



Royal United Services Institute of Victoria Inc.

Promoting National Security and Defence

A Constituent Body of the Royal United Services Institute of Australia

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RUSI-VIC NEWS

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Dates for your Diary

29 July - Speaker Meeting - **Victoria Barracks**

4 August - Council Meeting

26 August - Speaker Meeting - **Victoria Barracks**

30 September - Speaker Meeting and AGM
Defence Plaza Building

14 October - Annual Dinner - **Naval & Military Club**

10 November - Council Meeting

Lunchtime Speaker Meetings

**** Thursday 29th July, 2004 ****

Mr Aldo Borgu

Program Director - Operations and Capability

Australian Strategic Policy Institute

The topic for the ^{Luncheon} Luncheon address will be:-

Reshaping Australia's Defence Forces

Aldo Borgu, a frequent media commentator on Defence matters, is responsible for the development, management and delivery of ASPI's policy research projects. In his address he will be looking at the changes in the global and strategic security environment and what this means to the size and structure of our Defence Forces. Aldo will also expand on the role of ASPI whose aim is to promote Australia's security by contributing fresh ideas to strategic decision-making and by helping to inform public discussion of strategic and defence issues.

Note the Venue - Victoria Barracks : Time : 1130hrs (Tea/Coffee); Address : 1200hrs

Admission : \$3.00 - Lunch may be purchased from the adjacent "Barracks Bistro" afterwards.

Please advise the Office on 9282 7498 if you and/or any guests intend to be present.

**** Thursday 26th August, 2004 ****

Lunchtime Address

Brigadier Ian Lillie AM CSC

Former Commander ADF Bougainville

"The Bougainville Story"

at

Victoria Barracks – St Kilda Road

1130hrs – Tea/Coffee; Address – 1200hrs

Admission : \$3-00

Lunch may be purchased from the adjacent "Barracks Bistro"

Further details will be mailed out later

Vale – We record with deep regret the passing of:

CDR John Alliston DSO DSC* RN (A distinguished wartime navy captain, an obituary is held in the office);
Mrs Beryl Tuttle.

New Members – We welcome the following new members:

GPCAPT Kenneth R. Barnes Rtd – South Yarra; **Mrs Margaret Barnes** - Highton;
Colonel Basil S. Elms – Camberwell; **CMDR Graham McD. Harris RFD** – Ocean Grove.

Library News

The Library has made slow progress over the last few months, particularly as we have lost the services of Lyn Ross. There has been a steady and encouraging stream of donations, which have helped us a great deal. We are always looking for more!

You will note the article elsewhere in this newsletter based on our acquisition of Lt Keith Batiste's North African war diary, which was

generously donated by his wife Mrs G.A. Batiste. I hope this encourages all our members to seek out such items from their friends with World War two service before it is too late.

Bruce Dowse has offered to take over where Lyn left off, and we have accepted his generous offer. More cataloguing will therefore be done at a steady pace: members are encouraged to see how much progress has been made.

From the President – Air Commodore Mike Rawlinson

The address by Chief of Army at the Naval and Military Club on 24 June was a tour de force. Over 150 members and guests heard a lucid account by Lieutenant General Peter Leahy on how the Australian Army will conduct itself in a era of complex war fighting. He fielded many questions and clearly explained how the new tanks will be used in combined arms operations with the infantry.

I can report that the development of the RUSI VIC strategic plan is now at a stage where it is ready to mesh with the national strategic plan when the first draft of this plan becomes available shortly. An issue that is vital to both plans is the future of the RUSI of Australia Journal.

The Journal Board of Management has proposed that the hard copy Journal be discontinued, and articles and information be provided in future on the RUSI website. Your Council has not supported this recommendation. We believe that as a prestigious, professional association, RUSI of Australia needs to publish a hard copy Journal as well as having a modern website.

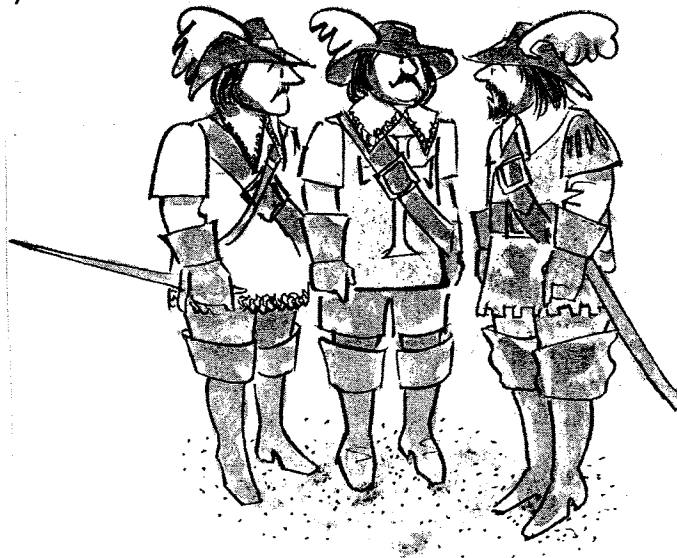
For the first time in many years, National Security and Defence has been looking as though it may be an election issue at the next federal poll. However, the differences between the Government and the ALP over Australia's commitment to Iraq have recently narrowed. Also the

appointment of Kim Beazley as Shadow Defence Minister will lessen the perceived differences between the parties in respect of the United States as he has always been a strong supporter of the US Alliance.

