



NEWSLETTER

Promoting National Security and Defence

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This edition of the RUSI-SA newsletter has a uniquely historical bent, but one that deals with contemporary issues. I urge all of our readers to read the very interesting articles written by two of our members, Gill Griffin and John Bradford.

The ongoing challenge for RUSI-SA is to grow. We will need to try new activities and events in order to expose RUSI to new audiences. This will mean that we may not always conduct our monthly luncheons at Keswick. In order to grow we need to sell our services to different groups and Monday lunches, as we know, do not serve all of us well, especially those who work. Having said that I am also mindful of taking up weekends for the already time-starved amongst us. I was generally pleased with our Sunday, 3 July event. We were able to put together a more comprehensive package than would normally occur on a Monday with additional support speakers, the marking of the anniversary of the Battle of Hamel and a link to the Army Museum of South Australia with their recently unveiled heritage walk. We will continue to explore various avenues to help us achieve our mission.

Meanwhile, as reported by the Department of Defence 'The roar of the fast jets and the rumble of the naval gun fire has been an extraordinary show of fire power during Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2011'. Held in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area near Rockhampton, Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2011 is a US-led, Australian supported

bilateral exercise that is aimed at '... training US and Australian forces in planning and conducting combined operations and improving US-Australian interoperability'. The Combined Joint Live Fire Exercise held as part of the exercise has provided Australian and US JTACs with the opportunity to guide fire support from US FA-18 and Australian FA-18 Super Hornets, Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters and Australian and US ships. JTACs are Joint Terminal Attack Controllers and are used to call in and direct fire power to attack a known enemy position.

Off the North-West coast of Australia the Navy's Armidale Class Patrol Boats (ACPB) and their crews continue to spearhead Operation RESOLUTE, the Australian Defence Force's contribution to the Australian Government's commitment to border security. Patrol boat crews are kept busy patrolling and responding to maritime security threats within the Australian maritime domain. Despite a recent increase in arrivals of Suspect Irregular Entry Vessels (SIEVs), the RESOLUTE teams, which include Army and RAAF personnel, continue to achieve extremely high interception rates. In addition, the number of Foreign Fishing Vessel (FFV) apprehensions has dropped markedly in the last five years, due in part to the deterrent effect of surface patrols conducted by the patrol boats. The Patrol Boat Divisions work closely with the Customs and Border Protection Marine Unit and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority in responding to civil maritime security threats including

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irregular maritime arrivals, drug interdiction and terrorism. The Operation RESOLUTE Area of Operations covers approximately 10 per cent of the world's surface and includes Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone which extends up to 200nm around the mainland and islands. The Navy operates 14 ACPBs with 21 rotational crews, of which at least seven are engaged in Operation RESOLUTE at any one time.

Sergeant Todd Langley, the commando who was killed in Afghanistan recently, has arrived at RAAF Richmond on his final journey home. 2nd Commando Regiment soldiers formed an honour guard and bearer party to escort Sergeant Langley's casket from the aircraft to his grieving family. Among the awards posthumously bestowed on Sergeant Langley during the ceremony was the United States Meritorious Service Medal, awarded for heroic or meritorious service in connection with military operations against an armed enemy. The 35-year-old commando served with the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG). He was killed by insurgent small-arms fire during a combined Afghan National Police and Special Operations Task Group clearing patrol in southern Afghanistan.

This week former Chief of Army, now Professor Peter Leahy, strongly suggested that a better whole-of-government approach was required to ensure success in Afghanistan.

"The Australian Government has traded off the bravery, resolve and

professionalism of its soldiers for too long," Leahy said. "The nation-building task at hand is not a job for soldiers alone but it seems that only soldiers are available to do the job."

Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Floyd spent six months last year at the coalition's southern Afghanistan headquarters as the officer responsible for the reintegration of insurgents there. As reported in *The Australian*, Floyd has written a paper for the Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence in which he says Australian personnel in Afghanistan should be given clear direction on integration policy and, if necessary, more troops and civilian officials could be sent there to help make it happen. Lieutenant Colonel Floyd, now an instructor at the Command and Staff College in Canberra, provides an insight into why the US and others are talking to the Taliban.

