



Royal United Services Institute
of Victoria Inc.

Promoting National Security and Defence

A Constitutional Body of the Royal United Services Institute of Australia

Patron: The Honourable Alex Chernov AO QC
Governor of Victoria



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RUSI VIC NEWSLETTER

Volume 11 Issue 3 – August 2012

Editor: Martin Holme

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LUNCHTIME ADDRESS

Defence Plaza – 661 Bourke Street

**1200 – Auditorium One
Thursday, 30 August 2012**

**Wing Commander
Richard Bluck AM, RFD**

Director- Leadership Horizons

**The 'New' Caribou –
the C27J Spartan**

Richard is a member of the Institute, and will be known to many as the RAAF Honorary ADC to the Governor of Victoria. He has had long-experience in air transport operations at No 21 'City of Melbourne' Squadron, particularly with Caribou aircraft. He will address the selection of the Alenia Aermacchi C27J Spartan as a replacement for the De Havilland of Canada DHC-4 Caribou, which provided the RAAF with 45 years of outstanding operational service.

**Time: 11.30 Tea/coffee 1200
Address**

Admission : Members and Guests : \$5.00

For security reasons please advise the Office of your attendance and the names of your guests by email to martin.holme@defence.gov.au or phone 9282 5918 by 5pm Tuesday 28 August. These names are provided to Security to issue Access Passes. If your name is not on the list you will experience a delay in gaining access.

Remember to bring a photo ID with you.

Cyberlinks

RUSI AUST (inc Victoria)	www.rusi.org.au
RUSI Whitehall	www.rusi.org
Dept of Defence	defence.gov.au
Aust Strategic Policy Institute	www.aspi.org.au
Australia Defence Association	www.ada.asn.au
RAAF Assoc 'Williams Foundation	www.williamsfoundation.org.au
Defence Reserves Association	www.dra.org.au
Defence Force Welfare Association	www.dfwa.org.au
Military History and Heritage Victoria	www.mhhv.org.au

From The Secretary: Captain Martin Holme

Our recent trio of excellent speakers has been mentioned by the President. We are endeavouring to have something done about the sound system in the Auditorium at Defence Plaza. I am acutely aware that some people are having difficulty hearing our speakers clearly. This has become a priority task.

The Commission of Inquiry into the May 2011 Chinook crash has commenced in the former temporary Officers Mess, next door to our office. This has caused much use of paint on every wall and the corridor down to our quarters has never looked so pristine!

We are still encouraging greater use of our excellent Library which grows in stature and numbers almost daily. It is well worth a visit – please give me a ring on 9282 5918 to make sure that I will be present.

As mentioned in the President's Report, a letter of loyalty and congratulations was sent to Her Majesty The Queen, in her Diamond Jubilee year, acknowledging her outstanding achievements. We have just received a gracious response from Buckingham Palace, thanking us for our message. It goes on to say that The Queen much appreciates our thoughtfulness and sends her best wishes for an enjoyable Diamond Jubilee Year.

Once again, I want to most sincerely thank Jill and Glen Doyle for helping out in the production line of getting our Newsletters out to Members. Their continued assistance is invaluable.

If there are any Members still to pay their Annual Subscription, your prompt action would be very much appreciated.

Future Program Dates

30 August	Lunchtime Address – Defence Plaza WGCDR Richard Bluck AM RFD "The 'New' CARIBOU – the C27J SPARTAN".
27 September	Lunchtime Address – Defence Plaza Speaker TBA
25 October	Annual General Meeting – Defence Plaza Lunchtime Address Speaker TBA
Tuesday 13 November	Annual Luncheon Angliss Restaurant
29 November	Lunchtime Address – venue TBA LTGEN David Morrison AO Chief of Army
11 December	Christmas Drinks

New Members

Since our last issue we welcome the following new Member:

Mr Peter Lawson-Hanscombe; Major Mark Leary;
Colonel Jason Blain

Vale

We record with deep regret the passing of:

Mr Shane Joy; Lieutenant Ian Wailes

Geelong Branch News

The Annual General Meeting of the Geelong Branch was held on Sunday July 15, and MAJ Ian Barnes OAM RFD ED was re-elected President for 2012-2013.

