



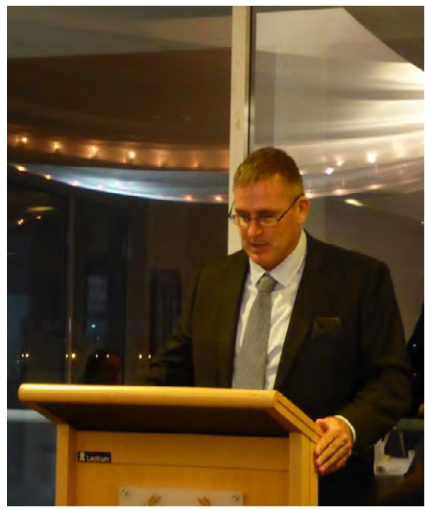
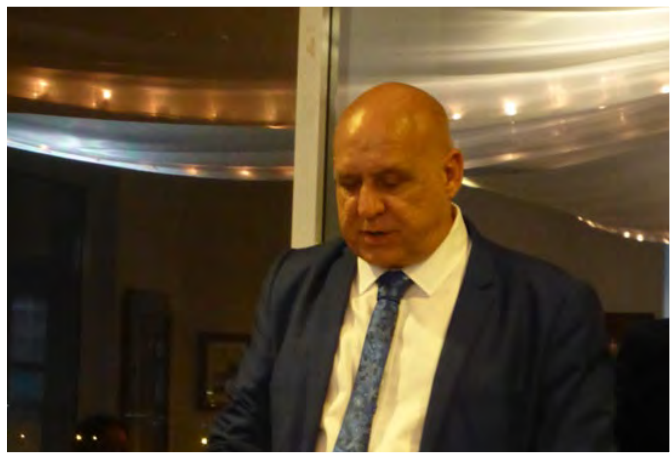
Farewell Henry



In January this year, the museum said farewell to major Henry Fijolek, who retired after 18 years as Museum Manager. During his time as manager, Henry oversaw some momentous changes to the museum, which have taken it to the pinnacle of military museums in Australia and it is considered as the “Jewel in the Crown” within the Australian Army History Unit. Henry always put the Museum first and had an open-door policy so anybody was always welcome to have a chat with him.

The Foundation Board arranged a farewell dinner for Henry at the South Perth Yacht Club, attended by all army staff with their wives/husbands/partners, board members and their wives/husbands as well as several of the museum’s long-standing ex staff.

It was a wonderful night of food and drink and after welcoming everybody, MC and incoming Museum Manager Steve Muir presented Henry with a framed print of an iconic sketch of a soldier on behalf of the Australian Army History Unit. Foundation Chairman Graeme Smith then presented Henry with a Jarrah medal box engraved with his beloved Armoured Corps Badge, on behalf of the Foundation and all of the volunteers. Henry responded in typical Henry fashion with a hilarious speech and all in all a great, fun night. Farewell Henry, we wish you well in your future endeavours and don’t be a stranger.





AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA MANAGEMENT

Museum Manager
Capt. Stephen Muir

**Museum Assistant
Manager**
Capt. Sean Collopy

Museum Curator
Steven Sinclair

Museum Deputy Curator
Richard Bennett

FOUNDATION DIRECTORATE

Chairman
Graeme Smith

Deputy Chairman
Garry Hugo

**Treasurer/
Company Secretary**
Peter Dennis

Directors
Lisa Devlyn
Bruce Hamling
Dianne Hornby
Geoff Murray

Marketing Manager
Julianne Mackay

From the Museum Manager



The start of 2022 has seen many changes at the AAMWA and it was with sadness that we farewelled Major Henry Fijolek after 17 years. Henry was

a great ambassador for the Army and responsible for so many improvements and innovations over the years that his legacy will be remembered for many years to come. Thankfully, we haven't seen the last of Henry and he has been back to visit a couple of times since formally departing on 20 January.

We also said farewell to our long-term volunteer Terry Irwin, who passed away in March. Terry was a stalwart member of the team who mainly attended the Museum on Fridays. Terry was a very private person and unfortunately very few people got to know his history, and the fact that he served for many years in both the Regular and Reserve Army, and that he was a passionate musician.

In addition to all of this, our long-term custodian of the textiles collection, and diligent Duty Officer, Frank Beardmore resigned. I'd like to personally thank Frank for his many years of dedicated service and wish him well in future endeavours.

Finally, I am sorry to announce that Warrant Officer Class Two George Stratton will be leaving us at the end of June 2022. George has had a very long and distinguished career in the Army and will be retiring to spend time with his wife Deb and his large collection of artefacts ranging from oil tins to Furphy Tank ends. We wish him well and hope that he will drop in for a brew and a chat every now and again.

It isn't all bad news though!

We welcomed our new Assistant Manager Captain Sean Collopy to the Army staff in March. Sean spent 17 years

as a military policeman in the Regular Army and after a break from the Army he has now returned and brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge. He has blended well with the team and has already started to make several changes and improvements around the place. Hopefully he will do a better job than the last Assistant Manager.