"The main concern of Afghan communities is security", Lieutenant Colonel Floyd says in his paper. The local people fear reprisals from insurgent groups, recidivism by ex-insurgents or intimidation by the government or its security forces. Floyd says the insurgency there involves complex layers characterised by ready recourse to violence and an unfathomable interlacing of local grievances, political maneuvering, criminal acts and corruption, graphic and extreme violence beyond the norms of traditional tribal and local power struggles, and a perverted interpretation of Islam. Lieutenant Colonel Floyd urges the Government to declare

its clear support for reintegration. He says it is vital to reintegrate the Taliban into Afghan society and Australia should do more to train troops to persuade insurgents to abandon the war.

A soldier's view of Afghanistan came from Victoria Cross recipient, Corporal Mark Donaldson. Having just returned from his sixth tour of Afghanistan, Corporal Donaldson, 32, says he wants Australians to know that *"we are having a lot of success"* in the war against insurgents in Afghanistan. *"We are over there, we're fighting and we're winning,"* Corporal Donaldson was quoted as saying.

Corporal Donaldson said recently a group of more than 20 insurgent and Taliban leaders were killed or captured and that every time troops took out insurgent fighters, there was a very large positive effect for coalition troops and the Afghan people.

Recent operations have *"... taken out numerous networks and that shuts their whole system down and it degrades their ability to fight and degrades their ability to turn locals and subvert locals to go over to their side and go against the Afghan government"* Corporal Donaldson said. It was important Australian troops had public and bipartisan support. *"Tell them they're doing a good job... give them a slap on the back and say thank you very much and we appreciate what you do for us".*

BRIG Tim Hanna

UNMANNED SPY PLANE

The Weekend Australian has reported that Afghanistan-based troops will get enhanced protection from a new \$170 million US-designed unmanned spy plane system.

The Defence Materiel Minister Jason Clare confirmed that 'within months' the catapult-launched Shadow 200 will be purchased as part of a \$1.1 billion package of protection measures. Shadow 200 is a tactical unmanned aerial vehicle that will provide day and night surveillance. The package includes the C-Ram early-warning

radar system used to detect incoming rockets or artillery.

The first UAV system, which comprises as many as six drone aircraft, is expected to be deployed by the end of the year. It will replace the smaller, less capable Scan Eagle UAV leased under an earlier deal with US aircraft maker, Boeing.

Monthly Luncheons

Monday 1 August 2011
Speaker: Lieutenant Commander
Michael Devine RAN
Topic: **Air Warfare Destroyer
Capability: Network Node**

Monday 5 September 2011
Speaker: Mr David White
Topic: **Lawyers on Operations**

Please note that the AGM will be held during this luncheon.

All members are invited to attend our luncheons. Indeed you are encouraged to invite partners, friends and colleagues to join us and, if they like what they see and hear, to nominate them for membership. Please book in advance. If you are unsure whether or not your name is on the booking list, please check!

The dress code for the luncheon is neat casual, taking into consideration weather conditions. We usually assemble in Building 34A, Keswick Barracks, Keswick, at approximately 11.30 am for drinks and good fellowship. Members are asked to be seated by 12 noon when our President welcomes members and guests and lunch is served. The cost of the buffet is \$22 for members and first time guests and \$25 for non-members. We also conduct a raffle to help cover expenses. Our caterer has agreed to provide vegetarian meals and sweets for diabetics, but these must be ordered before midday on the Thursday before the lunch.

For those who do not have time to enjoy lunch, but wish to hear the lecture, chairs are provided around the perimeter of the hall. Please be seated before 12.55 pm. The address is of about 30 to 35 minutes duration with 15 minutes for questions, after which coffee or tea is available. We aim to complete the program by 2.00 pm.

Cancellations must be advised to the RUSI-SA Office by midday of the Friday before the lunch. Subsequent cancellations will attract a fee of \$22.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR MEMORIAL

The following article was provided by the SA Committee of the Boer War Association. For more information on the National Boer War Memorial Association (Australia), please see

www.bwm.org.au/

On 29 May 2011 the South Australian committee arranged the conduct of a short commemorative service at the South African War Memorial outside Government House, Adelaide. This striking statue features a mounted soldier upon his horse and is acknowledged as one of the finest memorials to the men who served in South Africa.

The number of people that attended the ceremony exceeded the committee's expectations by about 20%, with just in excess of 60, including several descendants of Boer War veterans. The support of the general public not connected with the event was evident on the day by them showing respect for the ceremony through their conduct whilst passing by, with a few staying for a while during the ceremony.