The new year programme will begin on Monday August 20 when our member, and Vice President of the Branch, CAPT Ian Downing will address the topic of 'Signals Intelligence' The Dinner Meeting is to be held at The Geelong Club, 74 Brougham Street, Geelong and the evening commences at 1830 for Dinner at 1900. The cost is \$ 35 per head with drinks available at Club prices.

Bookings are required to be made - contact Mrs Margaret Barnes 03 5243 9569.

Further dates for Dinner Meetings this calendar year are:-

Monday, 17 September

Monday, 15 October

Monday, 19 November, and

Monday, 10 December

Donations to your Library Fund are Tax Deductible

Help to maintain the Institute's Library as the best collection in Victoria on defence and military related subjects by donating to your RUSI VIC Library Fund. The RUSI VIC Library Fund is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) approved by the Australian Taxation Office, and monetary gifts to the Fund over \$2 are tax deductible by the donor.

Please make cheques to the 'RUSI VIC Inc Library Fund'. Receipts will be provided.

From The President: Commander Warren Kemp



The Queen's Birthday was celebrated on 11th June, but this year the event was special and memorable as it also included the Diamond Jubilee of her accession to the throne. Although crowned as Queen of England and the United Kingdom, it should not be forgotten that she is also the Queen of Australia and our Head of State. The jubilee celebrations extending over four days were magnificent and I hope that you enjoyed the television presentations which were a most suitable accolade to her long and dedicated reign. Her leadership to the UK and to the world in general has been unique and inspiring and could not have been carried out by any other individual or head of State, so I have written on behalf of the Royal United Services Institute of Victoria to offer our congratulations and best wishes to her on this momentous occasion.

I find quite frequently that many people appear not to have heard of RUSI Victoria and I am always pleased to explain the Institute to them and to offer an invitation to visit our library or attend one of our monthly addresses that may be of interest. Enclosed with this newsletter is a single page of information explaining the Institute, which I use to reinforce my verbal explanation and which may be kept for later reference. I would recommend that you read this page and photocopy it for use with people of your acquaintance who are unaware of RUSI Victoria and may attend our presentations.

I would also like to promote our Foundation Day on 2nd June, which is the anniversary of the first meeting convened in 1890 by Major General Alexander Tulloch. A formal dinner to mark the occasion was suggested, but your Council decided that a Luncheon was more appropriate and arrangements are proceeding for this to be held, probably at the RACV Club in June, 2013. The Secretary, and I would be pleased to have your comments regarding this proposed event.

On Saturday, 19th May, I represented RUSI Victoria at the annual commemoration of the battle for Crete, held by the Hellenic Sub-branch of the RSL at the St Kilda Town Hall. This large gathering was again a splendid occasion that included the launching of a new book entitled *Greek Australians in the Australian Armed Forces during the First and Second World Wars* and a copy was presented to our library by the author, Mr Steve Kyritsis.

The annual Boer War commemoration was held at the Shrine on Sunday 27th May and RUSI Victoria was represented by Vice President, Major General Mike O'Brien.

The 63rd annual dinner of our Geelong Branch was held at the Geelong Club on 18th June, which I attended with 24 of their members. I was asked to speak about recent changes and future developments at RUSIV, which was received with interest. All of us enjoyed a splendid occasion in this fine Club.

On Sunday 24th June, an excellent luncheon was held in the 22 Construction Regiment Officers' Mess in honour of our Past President, Brigadier Mac Grant, on the occasion of his 90th birthday. Mac had a great afternoon, as did the 50 or more guests who were privileged to attend this historic event.

On 28th June, Vice President, Major General Mike O'Brien and I called on the new Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation in Victoria, Mr John Geary. The purpose of this visit was to inform him about RUSI Victoria and about our proposed seminar in 2015 on the centenary of Gallipoli and the 125th anniversary of RUSI Victoria. We were given a warm reception by the Deputy Commissioner, who was very interested and offered to continue the support given by his predecessor, Mr Mike O'Meara.

The annual conference of RSL Victoria was held on 4th July and I represented the Institute, but noted that quite a number of our fellow members were also present, including the RSL President, Major General David McLachlan.

