by Sergeant Joseph Scruce who was carrying the hunting guns and a dog. Separated from the lead vehicle at a railway crossing when Patton's vehicle had to wait for a train to pass, they again set off after the lead jeep.

(Continued on page 46)

Vehicles in collision

Around 11:45 am travelling along an almost deserted icy road near Mannheim, Germany they were confronted with two U.S. Army trucks parked facing them on the opposite shoulder. As they approached, one of the trucks driven by Private Robert Thompson started to move forward to make a left turn across the path of Patton's car as it was about to pass with the intentions of entering a U.S. Quartermaster's storage area.

Damage to General Patton's staff car.

The right front of the staff car hit the right front of the turning truck. The impact only assessed as slight with the speed of the staff car estimated to have been under 20 miles per hour (30 kph) while the truck's turning speed estimated to about 10 miles per hour, (16 kph) limiting the damage to the right front mudguard of the staff car.

While the truck crew were uninjured Patton who had been sitting in the rear seat on the right side and who had been looking to the side was thrown forward, striking his head on the partition between the front and rear seats.

He was bleeding from a wound to his forehead and unable to move, though he was conscious. An Army ambulance and medics arrived and transported him to 130th Station Hospital of the U.S. 7th Army in Heidelberg situated about fifteen miles (24 kilometres) away and admitted suffering from a gash to the head and a severe dislocation of the vertebrae in his neck which reportedly had caused spinal cord damage and caused paralysis from his neck down.

While doctors decided to make plans to fly the General back to the U.S. for specialist treatment, on the 21st December his wife Beatrice had arrived to visit him at the hospital and was reading to him into the afternoon before taking a break for a meal. While she was eating an orderly came in to tell her that the General was dead.

(Continued on page 47)

(Continued from page 46)

The official cause of death was given as pulmonary oedema and congestive heart failure. Patton was buried in the U.S. Military Cemetery at Hamm in Luxembourg, next to U.S. 3rd Army soldiers who had died during the Battle of the Bulge.

For thirty years until 1974 there seemed no doubt that death was anything but a tragic accident until in 1974, the novel *The Oshawa Project* by British thriller writer Frederick W. Nolan was published in the United States. This featured the story of a plot by President Truman and General Eisenhower to assassinate a troublesome American General in the period just after the end of World War Two. While never named in the novel, pundits have concluded that the assassinated general in the novel who was cast as being a legendary war hero who is also the Military Governor of Bavaria and an outspoken critic of the Soviet Union. It seems to be clearly based on Patton.

In the space of thirty-five years, between the publication of 'THE ALGONQUIN PROJECT' in 1974 and 'TARGET: PATTON' in 2008, the possibility that General Patton had been assassinated moved from being the plot of a work of fiction to being regarded by some people as historical fact.

5 Deadly terms used by women

Fine - This is the word women use in an argument when she knows she is right, and you need to shut up.

Nothing - Means something, and you need to be worried.

Go Ahead - This is a dare not permission. Don't do it!

Whatever - A woman's way of saying, 'Screw you."

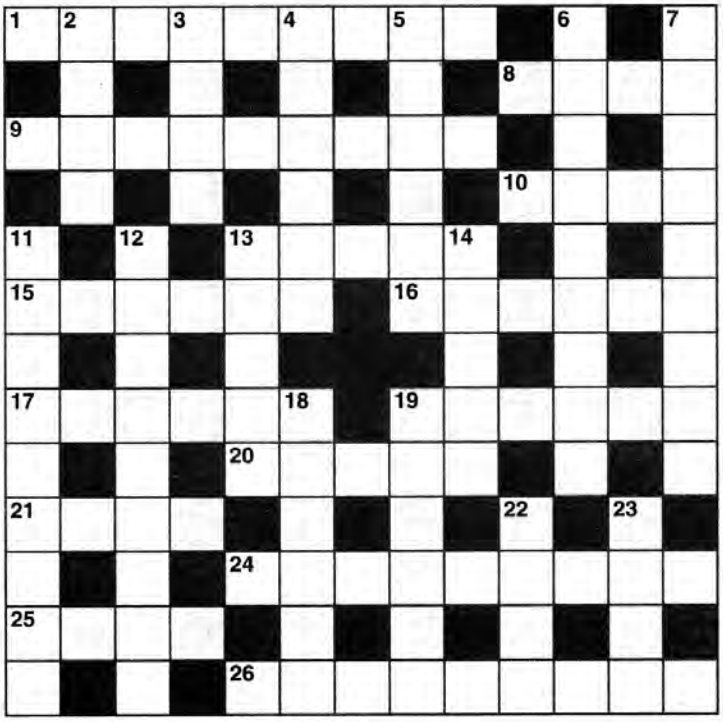
That's Okay - She is thinking long and hard on how and when you will pay for you mistake.