Later this year we will also be welcoming Warrant Officer Class One Mal Anderson, who will be replacing George. Mal is a RAEME soldier and we look forward to him coming on board.

We will soon be able to place our collection of Victoria Cross medals on permanent display, and the O'Meara VC will also be returning to Australia in August this year, so we will once again have one of the largest publicly viewable collections of Victoria Crosses in Australia. This is mostly thanks to the hard work of AHU staff in Canberra and our own Curatorial department.

One other significant event that occurred during the first half of 2022 was the visit from Head of Army History Unit, Mr Tim Gellel, manager Army Heritage Mr Neil Daley and AHU's Liaison to the Australian War memorial Ms Leah Herdman. We have not had a visit for almost two years due to Covid restrictions so it was wonderful to host this visit and all of our visitors remarked enthusiastically that the volunteers at the AAMWA were doing fantastic work and that you all deserved the highest praise.

I am hopeful that once we are finally free of Covid we can return to our old ways and re-introduce major events like the Sunset Concert, but in the meantime I'd like to thank all of the volunteers for your hard work and dedication. It hasn't been easy dealing with the changes in policy and working conditions that have been forced upon us by Covid, but you have all maintained your enthusiasm, professionalism and excellent work ethic, without which the AAMWA could not function.

Steve Muir

Captain
Manager AAMWA

Chairman's Report



COVID – 19 is still affecting the running of the Museum, a number of volunteers have still not been able to return from our 12-month closure, some have not bothered to contact the museum and some have not been

vaccinated. This makes it very difficult to open our gates on Saturdays.

Museum volunteer numbers are now down to 83, at this stage it is not a concern, I am certain in a few months things will be picking up un regards to volunteer numbers. Other volunteer organizations are also down in numbers, so the pool is getting smaller and smaller.

As we all know, COVID spoiled our Museum Family Day in March but 5th November is our proposed family day (Discovery Day).

International Women's Day at the museum was a great success thanks to marketing and Curatorial, \$900 was made through this event.

With a couple of proposed late-night openings during the school holidays and a couple of Back to the Barracks lectures, hopefully we will be able to replenish our bank accounts.

The Shop /Reception area is nearly finished and hopefully new lighting will enhance it even further. Second- hand book sales have been a great success, and a fridge has been placed in the shop on a trial basis, from which we sell drinks.

The 2-pounder gun pit should be completed very soon.

The AAHU visit was a success, they promised items which will be arriving very soon, which saved the Foundation many of dollars, they are also going to pick up the cost of Museum shirts another win for the museum.

The Museum is in good shape and I thank all volunteers for their hard work for the past six months.

Graeme Smith
Chairman



LEST WE FORGET

VALE

Terry Irwin

From the Curator



As we approach the end of the financial year, I reflect on the past year at the museum and it has once again been a very busy year for us all.

The activity level within the museum with its program over the past 12 months along with the workload in Curatorial has kept all of us actively engaged. There has been a hive of activity which has added a positive atmosphere in the curatorial dept and produced many completed tasks and projects.

The key events that stand out have been the Night at the Museum, The launch of the Lorimer Art display, Museum Family Day, and the Army open day. These activities, with the donation of the Mackenzie Smith research papers, the display of the regimental Colours for the RWAR function and the reopening of the refurbished VC gallery have all added to the richness of the museum's life and content.

Donations continue to be an area of growth with continued offers of material to the museum.

We have been well supported by AHU HQ with funding for several projects and the provision of items of value including a new Data Projector, two large new Map Cases, with another two to come, a new Camera, picture frames for the Lorimer display and a large quantity of archival materials.

The year has also produced the ongoing problem of display maintenance, both within the internal displays and the external on-going battle with the environment that the external displays live in. Curatorial has dealt with the continuous maintenance throughout the past year. The museum workshop has been doing some heavy lifting with the completion of the preservation of the Staghound and commenced the preservation of the Stuart Tank along with providing support to museum functions and events.

Curatorial have been focusing on the value adding to the existing galleries and displays with several additions of nomenclature and story boards to displays. This project is ongoing.

We have successfully run an International Women's Day event with 65 visitors attending over three days.

The coming 12 months will again be busy with events and specific activities to enhance the museums stature in the public arena. I look forward to working with you all and thank you for your support and ongoing commitment to the museum.

Stephen Sinclair

Curator

New Meets Old

On the 7th of August 2021 the Royal Western Australia Regiment (RWAR) celebrated its 61st Birthday of the formation of the Regiment (60th anniversary delayed in 2020 due to Covid). The Regiment consists of 11Bn RWAR, 16th Bn RWAR and the 28th Bn RWAR which some time ago was amalgamated with the 11TH Bn to form 11/28th Bn RWAR. All the units of RWAR have their origins in ANZAC units and early Australian colonial units and the RWAR is today part of 13 Bde based at Irwin Barracks in Karrakatta Perth.