The lunchtime addresses are now given on the last Thursday of the month at the Defence Plaza, 661 Bourke Street, Melbourne, unless otherwise notified on the notice paper. In May we have had an interesting address by Mr Jon Metrikas, Manager of the Geelong Club and a member of our Geelong Branch, who gave us some insights following his recent visit to North Korea, which was of particular interest to those present who had served in the Korean War. In June, the monthly address was given by Mr Mike Lean, a former Army officer who is now an executive of BAE Systems Australia, the owner of Williamstown Dockyard. He spoke about the construction and fitting out of our two new major ships, the LHDs or Landing Helicopter Docks, which will be an interesting addition to the capability of the Royal Australian Navy.

At our last meeting in July, we had a major address from Air Marshal Geoff Brown, AO, RAAF, and Chief of Air Force, who believes that the concept of Australian military strategy within a Grand National maritime strategy is an appropriate and sensible approach to discussion of the role of the RAAF in Australian national security.

CAF's presentation included a summary of international threats and conflicts over the century since the first powered flight, emphasizing the difficulty or impossibility of predicting the future and the consequent problems of future procurement and recruitment.

He approached this from the Tri-Service aspect and emphasized that force structure, capacity and capabilities cannot be left until the crisis develops, but a balanced force is essential, capable of responding to any missions that may be required by the Government.

The success of the Institute depends largely on the quality of our address programme and we are pleased to

note that the Service Chiefs have been invited and will be presenting during the next few months.

I look forward to strong support from our membership and to meeting many of you on these occasions.

And now, I have a request for assistance. Any members who would be prepared to review a book for the library, or to assist with a survey that we propose to carry out, please contact the Secretary, Captain Martin Holme for further details.

Yours Aye
Warren



President Commander Warren Kemp and Air Marshal Geoff Brown at the Defence Plaza Melbourne prepare for questions after the Chief of Air Force's presentation.



**Military History and
Heritage Victoria Inc.**



'By the Seat of their Pants' *Australian Airmen and their Aircraft 1915-1918*

One Day Conference
9 am - 4.30 pm 12 November 2012
RAAF Museum, Point Cook, Victoria

For more details and registration visit
the MHHV Website.

Victoria's Military History and Heritage

Victoria Barracks Melbourne

By Colonel Marcus Fielding

Located on St Kilda Road, Victoria Barracks Melbourne is of architectural and historical significance as one of the most impressive 19th century government buildings in Victoria.

The Barracks were originally built as accommodation for British Imperial Garrison troops, including the 12th and 40th Regiments of Foot (who were involved in putting down the armed Eureka Stockade rebellion in Ballarat Victoria), and later the Colony of Victoria's colonial forces.

The Barracks housed the Departments of the Navy, Army from the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 and later the Air Force, until 1958 when they began relocating to the new Russell Offices in Canberra.

The earliest building (now G Block) at Victoria Barracks was built by soldiers of the 40th Regiment, under the supervision of a Royal Engineer officer between 1856 and 1858, while the remaining bluestone buildings (including A Block) were built by civil contractors between 1856 and 1872.

A large extension (now A Block New Wing) was added in 1917 and while it looked like the original A Block building the construction method and interior was completely modern for the time.

Another modern, for the time, art deco building (now M Block) was added in 1939 and the floor was the first continuous concrete pour in Australia.



The War Cabinet meeting around the large oval table in the War Cabinet room. Cigarette boxes and ashtrays were provided, 1943. Australian War Memorial: ID 139923

During World War II, Victoria Barracks Melbourne housed the Australian War Cabinet. The War Cabinet comprised senior MP's from the Government and Opposition parties. The wartime Prime Ministers (Robert Menzies and later John Curtin) also had offices near the War Cabinet Room throughout the war.

The Defence Secretariat occupied the second floor of the A Block New Wing which also contained the office of senior military staff, the Secretary of the Department Defence (Sir Frederick Shedden), visiting Ministers of State and their secretaries and support staff, and the War Cabinet room.

Myth has it that the US General Douglas MacArthur had an office at the Barracks however this is not true.

His Headquarters South-West Pacific Area was initially established in a building on Collins Street in the Melbourne CBD before relocating to Brisbane in July 1942.