WOW - This not a compliment, she is amazed that one person could be so stupid.

Crossword No.29

(Solution on page 51)

29 THE Sun



ACROSS

1 Abandoned community (5,4)
8 ___ Major, constellation (4)
9 Tiny grey-shelled creature (9)
10 Fencing sword (4)
13 Computer data (5)
15 Destitution (6)
16 *Friends* character (6)
17 Spicy sauce, pickle (6)
19 Bought off (6)
20 Notorious biblical king (5)
21 Baby sheep (4)
24 Emphasise (9)
25 Italian volcano (4)
26 Soft rich cheese (9)

DOWN

2 Head-cover (4)
3 Aerated water (4)
4 Prickly (6)
5 Do the dishes (4,2)
6 Called in (7,2)
7 W African island state (4,5)
11 Corkscrewed (9)
12 Adverse (weather) (9)
13 From Dublin, perhaps (5)
14 In the bronze position (5)
18 ___ Bonham Carter, actress (6)
19 Clyde's partner in crime (6)
22 Hair tidier (4)
23 Old wound mark (4)

34

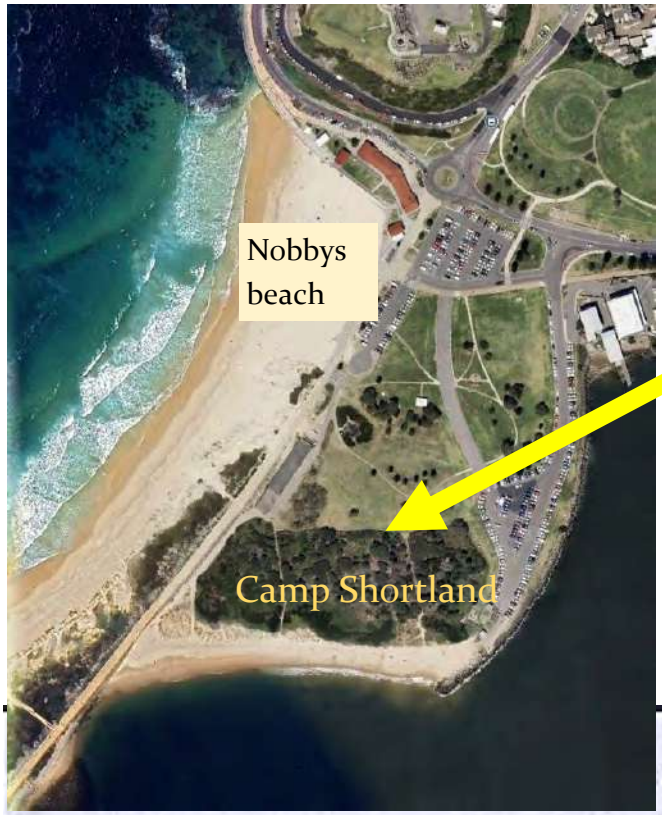
Word search No. 29

(Solution on page 51)