Mr Beazley can also be expected to add some depth and rigor to the defence debate. As he has previously been an advocate of the Dobb Doctrine of 'defence in depth', there could be implications for the ADF's force structure if the ALP forms a government. At this stage in the lead up to the campaign there does not appear to be any difference between the major parties in respect of defence funding, with little scope for an increase.

There will probably be a good deal of inaccurate reporting of defence matters in the press in the coming months. It is up to RUSI members to ensure that as far as is possible the interpretation that is received by the members of the public with whom we have contact is factually correct.

Air Commodore John Macneil has recently stood down from our Council but remains a member of the Institute. I would like to publicly thank him for his contribution in promoting national security and defence over many years and for promoting a closer relationship between the members of RUSI of Victoria and the Australia Defence Association.



"I just think we'd be a better fighting unit if it didn't take us two hours to get dressed."

From The Secretary - Martin Holme

The next two Lunchtime Speakers Meetings will be held at Victoria Barracks, which we hope will provide an opportunity for serving personnel and Defence Force employees in general to attend and participate in our deliberations.

The July speaker, Aldo Borgu, is a regular media commentator from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and will be provocative and challenging. Brigadier Ian Lillie, the August Speaker and a recently re-joined Member, will provide us with some fascinating insights on his time as commander of our forces on the troubled island of Bougainville

I draw your attention to two important diary dates – 30th September, at Defence Plaza, when the AGM will be held. Our Annual Dinner will be held at the Naval and Military Club, on Thursday 14th October and a splendid evening is assured, cementing our increasingly enjoyable and appropriate association with the Club.

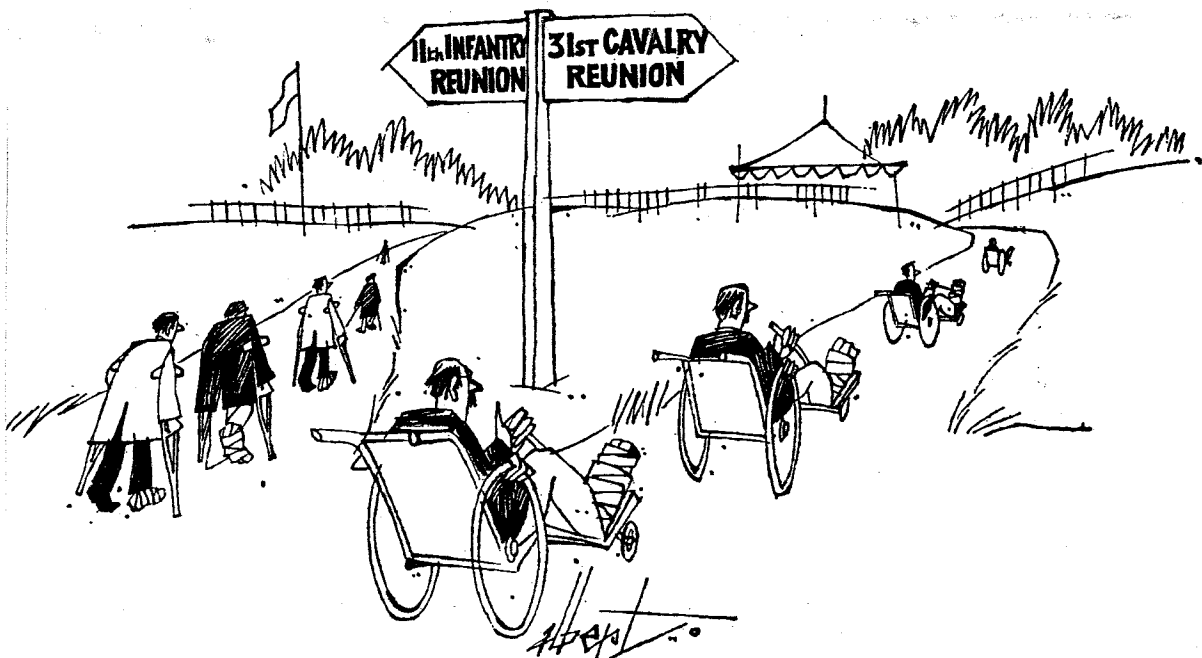
There have been two excellent lunchtime occasions since the last Newsletter. The June speaker, Neil James, Executive Director of the Australian Defence Association, made a very stimulating presentation, a precis of which is included later. It was a pity that some members

could not attend but those that did were treated to an outstanding and thought provoking presentation and discussion. There was universal agreement that Neil should be invited to speak again in the not too distant future.

Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, gave a memorable address to members and their guests at the July Meeting, which was held at the Naval and Military Club. Over 150 attended, with the Club providing excellent food and facilities.