The ceremony was rated as a great success by the members of the committee and the feedback from attendees was very favourable. ABC radio commentator and Sunday Mail journalist, Mr Peter Goers, spoke highly of the service and featured it in his newspaper article the following week.

The Order of Service at the ceremony was short, but all encompassing. It was led by the master of ceremonies, Mr Mike Norton (a Boer War veteran's descendant) and supported by Brigadier Max Lemon AM, who recited "The Ode" and laid a tribute

at the memorial on behalf of the SA Branch of the RSL.

The committee was especially praiseworthy of the contributions by the Chaplain, the Bugler, the Piper and [The Barossa Light Horse Historical Association](http://www.barossa.com.au/), whose presence in uniform along with their horses added to the event. The cooperation of the South Australian Police, the Adelaide City Council and Government House in enabling the event to be held at the Memorial is gratefully acknowledged along with the support of Blackwell Funerals by donating the cost of printing the service booklet, the use of chairs, public address system and their general help in planning and conducting the service.

A worthwhile service was provided by Tania Buck in the RSL boardroom for anyone interested in purchasing Boer War medals (or any other medals). Tania also offers to provide family history research at no extra cost. The Website <http://www.medalsandframes.com> provides all the details of the services Tania offers.

Next year's ceremony at the South Australian South African War Memorial will be either on Sunday 28 May 2012 or Sunday 3 June 2012. An awareness campaign will target those who attended this year, with the expectation that they will spread the word amongst their families. Ex-service organisations will also be invited and requested to advise their members. The committee expects that the attendance by descendants of Boer War veterans will be a much more significant number and the number of tributes laid during the ceremony will be greatly increased. The style of the short service, successfully conducted this year, is planned to be replicated.

DSTO

DEFENCE SCIENCE AUSTRALIA is DSTO's flagship publication featuring its latest projects and research. Produced quarterly, it will keep you up to date with the latest in Defence science.

The latest copy features DSTO's research into the susceptibilities of ADF personnel to various forms of exposure. You'll also find articles on:

- Issues of rotor visibility for helicopter pilots;
- A new minesweeping technology which uses acoustic waves; and
- Growing a forest in 3D.

Download your copy today at www.dsto.defence.gov.au/publications/dsa/



Structural Fatigue Test of the F/A-18

This photograph is an example of many on the DSTO website. For many more illustrations, go to

www.dsto.defence.gov.au/gallery/

RSL

At the RSL State Conference 2 July 2011 a new constitution, rules and bylaws for State Branch and Sub-Branchedes were approved. They can be downloaded from the website at

www.rslsa.org.au

The new State Board is Jock Statton, Frank Owen, Steve Larkins, Tim Hanna, Jill Hoare and Haydn Madigan.

RSL-SA has an extensive Research Library for member and public use. Volunteer Librarian Gordon Coucill is available most Tuesday mornings, phone 8232 0322 or

library@rslsa.org.au

for an appointment.



The Vietnam War Memorial Adelaide is situated at the Torrens Parade Ground and dedicated to Australian and Vietnamese who served and especially those who paid the supreme sacrifice.

WINTER CARVERY

The Winter Carvery will be held on

Sunday 21 August 2011

at the
Feathers Hotel, Burnside
at 12.00 noon.

Please book with the Secretary by
12.00 noon on
Monday 15 August 2011.

The cost is \$32 per person which
includes a four course

RUSI OF AUSTRALIA

The Royal United Services Institute of Australia supports the defence Mission and promotes informed debate on Defence and Security matters.

The Institute is grateful to receive funding from the department in this mission and much-needed financial support from our major National Sponsor Rolls-Royce.

The National RUSI website can be viewed at

www.rusi.org.au/index.php

National News on the site includes an update on Australia's Joint Strike Fighter by Air Vice-Marshal Kym Osley, the Program Manager New Air Combat Capability (PM NACC) within the Defence Materiel Organisation.

Vale

It is with regret that
the recent deaths of

Mr Bill Bowden
FLTLT Thelma Wiggins

were announced.

The President and members of
Council extend their condolences
to their families and friends.