It was in fact General Sir Thomas Blamey who had his HQ at the Barracks while serving as Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, and simultaneously in multinational command as Commander-in-Chief Allied Land Forces in the South-West Pacific Area.



Victoria Barracks Melbourne currently accommodates the corporate headquarters and ten Systems Program Offices (business units) of the Defence Materiel Organisation's Land Systems Division, as well as elements of Joint Logistics Command and the Defence Service Group.

After 67 Years a Bomber Command Memorial



On 28 June 2012, HM the Queen unveiled a memorial in London's Green Park, to honour the 55,573 aircrew of RAF Bomber Command who lost their lives during World War II. The centre piece of the Portland stone memorial is a nine feet high bronze sculpture depicting a seven-man bomber crew returning from a mission.

The ceremony was attended by veterans from Britain and the Commonwealth, including 32 veterans sponsored by the Australian Government to travel to London with the official Australian commemorative mission.

In total Bomber Command flew 364,514 operational sorties, 1,030,500 tons of bombs were dropped and 8,325 aircraft lost in action.

Bomber Command crews suffered an extremely high casualty rate: 55,573 killed out of a total of 125,000 aircrew (a 44.4% death rate), a further 8,403 were wounded in action and 9,838 became prisoners of war. Of the Bomber Command personnel killed during the war, 72% were British, 18% were Canadian, 7% were Australian and 3% were New Zealanders.

Some 10,000 Australian airmen served in Bomber Command during World War II. Of these, 3486 were killed in action and 546 died in training accidents in the UK – making the bombing campaign against Germany and Italy Australia's costliest combat action in the War.

The very high casualties suffered give testimony to the dedication and courage of Bomber Command's aircrew. The Command had 19 Victoria Cross winners. By 1943 only one in six was expected to survive a first tour of 30 operations, while few would survive a second tour. For much of the war, the loss rate hovered around 5%, about 1 in 20 aircraft would, on average, be shot down on each mission.

Bomber Command destroyed a significant proportion of German industries notably in the Ruhr valley and many German cities including Cologne, Hamburg and Dresden. The raids caused the loss of up to 600,000 civilian lives.

Notwithstanding pride in the exploits of Bomber Command squadrons against specific military and industrial targets, the area bombing of cities entailing high civilian death tolls has always been controversial, and is one reason there has been no memorial until now.

The courage of the then young men who believed they were striking at the heart of the German war machine was tarnished by post-war angst about the ethics of bombing civilians.

The ancient German city of Dresden, where 25,000 civilians died in bombing raids, initially objected to the memorial. As a gesture of reconciliation towards German cities which had been subjected to firestorms from raids during the conflict, Dresden's objection was overcome by the placing of an inscription commemorating all the lives lost in the bombings of 1939-45,

At the unveiling ceremony, Royal Air Force Chief, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton said:

"Many of those who gave us our freedom, and to whom this memorial is dedicated, cannot join us physically, but their spirit is certainly here."

"They will now know that this country and the Commonwealth have shown them and the remaining veterans that their service and their raw courage has been recognised."

"For their bravery and sacrifice which helped to give us our freedom, we will never forget them."



The fighters are our salvation but the bombers alone provide the means of victory.

*Winston Churchill
September 1940*

Victoria's Military History and Heritage

Fort Gellibrand

By Colonel Marcus Fielding

Fort Gellibrand is located on Battery Road near Point Gellibrand at the southernmost tip of the Williamstown peninsula as it juts into Hobson's Bay and Port Phillip Bay.

Fort Gellibrand is of historical importance to Victoria for its association with the development of defence strategies for the colony in the nineteenth century, and for its association with the convict hulk period of the penal system in the colony.



**The Williamstown Jetty and Lighthouse
circa 1853**

Gellibrand's Point was named after Joseph Tice Gellibrand, a lawyer and principal of the Port Phillip Association who drew up the treaty used by John Batman to purchase Port Phillip from the Aborigines in 1835. A 30-metre stone jetty was built by convict labour in 1838 where Gem Pier now stands. A wooden lighthouse tower was constructed in the early 1840's and later replaced with a bluestone tower.