Prior to the event being held, the Army Museum of Western Australia was approached as to what history or artifacts that the museum had and could provide/display at the event to contribute to the celebration and history of the units of the Regiment.

After much discussion and in-depth research in the museum it was suggested that perhaps the preserved past Colours of the 3 Bns which are held in the museum collection of laid up unit colours could form part of the overall occasion. The theme of the suggestion was the presence of the current and the past, a celebration of history and the present.

So, on the morning of the 5th Aug the laid up colours for 11Bn, 16th Bn and 28th Bn were removed from the museum display cases and

moved to Irwin barracks, the home of 13 Bde where the celebration would happen on the 7th of August.

On the evening of the 7th Aug the function was held with the principal guests of three past Bde Comds and the current Comd Brig Brett Chaloner CSC.

The laid up colours were displayed across the floor of the drill hall where the function was held. (In the order of the battalions that make the RWAR).

In the photo you will see that the current battalion colours hang from the roof above the old colours of the Bns.

This rare photo is we think quite unique given the age of the laid up colours and paraded with the current colours of the three Battalions of the RWAR.

It was a significant event that was well received and the colours attracted great interest and questions as to their history and background.

This event is an example of the contribution that the Army Museum of WA and Army History Unit was able to make to a very special event within Army.



New meets Old

LAID UP COLOURS IN ORDER (L - R)

1. 1st infantry (WA Volunteers) 28th May 1896 – later 11th Inf Bn
2. Reg Colour – 1st & 11th Bn 1911
3. Reg Colour – 11th Bn 1929
4. Queens & Reg Colour 16th Bn 1951
5. Queens Colour 28th Bn 1921 & Reg Colour 28th Bn 1927

SUSPENDED ABOVE – the actual current Bn Colours in order: 11Bn, 16Bn, 28Bn.

Museum Christmas Party 2021



Cpl Kristy Boyd receives her Award



Robert Mitchell receives his Commendation



Brian Houlston receives his Commendation



Bob Wise receives his Commendation



Steve Fleming receives his Commendation

The museum held its annual Christmas party on Sunday 19th of December 2021. The foundation chairman Graeme Smith welcomed guests in the lecture room and outlined the achievements of the museum over the preceding 12 months, including continuing to operate under fairly harsh Covid restrictions and the chairman gave particular notice to our volunteers who worked under these conditions and helped the museum to remain open.

Colonel Mark Sweetman, the Deputy Commander of 13th Brigade was in attendance to present a Bronze Commendation to Cpl Kristy Boyd for her outstanding work. There were also four Australian Army History Unit commendations for their outstanding efforts, presented to Bob Wise, Robert Mitchell, Brian Houlston and Steve Fleming. These were presented by the Manager

Major Henry Fijolek at his last museum Christmas party before retiring early in the new year. The chairman then presented long service pins to volunteers as follows:

15 Years

Patrick Sobon
Bill Tennant
Bill Thorpe

10 Years

Len Cullen
Mary Goldthorpe
Bruce Hamling
Igor Iskra
Max Page

5 Years

Laurie Carroll
Peter Harding
Jennifer Hegney
Garry Hugo
Pam Mikus
Daren Sinclair

Awards Presentation May 2022

At the regular Wednesday meeting on the 25th of May, Foundation Chairman made some very prestigious presentations to some very deserving volunteers.

Under the Department of Communities WA Volunteer Service Awards scheme, the museum nominated six of our volunteers who have completed twenty-five years or more and four of those volunteers were selected, a wonderful achievement indeed.

Peter Shaw, who has over 40 years volunteer service to his credit at the museum, was unfortunately unable to attend and his award will be presented at a later date.

Awards were presented to Helen Birch, Gil Bulliard and Andrew Pittaway and all are very worthy recipients and are to be congratulated.

A recent foundation board decision to present volunteers with a museum plaque who, for one reason or another, leave the museum after completing ten years service meant that Plaques were presented to Bill Thorpe and David Nicolson. However, Thelma Chilton was unable to attend and her plaque will be presented later.



Gill Bulliard with Graeme Smith



Andrew Pittaway with Graeme Smith



Bill Thorpe with Graeme Smith



David Nicolson with Graeme Smith



Helen Birch and Chairman Graeme Smith

A Tome Of History

In mid-August 2021 the museum received an offer of becoming the owner of a significant volume of research material.

This offer came from a prominent Military Historian by the name of Graham McKenzie Smith. Graham contacted the museum and made the offer of the museum receiving the research documents he assembled over a period of some 30+ years.

The material on offer was the foundation of Grahams last publication - set of 6 volumes of 3000 pages:

The Unit Guide, the Australian Army: in a six-volume boxed set, it seeks to fill the gap of history of Army units with no published histories with more than 5500 profiles of units in the Australian Army during the war 1939 – 45 (which between them had over 13,700-unit names).

Graham indicated during his offer that the content of the research library was well indexed and filed.