EVOLUTION OF THE IMPERIAL GALLANTRY HONOURS AND AWARDS SYSTEM - ITS IMPACT ON RAN GALLANTRY AWARDS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

**John Bradford
addressed the RUSI-SA
luncheon on 3 July 2011.
Following is the the text
of the talk he gave.**

On 16 April 2011, the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, Senator David Feeny, announced the independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals (H&AA) Tribunal would inquire into unresolved recognition for past acts of naval and military gallantry and valour. As Senator Feeny put it: *"There have been numerous acts of gallantry and valour by Australian naval and military servicemen since World War I. I am pleased that the Tribunal will inquire into recognition for 13 naval and military personnel. Their brave acts of gallantry and valour deserve greater recognition."*

For several years I have actively researched why it was that no one serving with the RAN in the South West Pacific Area (SWPA) in the Second World War (WW2) was ever recommended for a VC, let alone awarded one. I have written several articles covering eight of the 13 men, the circumstances of whose gallantry the Defence H&AA Tribunal is now to investigate.

In this article, however, I wish to discuss those aspects of the Imperial Honours and Awards (H&A) system that encroached on the awards these men actually received. In particular:

- How the Imperial gallantry H&A system evolved from the beginning of WW1 to 1995,
- The confusion, from 1914 to 1945, over what precisely needed to be done about posthumous gallantry. In a review of posthumous awards in December 1941, the Secretary of the Admiralty Honours and Awards



- Committee (H & A C) admitted: *"The traditional practice is certainly illogical; that it is unsatisfactory is suggested by its being so often called into question."* and
- How the administration of RAN gallantry awards in the SWPA from 1942 to 1945 was at odds with what had become accepted practice in the Royal Navy (RN).

Prior to WW1, a four-tier system of awards covered gallantry by RN officers. They ranged in descending order from the VC, to the Distinguished Service Order (DSO), the Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC) and the Mention in Despatches (MID). In October 1914, the RN replaced the CSC with the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) and brought in an equivalent third-tier award for men: the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM). The second-tier award for men, the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (CGM), remained unchanged

The Army's DSO, though generally awarded for good service and leadership in active operations, could also be awarded to junior officers for gallantry; for men the equivalent award was the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM). In December 1914, Army introduced its third-tier award for officers,

the Military Cross (MC), but the equivalent award for men, the Military Medal (MM), was not introduced until 1916

In 1912 the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) - the Army's above-land air arm - and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) were created and, still in their infancy when WW1 began, personnel serving in these two services came under the jurisdiction of the Army and RN for the granting of gallantry awards. However, by August 1917 a new air service was in the offing, one that would share equal status with the Army and RN. Thus, on 1 April 1918, the RFC and the RNAS were amalgamated to become the Royal Air Force. This led to the introduction of four, third-tier awards: the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) and the Air Force Cross (AFC) for officers, the Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM) and the Air Force Medal (AFM) for men.

All three services now had a common, four-tier structure for gallantry awards. At that time the conventional wisdom was that gallantry awards were for the living, a reasoning sustained by the belief that - except for the VC - King George V and the military hierarchy, including Lord Kitchener and General (later Field Marshal) Haig, were known to be strongly opposed to posthumous awards. The underlying concern was that should posthumous awards be introduced at other levels, then this could only be done at the expense of live awards. Thus, none of the second- and third-tier awards could be granted posthumously, which meant - and this certainly occurred in WW2 - that should a posthumous VC recommendation not be approved, the only recourse was to grant the only other posthumous award: the lowest-ranking MID.

Even though the official warrant for the posthumous VC was not formally issued until 1920, of over 600 VCs granted in WW1, close to 25% were posthumous. Notwithstanding only the VC was supposed to be awarded posthumously, the London Gazette records numerous instances in WW1 where posthumous MID's, though not listed as such, must have been granted. For example, the London Gazette for 5 November 1915, lists gallantry awards for 1st AIF personnel at Gallipoli. Under the heading 'deserving of special mention' the names of approximately 130 officers and men appear, of whom 16 are listed as 'dead' or 'killed'. J. Simpson was not one of the 16, but his name is to be found amongst 17 members of the Australian Army Medical Corps who received MID's. There is no indication provided of whether his award was for the action in which he was killed on 19 May 1915.

Despite all the changes in the Imperial H&A system since 1914, two problem areas needed to be resolved:

- The ambiguity present in the DSO award. Was it an individual award for good service etc., or gallantry? and
- The vexed issue of posthumous awards.