From the 1850s to the turn of the century a series of coastal defensive works were built in the Colony of Victoria in response to a perceived threat of attack from hostile warships.

The Point Gellibrand shore batteries were first developed as part of an immediate defensive system for the city and port of Melbourne. The strategy for the defence of the port of Melbourne at this time was based on a number of shore batteries inside Port Phillip Bay.

The first permanent battery was built by penal labour on Gellibrand's Point in 1855. Convicts from the hulks moored offshore were employed on these works and accommodated in an old military barracks at the Fort. The buried central magazine at the Fort dates from this period. Further gun emplacements were added by private contracts, along the foreshore in the 1860's.

The technology of artillery was developing rapidly in this period and the batteries were changed to accept, and defend against, new types of guns. Improvements were made to the Point Gellibrand batteries in 1871.

The most expansive period of building of shore defensive works in the Colony was the late 1880s and early 1890s. By this stage the primary defences of Port Phillip were located at the heads, but Fort Gellibrand batteries were also upgraded in this phase. Fort Gellibrand contained up to nine guns – some of which were 'disappearing' guns that would roll back to a defilade position to be reloaded.

The citizens of Melbourne obviously thought they had something worth protecting. By 1887, when the fortification's armaments had added to them the provision of armed Harbour Trust boats, torpedo boats, minefields, searchlights, floating batteries, plus patrol vessels and telegraph wires for early warning. Melbourne was rated '*the best defended commercial city of the Empire*'.



A 1869 Sir William Armstrong rifled muzzle-loading fortress gun at Fort Gellibrand

But not all Melburnians were so pleased about state of defences. There were numerous close calls with passing ships during firing practice. The Williamstown Chronicle of 9 August 1902 reported that a 'deputation from the Williamstown Town Council and local residents called on Sir William Lynn, the Acting Minister for Defence, regarding the damage to property brought about by the firing of the guns at the Fort. The delegation complained that the concussion from the guns "broke windows, cracked walls and in some instances injured the foundations of buildings."

Some 42 years later the same newspaper reported in July 1944 that claims for damages to property caused by the gun fire could now be lodged.

The importance of the Fort batteries declined from the 1890s, when they were effectively replaced by new facilities at Queenscliff and Point Nepean, but they were used for gunnery practice up until the 1920s. Commonwealth activity resumed from the 1930s to the late 1940s with the adaptation and use of the site for use as an artillery test range. A number of buildings were added to the area around the Drill Hall during this period.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported in September 1941 that a 25 pounder howitzer manufactured at Maribyrnong was test fired from the Fort. On successful completion of the test firing the guns were officially handed over from the Minister for Munitions to the Minister for the Army and entered into service.

Coastal artillery was disbanded after World War II when it was accepted that aircraft provided an effective and flexible solution to coastal and port defence, while hostile aircraft were capable of neutralising coastal batteries. In the years following World War II many of the emplacements and facilities at Fort Gellibrand became derelict.

A refurbishment program in the 1990's saw many of the derelict emplacements removed or buried and replicas of the emplacements from the 1870's were constructed.

The Fort Gellibrand site also contains physical evidence from the period when convict hulks were moored off Point Gellibrand. From 1854 five prison hulks were moored just offshore.

Some of the convicts from the hulks were employed in quarrying and building activity in a number of bluestone quarries along the shoreline, producing both mass stone and finished stone for government projects within the reserve and buildings in the town of Williamstown. One obvious area of shallow quarrying remains visible to the south west of the Fort.

The current road along the shore is thought to follow the line of the tramway built by the convicts to facilitate movement of stone. Convict quarries elsewhere along the shore in front of the Fort and elsewhere at the Point, have since been filled in.

Treatment of prisoners on the hulks was harsh. In 1857 Inspector General of Penal Establishments in Victoria John Price was attacked at Point Gellibrand by convicts from a working party and died of his injuries. The brutality of the hulk system was given as a reason for the attack in subsequent Government inquiries.

Today, the Fort is home to a reserve commando unit of the Australian Army – 2 Commando Company of the 1st Commando Regiment.

The Fort is also a historic site containing the only remaining visible physical evidence of the system of four battery positions at Point Gellibrand from the 1870's period.