To our surprise when we decided to accept the offer of the Tome there where 90 lever Arch files of over 30,000 pages of research material

In planning for the material to be transported to the museum there where 25 Archive boxes of files required to successfully complete the handover. The documents now reside in the museum Resource Centre.

Secrets Of World War II

SECRET No. 1

In the event of a Japanese invasion, our Army chiefs planned to abandon all of Australia that lay west of a line running from a point north of Brisbane to Melbourne.

Under this Brisbane Line plan, only the south-east corner of Australia would be defended.

The matter was made public for the first time in October 1942 by Mr E.J. (Eddie) Ward, Minister for Labour and National Service in John Curtin's Labor Cabinet.

Mr Ward claimed that previous non-Labor governments had planned the line. But this brought denials from the Menzies-Fadden United Australia party-Country party coalition and Opposition members joined with the government in endorsing a defence plan for the whole of Australia.

When Mr Ward repeated his charges in June 1943 and said that a document which supported his charges was missing from official files, a Royal Commission was appointed by Prime Minister Curtin to investigate the matter. The enquiry found that no document was missing and Mr Ward was made to withdraw some of his remarks.

But a Brisbane Line DID exist. Long before the attack on Pearl Harbour and the fall of Singapore, the Army had drawn up plans to come into effect if the Japanese invaded Australia.

In February 1942 Sir Iven Mackay, who had been recalled from Commanding Officer of the 6th Division in the Middle East to become General Officer Commanding Home Forces, asked the Government to recognise the principle of a concentration of forces in certain places.

The recommended concentration was to be east of a line from Melbourne to Brisbane. The defence of the rest of Australia was to be left to troops already there – and local people.

Sir Iven said it might be necessary to submit to Japanese occupation of some areas. He told the government that it could be necessary to accept such a possibility.

According to Army minister Frank Forde, the Chief of the general Staff, Lieutenant-General Sir Vernon Sturdee, agreed with Sir Iven.

Mr Curtin said the Government and the Opposition had rejected the advice of the generals.

But in a memo to all army leaders AFTER this, Sir Iven said that subject to there being no direction from the Government to the contrary, no part of Australia outside the Brisbane Line was to be reinforced.

All those people who were to be kicked out in the cold and sacrificed to the Japanese under the Australian Army plan were suddenly welcomed back into the fold when America's General Douglas MacArthur arrived on March

17, 1942, to take over as Supreme Commander.

The very next day, he entirely disagreed with the plan. He said it was defeatist. The battle for Australia would not be fought here, it would be fought in the islands.

And on the same date, March 18, 1942, America's President Roosevelt cabled Britain's Prime Minister Churchill: Australia must be held and we are willing to undertake that. So, no thanks to the Australian Government (even with a West Australian Prime Minister) or the Australian army chiefs, Western Australia would be defended.

SECRET No. 2

After Japan had bombed Darwin, Broome, Wyndham, Derby and Port Hedland, Lieutenant-General Bennett called in top intelligence officers Colonel W. E. Robinson and Major Reg Nicholas to make an immediate start on a civilian evacuation plan.

He said they were to make the State Government agree to, and work with them on a plan to be put into action immediately there was an invasion.

It was to be for women and children, and older men who were not in essential services and could help care for the women and children.

The General stressed that the Japanese had ravaged women, and even children, in the countries they had overrun.

The plan drawn up was:

Metropolitan Area, and towns on the way – to the Eastern States or Eastern Goldfields.

North Coastal – to the Murchison.

South and South-West – to Coolgardie and South Australia.

The General then sent a TOP SECRET letter, by Army Couriers, to the heads of municipalities on or near the Kalgoorlie line telling them the war situation was so grave that arrangements had to be made for the evacuation of women and children.

He told the council chiefs they had a duty to do. They had to provide reception committees, soup kitchens and meals. They had to find homes in the towns or on farms for the people for the people to be evacuated.

The Army had already sent men to these towns to check every house: how many rooms, how much verandah space, how many occupants.

In addition, the Council chiefs were told to check on how many water tanks they had and how much water they could store in case something happened to Mundaring Weir or the Kalgoorlie pipeline.

Secrets Of World War II (Continued)



Did you know?

The Japanese were the first to lay a wreath on our War Memorial in Kings Park. The training ships Idzumo and Yakoumo entered Fremantle Harbour on June 16, 1928. There was a civic reception for the visitors in the Perth City Council chambers. Archbishop Riley, the Anglican Archbishop of Perth addressed a big crowd that gathered to see Vice-Admiral Kobayashi lay a wreath on the unfinished war memorial. "I am the first man to lay a wreath on your memorial", the admiral said. The photo is from the original Western Mail, the predecessor of the Countryman.

Education

The arrival of Covid brought quite a few changes to the Museum and one of these being a reduction in visits from school students and this in turn has reduced the preparation workload for Education. So, during this quiet period work has been undertaken to update and create new publications to assist visiting teachers.