In 1922 General Monro chaired a committee whose task was to produce a report on 'the simplification and standardisation of honours and awards.....in time of war'. One proposal was that the CGM and DCM – both highly regarded as 'nearly VCs' - should be replaced by the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross (CGC), a new decoration which, like the VC, could be awarded posthumously to both officers and men. Thus, should a VC recommendation not be approved, there would at least be a respected, alternative award available.

While the Admiralty and War Office endorsed the proposal to standardise awards, the Air Ministry insisted that their 'flying' decorations, the AFC and AFM, were essential for the RAF. Since no agreement on this item could be reached, each service was instructed to make out a scheme of its own. The proposed CGC lapsed.

With plans for the CGC shelved for the duration, the prospect of a VC recommendation being downgraded to a posthumous MID was always likely. And such had occurred following the sinking, in June 1940, of the aircraft carrier, HMS Glorious, together with the destroyers, HMS Ardent and HMS Acasta, by the German battle-cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. With Glorious lost, the COs of the two destroyers had no option but to take the fight to the battle-cruisers, a torpedo fired from Acasta hitting Scharnhorst and causing considerable damage and loss of life. The COs of both destroyers had subsequently been recommended for posthumous VCs. However, in their wisdom, the Admiralty considered their actions did not warrant granting the highest honour; so posthumous MID's were awarded instead.

Similarly, in the Mediterranean theatre in July 1941, two Fleet Air Arm pilots had successfully protected a large convoy from air attack. Having between them shot down three bombers and damaged a fourth, and with all ammunition expended, both aircraft had been shot down; one aircrew being lost, the other being picked up by a destroyer. Initially, the Admiralty H&AC had awarded one pilot a posthumous VC, the surviving pilot, the DSO. However, a higher authority thought the case was not 'strong enough' for a posthumous VC, hence the award had had to be downgraded to a posthumous MID. All this particular action had succeeded in doing was to show-up the inherent weakness of the Imperial H&A system as it related to posthumous recognition issues.

In the SWPA a few months later, the RAN encountered its own set of problems with the Imperial H&A system. The task of administering Army and RAAF gallantry award recommendations in Australia - excluding the VC and George Cross – had been delegated to the office of the King's representative: the Governor-General. The RAN was 'the odd man out', all award recommendations received by the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board (ACNB) being forwarded directly to the Admiralty.

In May 1941, VADM Sir Guy Royle, RN, had been appointed as 1st Naval Member of the ACNB, serving in this position until early 1945. In late 1942, Royle had argued vigorously against the Australian Government's proposal that the administration of RAN gallantry recommendations should match those of Army and RAAF.

Prior to this, in February 1942, he had issued a Commonwealth Naval Order (CNO) instructing ship COs not to suggest the nature of the award when submitting gallantry award recommendations.

Thus, unless the Admiralty H&AC were to request additional information from the ACNB, there was really little prospect of a VC recommendation emerging from this Committee. A particular case in point was that of Teddy Sheean of HMAS Armidale. The sketchy detail provided for his gallant action occupied barely 30 words, making inevitable his posthumous MID.

Royle's CNO was at odds with RN practice where, since at least May 1941, COs of RN ships had been permitted to indicate whether recommendations were for either MID's or decorations. Not until February 1945 did the RAN redress Royle's instruction and come into line with RN practice.

Another British Admiral, VADM Sir Louis Hamilton, RN, took over from Royle as 1st Naval Member, serving in this position until 1948. In November 1945, Hamilton had been approached by two members of the ACNB to see if HMAS Yarra's heroic fight warranted recognition. He ducked the issue, noting: "*I can only conclude my predecessor examined this question fully in 1942*". On the night of 28 February/ 1 March 1942, the cruisers, USS Houston and HMAS Perth were lost after a heroic fight against a far superior Japanese invasion force at Sunda Strait. Houston's CO, CAPT Albert Rooks, USN, had received a posthumous Medal of Honour for his gallant action, but when the ACNB submitted a number of gallantry award recommendations for Perth personnel to the Admiralty in November 1945, the name of her CO, CAPT Hec Waller, RAN, was not amongst them! On 25 January 1946, the Admiralty contacted the ACNB to inquire whether Waller should receive a posthumous MID. The ACNB concurred in this proposal and Waller's award appeared along with those for other Perth personnel in the London Gazette of 19 March 1946.