In January 2011 a brick bunker and tunnel were uncovered when an underground rainwater tank was being installed at the adjacent cricket club. It is believed that the bunker was constructed in the late 1850s and it was probably used to store artillery rounds for the 'Right Battery'.

A series of vaulted chambers has subsequently been uncovered and is presently being excavated and assessed. Heritage Victoria senior archaeologist Jeremy Smith said "the more we dig, the more we find. As weeks have progressed, it's clear that there's a whole network of fortification structures buried there."

"We're very confident that this is the oldest defence installation that's survived in Victoria - it's almost unique really," Mr Smith said. "It's a very significant find, potentially nationally significant."

RAAF A41 Boeing C-17A Globemaster III

The Royal Australian Air Force has five C-17 Globemaster heavy transport aircraft. The Globemaster is operated by No 36 Squadron from RAAF Base Amberley, near Brisbane.

The C-17 Globemaster is a high-wing four-engine heavy transport. It has three times the carrying capacity of the C-130 Hercules, allowing Australia to rapidly deploy troops, supplies, combat vehicles, heavy equipment and helicopters anywhere in the world.

The Globemaster is large enough to transport the M1A1 Abrams tank, Black Hawk, Seahawk or Chinook helicopters, three Tiger armed reconnaissance helicopters or five Bushmaster infantry vehicles.

It significantly enhances the ADF's ability to support national and international operations, and major disaster relief efforts.



Victoria's Military History and Heritage

Melbourne's Memorial Statue of

Major-General Charles George Gordon

by Colonel Marcus Fielding

Major-General Charles George Gordon, CB (28 January 1833 – 26 January 1885), also known as 'Chinese Gordon', 'Gordon Pasha', and 'Gordon of Khartoum', was a British army officer and administrator.

He saw action in the Crimean War as an officer in the British Army, but he made his military reputation in China, where he was placed in command of the "Ever Victorious Army", a force of Chinese soldiers led by European officers.

In the early 1860s, Gordon and his men were instrumental in putting down the Taiping Rebellion, regularly defeating much larger forces. For these accomplishments, he was given the nickname 'Chinese Gordon' and honours from both the Emperor of China and the British.

He entered the service of the Khedive in 1873 (with British government approval) and later became the Governor-General of the Sudan, where he did much to suppress revolts and the slave trade. Exhausted, he resigned and returned to Europe in 1880.

When a serious revolt broke out in the Sudan, led by a Muslim reformer and self-proclaimed Mahdi, Muhammad Ahmad, at the request of the British government, Gordon went to Khartoum in February 1884 to see to the evacuation of Egyptian soldiers and civilians.

After evacuating about 2,500 British civilians he retained a smaller group of soldiers and non-military men. As an ardent Christian evangelist he was determined to stand up to the Mahdi, his Muslim nemesis. In the build-up to battle the two leaders corresponded attempting to convert the other to their respective faiths, but neither would comply.

Besieged by the Mahdi's forces, Gordon organized a city-wide defence lasting almost a year that gained him the admiration of the British public, though not the government, which had not wished to become involved. Only when public pressure to act had become too great was a relief force reluctantly sent. It arrived two days after the city had fallen and Gordon had been beheaded.

In 1888 a statue of Gordon by Hamo Thornycroft was erected in Trafalgar Square, London. An identical statue was erected in a small park called Gordon Reserve, near Parliament House in Melbourne. Funded by donations from 100,000 citizens, it was unveiled in June 1889.

Gordon stands, hand thoughtfully on his chin, armed only with a cane and a bible, standing on a shattered cannon. He was thought to reflect all the Victorian

virtues – warrior, saintly virtues, and martyr. Inscribed on the memorial is "I have tried to do my duty" and

"This is the happy warrior. This is he that every man in arms should wish to be."



Major-General Charles George Gordon, CB

50 Years On – Remembering Vietnam Exhibition

From the deployment of the Australian Army Training Team (AATTV) in 1962, through the arrival of the First Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment in 1965 and the thousands that were to follow, Australian forces trained and fought 'Side by Side' with the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) in their pursuit for freedom. Australian troops also provided support and aid to local communities, while doctors and nurses in 'civilian' surgical teams helped both military and civilian casualties and our entertainers helped to keep up morale and memories of home.