29 Massage

T	J	T	F	A	Y	C	J	X	T	Q	K	T	A	A
S	T	X	R	F	I	U	T	L	X	U	S	Q	Q	T
J	R	W	S	O	N	B	U	R	M	E	S	E	U	C
E	D	Y	C	R	A	N	I	O	S	A	C	R	A	L
S	B	I	O	D	Y	N	A	M	I	C	K	U	T	U
U	T	H	E	R	A	P	E	U	T	I	C	S	I	L
E	U	S	S	I	T	T	F	O	S	Y	S	S	C	Z
S	H	I	A	T	S	U	A	H	M	J	S	E	B	S
S	W	E	D	I	S	H	B	B	P	R	E	R	O	T
A	A	N	O	I	T	A	X	A	L	E	R	P	D	R
M	T	C	S	Y	T	U	I	N	A	E	T	U	Y	O
D	S	O	K	H	E	A	L	I	N	G	S	C	W	P
U	U	Q	A	C	I	D	E	V	R	U	Y	A	O	S
M	V	I	Y	G	O	L	O	X	E	L	F	E	R	O
T	T	E	H	P	O	S	L	W	I	U	Z	T	K	U

ACUPRESSURE
AQUATIC BODYWORK
AYURVEDIC
BIODYNAMIC
BURMESE
CRANIOSACRAL
HEALING
MASSEUSE
REFLEXOLOGY
RELAXATION
SHIATSU
SOFT TISSUE
SPORTS
STRESS
SWEDISH
TABLE
THAI
THERAPEUTIC
TUI NA
TURKISH BATH
WATSU



LOCATION OF NEWCASTLE'S LOST CAMP SHORTLAND

Camp Shortland was associated with amphibious Army units, particularly during the mid-20th century. Notably, in 1954, the camp was the starting point for a training exercise involving amphibious Citizen Military Forces units, including the 15th Northern Rivers Lancers and the 16th Company, Royal Australian Army Service Corps. This exercise led to the tragic Stockton Bight disaster, where severe weather caused several amphibious vehicles to flounder, resulting in the loss of three soldiers. The event is remembered as one of Australia's worst peacetime military tragedies while the camp is forgotten.

Crossword solution No. 29

No. 29

G	H	O	S	T	T	O	W	N	■	D	■	C
■	O	■	O	■	H	■	A	■	U	R	S	A
W	O	O	D	L	O	U	S	E	■	O	■	P
■	D	■	A	■	R	■	H	■	E	P	E	E
S	■	I	■	I	N	P	U	T	■	P	■	V
P	E	N	U	R	Y	■	P	H	O	E	B	E
I	■	C	■	I	■	■	■	I	■	D	■	R
R	E	L	I	S	H	■	B	R	I	B	E	D
A	■	E	■	H	E	R	O	D	■	Y	■	E
L	A	M	B	■	L	■	N	■	C	■	S	■
L	■	E	■	R	E	I	N	F	O	R	C	E
E	T	N	A	■	N	■	I	■	M	■	A	■
D	■	T	■	C	A	M	E	M	B	E	R	T

Word Search No. 29 solution

29

T	J	T	F	A	Y	C	J	X	T	Q	K	T	A	A
S	T	X	R	F	I	U	T	L	X	U	S	Q	Q	T
J	R	W	S	O	N	B	U	R	M	E	S	E	U	C
E	D	Y	C	R	A	N	I	O	S	A	C	R	A	L
S	B	I	O	D	Y	N	A	M	I	C	K	U	T	U
U	T	H	E	R	A	P	E	U	T	I	C	S	I	L
E	U	S	S	I	T	T	F	O	S	Y	S	S	C	Z
S	H	I	A	T	S	U	A	H	M	J	S	E	B	S
S	W	E	D	I	S	H	B	B	P	R	E	R	O	T
A	A	N	O	I	T	A	X	A	L	E	R	P	D	R
M	T	C	S	Y	T	U	I	N	A	E	T	U	Y	O
D	S	O	K	H	E	A	L	I	N	G	S	C	W	P
U	U	Q	A	C	I	D	E	V	R	U	Y	A	O	S
M	V	I	Y	G	O	L	O	X	E	L	F	E	R	O
T	T	E	H	P	O	S	L	W	I	U	Z	T	K	U

Disclaimer

This magazine is intended to provide general information, insight, and perspectives relevant to veterans and their families. It does not constitute professional, medical, or legal guidance and recommendations. Any reliance you might place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.

While we strive to ensure every effort is made to present factual information, it is acknowledged that some historical articles could be exposed to historical interpretations that may vary.

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While external resources and websites are accessed and cross referenced for accuracy, it is acknowledged that inaccuracies can occur, and it is appreciated when corrections and feedback is provided.