As if the ACNB's seeming indifference was not indignity

enough, in 1947 the Australian Government declined the Netherlands Government's offer to honour Waller with their equivalent of the VC: the Knighthood of the 'Militaire Willems-Orde'. US authorities had had no problems in accepting a similar honour on behalf of Rooks, but under Imperial awards system regulations, posthumous awards from foreign governments were not to be accepted. To make matters worse, the Australian Government then put a 'Secret' classification on the correspondence! Perth survivors knew nothing of this issue until 1996 - just months before the submarine, HMAS Waller was launched.

Two years prior to the launching of Waller and almost three-quarters of a century after the CGC had first been suggested, a radical overhaul of the British H&A gallantry system determined:

- The CGC should finally be introduced as a second-tier award;
- All decorations could be awarded posthumously;
- The distinction between awards for officers and men should be abolished; while
- The DSO should still be retained for responsibility,

skill and leadership on active operations.

In hindsight, the failure to introduce the CGC as a second-tier award in 1922 was to cast a long shadow over posthumous recognition issues in WW2, many fine acts of heroism being denied an appropriate level of recognition.

But for the RAN, one can only speculate on what would have happened, had:

- The CGC been able to be accepted by all three services in 1922;
- VADM Royle shown greater awareness of the RN's gallantry H&A practice,
- The Australian Government been more assertive in insisting on the RAN's right to administer and grant all gallantry awards, save the VC.

John Bradford has his own website, which can be viewed at

<http://users.picknowl.com.au/~wjb718/default.htm>



RUSI is celebrating 180 years of Defence and Security Thinking. Its website contains a significant range of information ranging through news, research activities, analysis, defence related events, talks and publications. The website can be seen at

www.rusi.org/

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AUSTRALIAN WAR LITERATURE AND THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

Council member Dr Gillian (Gill) Griffin is writing a series of chronological reviews of selected Australian literature, from about 1860 until the present day, covering the major conflicts in which Australians have been involved. The literature is not about Strategy and Defence, which indirectly has played a part in its development. The reviews are integral to how the public view the ADF, one of the reasons it is held in such high regard and why it enjoys public support, an important component of morale.

Following is the first critical review covering the period of the Boer War. It is titled *“Tommy Cornstalk and the Boer War”*.

Most would recognise Australia's national identity as being the values and characteristics which we believe makes us uniquely Australian. Of course values can and do change over time so the national identity of a country will be constantly evolving, but the Boer war literature which described certain character traits helped to set the foundation stone of the 'Anzac Legend', which we hold as testament to all that we believe is best in the Australian character. Arguably the 'core' of this perception of Australian soldiers throughout history has not changed despite economic, political and social changes and unpopular wars.

Let us turn back the clock to the period 1788-1901. Australia was a British colony and did not have a separate national identity and in fact many people who lived during this period tended to adopt British customs and values. The majority also tended to become very patriotic when it came to British affairs.²

However when the Boer War (1899-1902) began on 11 October 1899, the Australian reaction was not as patriotic as it had been in the 1885 Sudan conflict.

The seeking of an identity was in its embryonic stage. The colonists did not want Britain to take their support as being automatic and at first neither NSW nor Victoria offered troops. The British Government eventually did ask for help and offered to pay the Australian troops at the same rate as they paid their own troops as well as paying for the rations and the cost of transporting the troops to South Africa. Australia did send troops but some Australian

citizens and colonial politicians had some serious reservations about doing so. They felt that Australia's interests were not well served by being involved in a foreign war.

It was generally those Australians of English and Scottish stock who supported involvement in the Boer war as they believed such action would show loyalty to Great Britain. They saw support as necessary to strengthen the links between Australia and the mother country. After all they argued, they were part of the British Empire and they shared a common British heritage.

However by the 1880's some Australians were searching for a national identity which would mark Australians and set them apart from other national groups or countries, and as such the scene was set for the beginnings of a war literature that would not always be totally supportive and would encourage Australians to think of themselves as unique and not necessarily tied to Great Britain by the umbilical cord.

Throughout the 1880' and 1890's, many of the magazines such as The Bulletin and The Boomerang tried to increase the national consciousness. They wanted people to think of themselves as Australians. In the columns of The Bulletin the ideas of mateship, egalitarianism and the romance of a bush life were promoted as being typically Australian. There was a developing Australian nationalism and this meant an emerging Australian national identity, but it was difficult to promote this fully when so many Australian born citizens had parents who still

retained British traditions and cultural links to Great Britain.