Education Section markets the tours of the Museum to schools and groups via emails and this in turn leads the teachers using the Booking Form contained in the Museum web page.

The booking is recorded and the school is advised all is O.K. for the tour. At this time white board slats are printed and invoices readied, numbers of tour guides required are calculated along with any special needs for the tour.

Because life is not meant to be easy, booking dates are changed and in some cases several times, this leads



to more emails, reprinting white board slats, invoices and more emails.

A teacher bag is prepared and this contains materials to assist the teacher expand on knowledge obtained during the visit. These bags with the invoice are delivered to the reception desk prior to the booked tour and if lucky the teacher will receive their teacher bag.

When the bus arrives with the students and teachers the next phase begins and the group is handled by the tour guides and Education moves on with new bookings

Used Book Store

Remember that we run a second - hand book shop at the museum, with books for sale to the public and to volunteers. We are always looking for donations of sellable items – Military History only please and donations can be left in Graeme Smith's office.

There is generally a number on display in the shop, with prices ranging from \$5 to \$20. If you see Brian Mofflin or Garry Hugo, they can open up the main store in the old loan store for you to browse.

George's Obsession With Collecting Furphy Farm Water Carts

Story by George Stratton



My earliest recollection of Furphy farm water carts started many years ago when as a 9-year-old child I lived on a dairy farm near Echuca, Victoria with my parents, 2 sisters and brother. We had a Furphy farm water cart, as did

most farms in those days. I used to throw an old saddle on the water cart and ride it as my imaginary horse. In summer we would fill an old bath tub and put it beside the tank. We would slide off the tank into the bath tub. We had many hours of fun on our own homemade waterslide.

The Furphy farm water carts were manufactured around 1868 by John Furphy who started a foundry in the town of Shepparton (Vic) approx. 45-minute drive from Echuca. The foundry still operates today along with a newer modern foundry beside it, one of Australia's longest running companies. The Furphy foundry made a number of farm related machinery and equipment such as graders, swingle trees, pig troughs, and camp ovens to name a few. J. Furphy & Sons pioneered the idea of advertising their wares by casting the names of the current items manufactured into the tank ends.

In 2015 I started to collect old farm pioneering equipment and my interest in Furphy's was re-ignited again. Because of my military service I was also interested in the stories of the Furphy water carts being used in WW1 training camps. I purchased my first Furphy farm water cart in 2015, it is a 1920 version which is mounted on a 2-wheel cart that was horse drawn. It was purchased via Ebay and I travelled to Ballarat in Vic to collect it on the trailer that was dragged from Perth. I also took the Water Tank to the Furphy Foundry in Shepparton to have the company re-barrel

the water cart, (that's the middle bit as the ends never wear out unless you break them). Since then, I have purchased a further 5 tanks. 3 are the 180-gallon type (4 foot long) which was considered a fair load for a horse in the day approx. 1 ton and the other 2 are 350-gallon capacity (8 foot long). They are known as the "squatter" tanks and are quite rare now. One of these "squatter" tanks I bought was in Vic and I had it re-barrelled at the Furphy foundry, it is mounted on a 4 wheeled wagon. (steel furphy wheels) Vintage is approx. 1880. The other "squatter" tank I purchased from a bloke at Bullsbrook who had 2 mounted on an old chevy truck. They were used by the Leonora Shire Council to water the roads under construction. All the other 5 tanks came from VIC or NSW covering both sides of the Murray River.

The last of my tanks is currently in Vic patiently awaiting collection on my next visit. When I say last, I mean it is subject to change. It certainly raises a few eyebrows along the way when transporting the tanks back to WA especiallwy at the border. I also have a Special Limited Edition Tank End that was produced in 2018. My tank number is 0048. I also have collected other Furphy products but the Water Carts remain my favourite.

There are 26 different original ends produced over the years and to my knowledge only one collector in Australia has the whole 26 so I have a job ahead of me to get a few more. They have become very expensive. The most expensive that I am aware of was one end only that sold for \$17,000. The other was a whole tank bought by 2 people for \$26,000. One of those people has 25 ends and recently appeared on the TV show "desert Collectors". I have purchased tank lids and taps for my tanks from him and viewed his whole collection. It is awesome and I can only dream. If anyone ever finds any Furphy items that may be for sale, please let me know.



Biography of Captain Sean Collopy

BIOGRAPHY



CAPT Collopy was born in 1970 in Subiaco but grew up in Lambasa, Fiji and Bunbury before returning to Perth to complete high school at Trinity College. He enlisted in the Army

in June 1992 following his completion of tertiary studies, as a Cartographer. He was allocated to the Royal Australian Survey Corps and posted to 2 Troop, 1 Topographic Survey Squadron. This posting as a 'Cartotech' was limited in time due to the disbandment of the Survey Corps in December 1994. Between January and June 1995, he was posted to the Royal Military College. During this posting he remained 'badged' as a Survey Corps member before transferring to the Royal Australian Corps of Military Police. He qualified as an MP in June 1996. At the completion of this training, he was promoted to lance corporal and posted to the 55 MP Platoon, Perth.