The exhibition also reflects upon the post-war struggle of those Vietnamese families seeking freedom in Australia, their challenges and successes as they ultimately settled into their new home. It features memorabilia from the war and will include the release of the book Vietnam: The Complete Story of the Australian War.

FREE ADMISSION

**Friday 17 August to Sunday 19 August Inclusive
9am – 5pm**

Swanston Town Hall, Swanston St, Melbourne
(next to Melbourne Town Hall)

Book Review

Neil C. Smith

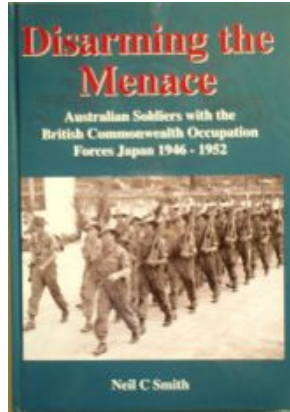
Disarming the Menace:

Australian Soldiers with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force Japan 1946-1952

Melbourne: Mostly Unsung, 2012. (258 pp, bibliography, index, b & W illustrations)

The author and publisher (and RUSI of Victoria member), Lieutenant Colonel Neil Smith, AM, has been kind enough to donate a review copy of his latest book to our Library.

Nominal Rolls of those who fought in the Vietnam and Korean wars have been published in recent years by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). Each of these books have been well received and have been of particular use to veterans and researchers. In every case, they have illustrated the difficulties of producing accurate and complete lists of participants: indeed the task is close to impossible to achieve.



BCOF has been termed 'the forgotten force' by another of our members, Colonel Jim Wood in his narrative history.¹ Ex-members of BCOF had pressed DVA to produce a similar Roll. The departmental answer was that the task was impossible.

BCOF participants have not had an easy run with Repatriation authorities. Despite a 1946 undertaking by the Prime Minister that those who enlisted for BCOF before a legally determined date would be entitled to full Repatriation Benefits, successive governments have introduced barriers – one might be tempted to call them 'bureaucratic barriers' – to dispute the application of the promise. The present situation is that the Defence Department recommendation to DVA that all those who served in Japan up to 30 June 1947 should be admitted to qualifying service eligibility has been refused by DVA. This sorry tale is more fully outlined in Neil Smith's introductory essay. And, to underline the obvious, now is the time of greatest need for these veterans.

Many of Neil Smith's publications – there are close to 100 – have taken the form of nominal rolls related to Australian active service from the Boxer rebellion to the present day. These Rolls are very valuable tools for researchers and for those tracing their family history. It is not surprising that Neil took up the challenge to produce one for BCOF in the face of the Department's inability. The easy, but very painstaking, part of the job

¹ James Wood, *The Forgotten Force: the Australian Military Contribution to the Occupation of Japan 1945-1952*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998.

was to interrogate the mass of data held in the Central Army Records Office part of the Soldier Career Management Agency. Many authors would have stopped there, but not the publisher of Mostly Unsung. His information sources have included the National Archives of Australia and UK and BCOF veterans' organisations. He has supplemented the core Roll with a useful introductory essay, organisation charts, chronology, maps and photos and a (very necessary) glossary & abbreviation list.

This book is an important addition to our collection. We hope to be able to purchase the majority of Mostly Unsung's publications when we have to funds available.

Mike O'Brien

Book Discounts for RUSI Members

We have negotiated the following discounts for all financial RUSI members across

Australia:

Mostly Unsung

(<http://mostlyunsung.alphalink.com.au/mubooks.htm>)

: 10% post free discount on all available titles War Bookshop (& Australian Military History Publications) (www.warbooks.com.au): 10% discount

All you need to do is to state you membership at time of ordering.

Donations to your Library Fund are Tax Deductible

Help to maintain the Institute's Library as the best collection in Victoria on defence and military related subjects by donating to your RUSI VIC Library Fund. The RUSI VIC Library Fund is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) approved by the Australian Taxation Office, and monetary gifts to the Fund over \$2 are tax deductible by the donor.

Please make cheques to the 'RUSI VIC Inc Library Fund'. Receipts will be provided.