It was to take the creation of a national government in 1901 and its subsequent

policies, especially those of the 1901-14 period, two World Wars, the development of the ANZAC Legend and the Great Depression (1929-34) to create Australia's national identity by 1945. It was indeed the Anzac legend as developed at Gallipoli which came to typify the qualities of the Australian spirit, but the earlier Boer War literature laid a few foundational bricks. Jack Abbott wrote that 'most of the rank and file of the troops who went to South Africa from Australia were of the Bush'. Here is an early expression of the belief that the Bushman was a natural soldier.

His writings, together with the works of Banjo Paterson, emphasized the belief in 'mateship' based upon the beliefs of solidarity and loyalty. Both of these writers portrayed Australians as believing that they were no worse and possibly better than anyone else. Australians were depicted as fiercely independent who did not like people they considered 'forward' (the tall poppy syndrome). They were resourceful, courageous and hardy.

JHM Abbott was a soldier who saw active service in a part time citizen cavalry regiment (The First Horse) raised in 1897 by Kenneth MacKay, a grazier and Member of Parliament. Abbott, through his writing, helped to promote the image of the resourceful, brave bushman as a soldier which became one of the most dominant impressions of Australians at war.²

He wrote an account of his war service called Tommy Cornstalk. This book is one of the earliest examples of Australian war literature. The book was well received and its success encouraged Abbott to turn to freelance writing. This book is still regarded as one of the best published accounts of the war from an Australian soldier's viewpoint.³ 'Tommy', is the generic name for a British soldier, while 'Cornstalk' is a New South Welshman. In August 1900 Abbott was commissioned in the Royal Field Artillery but soon afterwards became ill and was invalided home in October.

In his book he describes the Australian soldier, the 'cornstalk' as "The Bushman—the dweller in the country as opposed to the town-abiding folk—the real Cornstalk, is, to all practical purposes, of the same kind as the Boer ... His soldiering is mainly of the present. The only discipline he really knows is the 'discipline of enthusiasm'. He may have made many sacrifices for his volunteering. He may have been accustomed to ride miles to his parades. His shooting may have cost him time and money ... (but until he has signed his attestation paper, almost until he has embarked upon the troopship, he has never thoroughly been 'under the whip.

And, at first, he does not take altogether kindly to it. He has been a free man ... He may have been to school with some of his officers, may know them intimately in civil life. It is even possible that, in his own district, he may occupy a social position above that of his officer ... Tommy Cornstalk (is) ashamed to be seen walking. He is essentially a horseman—and generally a horsey man ... In Australia the possession of a horse carries with it something of a guarantee of respectability and solvency. A man who cannot read is far less to be pitied than one who cannot ride."²

Certainly the Australians did good work in South Africa. It is interesting to note that Abbott's little squadron of part-time bush cavalry was attached to the famous British regular cavalry regiment, the 2nd Dragoons, The Royal Scots Greys. Abbott described the association:

"Isn't it something for a one-horse volunteer crowd like you to be a squadron of such a regiment as the one you are with—a regiment which was fighting before there was an Australia, a regiment which saw Waterloo and Balaclava? And another thing— isn't it something to have shown a regiment like that how to scout, how to take cover, how to ride, how to shoot, how, in short, to play this particular game as it should be played?"³

Even allowing for youthful confidence and enthusiasm, and exaggeration, the passage gives an insight into how the Australians saw themselves. Whether or not Abbott's Australian group was as good, or better, than the British cavalry is open to debate. However it should at least be acknowledged that these men had only a fraction of the regulars' training and military experience. In no other war have Australian troops been expected to transform themselves from civilians to soldiers engaging the enemy in such short time.

Jack Abbott provided a unique 'insider's' view of the war. Victorian issues, values, and attitudes come to the surface. At times his writing shows normal human frailties, intolerance, and racism; both in the army of which he was a part, and in himself. Although there were other Australians who wrote about the war, notably 'Banjo' Paterson, Frank Wilkinson, and William Reay, they were war correspondents. Abbott was different. He was a soldier in the ranks.

There will be many Australians, myself included, who had never heard of Abbott, but he was a fine, courageous soldier and a talented writer. Australia owes him a debt because above all he helped to put on record the emergence of the Australian soldier in world warfare. He helped to create the legend of Australian courage and endurance in battle, and the reverberations of this still echo today. In the period from the Boer War to the First World War the statues that decorated the Australian countryside were 'not of an officer, or of any individual, but of a type, an ordinary soldier. Australian military history had delivered to stone masons and sculptors a local hero, the citizen as a soldier.