He was promoted to full corporal in May 1997. He remained with the 55 MP Platoon until June 2000 when he was posted to 25 Platoon, 2 MP Company, as part of JTF 112 for Operation GOLD; one of the Australian Defence Force task forces in support of the Sydney Olympics. He was with 25 Platoon until January 2001, where he returned to Perth as a Section Commander in 24 Platoon, 2 MP Company, on promotion with the rank of Sergeant.

In December 2002 he was moved to the 21 Platoon, 2 MP Company in Sydney before being posted to the Land Command Liaison Section, Royal Malaysian Air Force Base, Butterworth, in support of Rifle Company 61 with 8/12 Medium Regiment till Rifle Company 64 with 16 Bn, RWAR. On return to Australia in February 2004, he was posted back to the 24 Platoon, 2 MP Company, Perth as a General Reserve soldier

In August 2006, he was promoted to the rank of WO2 and where he held the position as the A/Platoon Commander of 24 Platoon, 1 MP Battalion.

In January 2007, he was commissioned through the ASWOC Scheme and was appointed as the platoon commander of 7PL, C Coy, 1 MP Battalion. In May 2008 he took up the position of Joint Task Force Provost Marshal, Joint Task Force 631 for Operation Astute in East Timor. His role was to raise, train and deploy a team of General Reserve Military Police personnel, ADFIS Investigators and Service Police Military Police Dog sections from both Army and Air Force. Once deployed, he was employed as the Policing advisor to the Commander, International Stabilization Force and he also had operational and technical control of four Service Police teams.

On return to Australia in May 2009, CAPT Collopy transferred back to the General Reserve and was posted to WAUR where he had the role of administering and mentoring Officer Cadets undertaking the First Appointment course.

During October 2010, he was posted to HQ C Company, 1 MP Battalion, as the 2IC and as the Co-Ordinating Officer for the Mission Rehearsal Training of MP's deploying to Afghanistan. During December 2012, he transferred to the In-Active Reserve in order to commence post-graduate studies for a Masters of Business Leadership. Throughout 2015 and 2016 he also assisted the Western Australian University Regiment as a guest lecturer for the First Appointment Course conducting the training for Defence Law.

From 2010 until 2020 CAPT Collopy was employed as the Manager of Professional Standards for the Security Services Branch of the Western Australian Public Transport Authority. During this time he was able to have the Transit Officers recognised for the National Medal. In January 2005, CAPT Collopy was also employed with the Department of Corrective Services as the Death in Custody and sexual assault investigator, a position he held for 3 years.

Since 2021, CAPT Collopy has been studying law full-time at the University of Notre Dame.

THE BATTLE FOR ISURAVA By David W. Cameron

Published by Penguin Books UK, 2021

Book review by Mark Ryan

David Cameron is a Canberra based author who has written a wide variety of books on military and social history.

This book is his most recent work, and it follows on from his 2021 book; "The Battles for Kokoda Plateau: Three weeks of Hell Defending the Gateway to the Owen Stanleys" (also published by Big Sky).

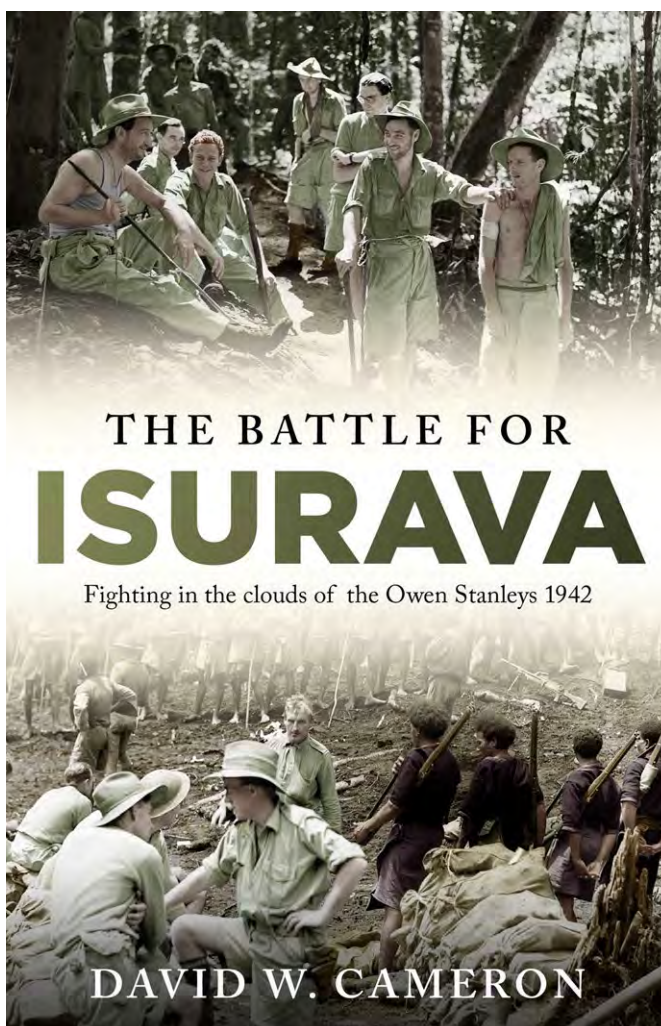
This first book on the Kokoda campaign outlined well the initial operations of July/August 1942 between the Japanese Advance Force that had landed near Gona in late July 1942 (based on a reinforced Infantry Battalion Group; the Yokohama Advanced Butai) and elements of the Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) and the Australian 39th Infantry Battalion (39 Bn, a Victorian Militia unit).