At the end of Tommy Cornstalk, Abbot describes the Australian soldier as he was before, and then after the war. The words are still the words of the bush. They are moving in their simplicity and simple in their symbolism. Tommy Cornstalk brought the images, both good and bad, of the beauty of South Africa and the awfulness, deprivation and hardship the men underwent in the war. But he also wove the imagery of Australia and Australians, into the lives of those who went to war and gave them an unforgettable identity.

He wrote in the very last paragraph, "For us who have come back the end is here. Black coat or shirt sleeves, instead of khaki-stock whip and shear blade instead of rifle. Cattle or sheep to herd instead of worn out horses-prospecting drives to dig instead of trenches. Kangaroos to hunt instead of men."⁴

Notes

1 When the British General Charles Gordon (1833-85) was killed at Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, it aroused so much sympathy in the Australian colonies that 5,000 Victorians contributed to a fund to build a memorial statue of him in Spring Street Melbourne. In a gesture of loyalty to Britain, NSW, and later Victoria, offered to send a contingent of colonial troops to the Sudan to fight the Mahdi.

2 When we think of past wars, we usually think of the Great War and Vietnam. Yet a total of 606 Australians died (half from disease and half in action) in the two and half years in South Africa and that is more than the number of casualties in Vietnam over ten years. 16,000 troops were sent by Australia to the Boer War. Five Australians were awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery in battle.

3 Abbott was an NCO in the Australian Horse at Bloemfontein, and was the son of Sir Joseph Abbott. Young Abbott was working on a family property when he joined the Scone troop of the regiment shortly before the war. He was a gifted writer and wrote *Tommy Cornstalk* which described his war experiences.

In the next article I shall be examining the works of Banjo Paterson, probably far better known to most Australians than Abbott. Paterson published about 20 poems from South Africa. Though the exact dating of their composition is uncertain, they reveal his changing commitment to the war. Paterson went from jingoistic imperialist to disillusioned nationalist.

RESERVE FORCES DAY 2011



Some 250 marchers, comprising past and serving Reservists, Navy, Army and Air Force Cadets, CFS & SES volunteers, South Australian Police officers, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and St John Ambulance Cadets, braved wet and blustery conditions to support Reserve Forces Day 2011 in Mount Gambier on Saturday, 2 July.



His Excellency the Governor of South Australia, Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC, CSC, RANR, flew down from Adelaide that morning to participate in the activities. He took the Salute outside the Council Chambers in driving rain without an umbrella or other cover and then addressed the Parade in nearby Cave Gardens.

Eleven past Reservists from the Royal South Australia Regiment Association in Adelaide also came down especially for the event, as did the historic vehicles and guns of the SA Bush Artillery.

Afterwards His Excellency chatted with the marchers and their families at the Community and RSL Hall and joined them for light refreshments.

The South-East Branch of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association conducted a number of additional activities around this event:

- A Commemoration Service and wreath-laying ceremony at Cave Gardens was held immediately after the Parade, with the Governor laying the first wreath
- A plaque was unveiled commemorating the 100th anniversary, at the site of the original Drill Hall in Mount Gambier, on Friday afternoon 1 July. The Drill Hall served as a training depot for an Infantry Company of the 10th, 27th 43rd and 10/27th Battalions until 1966 when a new training depot was built at another location
- An official Reserve Forces Day reunion dinner was held on Saturday evening when special medallions were presented to 50 spouses who supported their partners during their Service as Reservists.

In conjunction with the RUSI's monthly luncheon, the Reserve Forces Day 2011 activity in Adelaide was held at Keswick Barracks on Sunday, 3 July (in lieu of the normal RUSI first Monday). Mr John Bradford was the guest speaker. He spoke on the Imperial Honours and Awards system from 1914 onwards. Two current Reservists, Sergeant Steve Langdon and Sergeant Darren Wasley, addressed the luncheon on their various overseas deployments and exchanges and the increased role of Reservists in the ADF.

Although numbers attending the luncheon were not as high as expected, quite a few RUSI members and partners, who are normally unable to attend the weekday luncheons, found this an opportunity to attend in a more relaxed manner.



Sikorsky S70B-2 Seahawk helicopters flying in formation whilst preparing to conduct a weapons firing serial off the coast of Western Australia in November 2010