These operations eventually led to capture of Kokoda by the Japanese on 10 August (with its vital airstrip), and the northern entry point to the Kokoda Track, followed by the withdrawal of the 39th Bn and the PIB to Deniki, 8 Kms south of Kokoda.

The second book; Isurava, looks at the operations from mid August 1942 with the depleted 39 Bn briefly holding Deniki, before withdrawing to a better defensive position at Isurava, under pressure from the Japanese Advanced force.

During this period the Australian Army New Guinea Command acted hastily to reinforce the 39th initially with the 53 Bn (a NSW Militia unit, which along with 39 Bn was part of 30 Brigade(Bde) and then eventually with two Australian Imperial Force (AIF) battalions; 2/14 and 2/16 of the AIF 21 Bde, part of 7 Div AIF.

On 18 August the Japanese main body (the South Seas Force, a reinforced Bde Group of 3 Bn supported by engineers, light artillery and various logistic and support elements) landed in the Buna area and began their movement south following the path blazed by the Advanced Force with the aims of destroying the Australian forces and ultimately



capturing Port Moresby. Taking the Advanced Force under command, the Japanese main body would confront the Australians initially at Isurava and again in the subsequent battles along the Track, as the Australian force was forced to conduct delaying defence operations south along the Track.

Cameron looks in detail at the events around the clash between the Japanese and Australians that led to the initial loss of Deniki on 13/14 August and followed then by the major battle for Isurava, the next defence position approximately 5 kms south of Deniki along the Track, that lasted till 31 Aug.

The battle around Isurava was an intense one that saw heavy casualties suffered by both sides. The book well illustrates the scale of the battle as the 39 Bn supported initially by elements of 2/14 Bn and then later by the WA raised 2/16 Bn, fought to contain the superior Japanese force, which was able to use medium and heavy machine

THE BATTLE FOR ISURAVA REVIEW

(Continued)

guns, mortars and light artillery in support, while the Australians had only one 3 inch mortar with limited ammunition plus their normal company level weapons.

The collapse of the 53 Bn during the battle and their failure to protect the critical right flank of the Isurava position is also well documented. This Bn was neither well trained or motivated to be able contribute effectively to the battle and after a series of tactical failures it was withdrawn, disarmed and returned to Port Moresby.

Cameron outlines well, not only the intensity of the combat at individual, sub-unit, unit and formation level for both the Japanese and Australians, but he also details the influence and effects of the key factor that dominated the campaign for both sides; logistics.

The book outlines that the initial Australian plan was for 21 Bde under Arnold Potts (a well known WA soldier) to relieve 30 Bde, attack and defeat the Japanese Advance Force in the Deniki/Isurava area and then recapture Kokoda(with its vital airstrip), before the Japanese Main Force could fully deploy, thus seizing the initiative from them.

Unfortunately, the combat supplies (including 40,000 rations) that Potts required to support the advance of 21 Bde, and that were supposed to have been delivered by air drop and held ready at Myola (approximately 3 days south of Isurava) to be moved forward by 'native' carriers, were not available in anywhere near the scale needed by the Bde. Potts was thus forced to delay his force at Myola for a number of days and even then, he was only able to send his Bde forward towards Isurava in Company sized groups as supplies became available to support them. On their arrival at Isurava these company groups were sent straight into battle. This delay and staggered deployment of 21 Bde coupled with the failure of 53 Bn, effectively surrendered the initiative to Japanese who were able deploy their Main Force fully against Isurava with little initial interference and with superior combat power.

The other significant tactical logistic issue that the books details, is that based on the planned 21 Bde advance to Kokoda, a casualty holding plan was developed that saw the many casualties suffered by the PIB and 30 Bde and later 21 Bde being held forward in the Alola area (just south of Isurava) on the assumption that after the planned capture of the Kokoda air by 21 Bde they could be moved the relatively short distance from Isurava north to Kokoda for evacuation. Unfortunately, when the Japanese having seized the initiative, did eventually capture Isurava, the movement to safety of these casualties became a major logistic issue that required a substantial number of carriers and imposed significant tactical time pressures on the Australian defenders as each subsequent delay position had to be held until all casualties were evacuated to the next collection and treatment point south along the Track. The book details well the suffering of the many casualties as they struggled or were carried to safety.

Overall the book is generally well written and it has good maps which enable the reader to clearly understand the tactical picture prevailing at various stages of the battle. The book succeeds in capturing and holding the reader's attention.

There were however, a relatively large number of spelling and grammatical errors in the book which indicates that the editorial oversight of the book could have been better. Cameron also at times in the book shows his lack of military background as he occasionally confuses unit titles/types.

Although it is not mentioned directly I suspect that this book will probably be followed by another one possibly next year, continuing to look at the Kokoda campaign.

Overall I thought that the book is a valuable addition to the written history of the Kokoda campaign and I would recommend it.

Book reviewed by
Mark Ryan

THE NAKED ISLAND By Russell Braddon

Published by Penguin Books UK, 2021

Book review by Graeme Smith

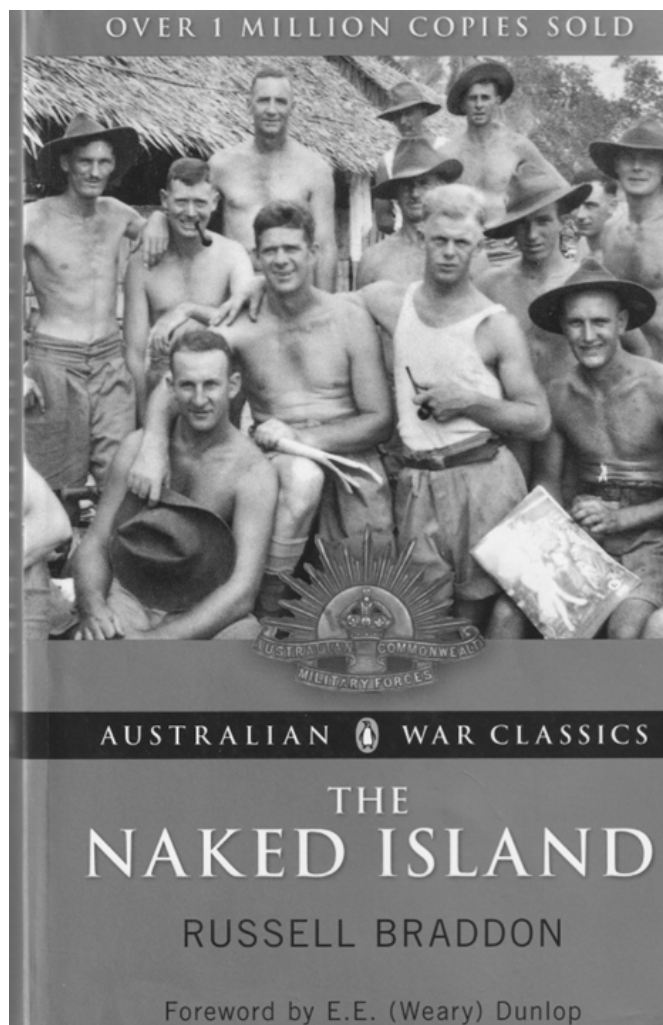
Many books have been written by high-ranking officers reference the POWs in Singapore during WW2 and usually covers it all as a general view, of what went on.

This book is written by an ordinary Artillery "Gunner". It is a very moving book of life or should I say existence of a POW under the harsh stick of the Japanese during World War 2. Russell describes the day-to-day's work parties, the daily bashing by the guards, the shortage of food, living conditions and the non-existence of medicine.

Many POWs died because they were not giving enough food even though the Japanese had plenty in their great stores that were captured from the British when they capitulated. There was plenty of medicine but it was held back and because of this many POWs died that could have been saved. The bartering with the Locals for food and medicine, the black market within the barracks, always looking out for the guards who bashed POWs for no reason. Mateship within the OR ranks was paramount because if you didn't have mates, things would be pretty grim for oneself. He states throughout his book that there was not a lot of love for officers as they didn't have to work and didn't suffer as much.

One paragraph towards the end of the book," the POWs who were on a work party and allied planes were flying overhead at 30000 feet and the POWs were looking up and the guards were beating up all the defenceless POWs who were cheering". Another paragraph "the day's work over, just as it began to darken a little, we would march back to the gaol - through the scrub, catching snails and frogs on the way, through the officers' lines, immaculate, cool looking men playing chess and eating their evening meal."

If you get a chance read this book. Published by Penguin Books Australian War Classics



BOOK REVIEW



GUIDED TOURS 17 | 18 | 19 August 10am-12pm

ARMY MUSEUM OF WA

Insights of the Vietnam War

Three Guided Tours
17 | 18 | 19 August 2022
10am - 12pm

On 18 August, we commemorate Vietnam Veterans' Day on the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan in 1966. We remember the sacrifices of those who died and say thank you to almost 60,000 Australians who served during the 10 years of our involvement in the Vietnam War.

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