As mentioned elsewhere, this Newsletter contains an extract from the diary of long-time former Member, the late Keith Batiste. The diary entry for 9th July 1942 is a stirring, poignant and sobering reminder of the trauma experienced by our soldiers in the North African campaign. Further extracts from this fascinating and at times heart-rending document will be published in future Newsletters.

A copy of the diary may be read in the Library and again we thank Mrs G.A. Batiste for donating, in memory of her late husband, such an historically important item to our collection. Our thanks are also due to Brigadier Keith Colwill for facilitating the presentation.



Treasures from our Library

We have recently re-discovered an interesting document in our RUSI Library collection. It is a foolscap-sized exercise book of 72 pages made from blue lined wove paper. The paper has a large watermark of a seated Britannia surmounted by a crown. Pasted on the cover is the following label:

CORPS OF VICTORIA VOLUNTEER ENGINEERS.

SUBJECT Questions set at 1st Examination
for Non Commissioned Officers
held on the 19 August 1861

N.B.—This Book is not to be taken out of the Orderly Room, nor is it to be defaced by pencil or ink marks, nor to be injured in any way.

P.H. SCRATCHLEY,
Commanding Royal Engineer

Melbourne 23 August 1861

The first page has a notice of exam pasted in. It states that the exam will have 35 questions to be answered in a 5 hour 50 minute time limit. The subjects covered were: Arithmetic, Field Fortification, Practical Geometry, Logarithms (candidates were to bring their own log tables, but for some reason or other pocket calculators were not mentioned!). This first page is signed by P.H. Scratchley, CRE.

The rest of the document has the individual printed questions cut out and pasted in, together with model answers handwritten in ink. The handwriting throughout may also be that of Scratchley.

What is the significance of this exercise book?

Sir Peter Scratchley was born on 24th August 1835 in Paris, the son of a doctor in the Royal Artillery. He attended the Royal Military Academy Woolwich and passed first in his class. From 1854 to 1856 he served with the Royal Engineers in the Crimean War. He then performed engineering works at Portsmouth and proceed overseas to serve in the Indian Mutiny campaign, being mentioned in despatches three times.

He was promoted to Captain in 1859 and dispatched to Melbourne in command of a detachment of Royal Engineers to erect defence works that he had designed. The Victorian Government had requested a detachment of engineers for this purpose. Scratchley had been described as 'an officer of great ability'. Arriving in the colony in 1860 he reported to the Victorian Parliament that the estimated cost of the defences of the colony, £81 200, was

insignificant when compared with the wealth and security of its people. However, lack of funds prevented most of his construction, other than the first works at Queenscliff.



THE LATE SIR PETER SCRATCHLEY, R.E.M.O., FORMER COMMISSIONER OF NEW GUINEA.

Scratchley played a central role in the formation of the Corps of Volunteer Engineers in Victoria. He was evidently present at the meeting at the Duke of Rothsay Hotel in Elizabeth Street on 7 November 1860 where the formation of the corps was first formally discussed. He made many valuable suggestions for the government of the corps. The Corps Regulations were gazetted in March 1861.

Scratchley was posted back to England in 1863 but retained an interest in the defences of all the Australian colonies. He returned to Australia as a lieutenant colonel in 1877 and commenced an affiliation with Sir William Jervois in advising the colonies on their defences. After Jervois was appointed to be the Governor of South Australia, Scratchley became Commissioner of Defences in 1878. His plans were largely implemented and perhaps all of the Australian coastal defences of this period can be traced to his inspiration.

He retired from active military service in 1882 as an honorary major general but continued to assist the Colonial Office as a defence adviser. He was appointed Special Commissioner for the British Protectorate of New Guinea in 1884 and was knighted in 1885. He contracted malaria on a journey of interior exploration in 1885 and died in December at sea when sailing to Townsville. He was buried in the St Kilda Cemetery but reinterred in Woolwich in 1886.

The Corps of Victoria Volunteer Engineers was the first engineer corps formed in Australia. Here we have one of the earliest surviving written records of the Corps of Engineers in Australia, with the signature of its founder. It is indeed a valuable document.

The Charles Batiste North African War Diary

Keith Charles Batiste was born on 30th Dec 1918 at Flemington Victoria. He joined the Militia in May 1935 (Regimental no. 297746) to serve with 15th Field Brigade, Royal Australian Artillery (RAA). He enlisted under war conditions at Caulfield on 3rd May 1940. On 5th May 1940, as a gun sergeant, he transferred from 112th Howitzer Battery to enlist in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force and was allotted to 2/8th Field Regiment[1], RAA. He was commissioned on 21st August 40. He embarked from Australia on 16th November 1940 for the Middle East and was on active service with A Troop, 15th Battery (equipped with 25-pdr guns) until embarkation on 31st January 1943 for return to Australia. He continued to serve with his unit on the Atherton Tablelands until transferring to the Reserve of Officers on 11th Feb.44. He was placed on the Retired List in 1967. For his wartime service he was awarded the 1939-45 Star; the Africa Star (with the 8th Army clasp); the Defence Medal; the War Medal 1939-45; and the Australian Service Medal 1939-45. He died on 18th March 2000.

Mrs G.A. Batiste has donated his diary covering six months in 1942 to the RUSIV in memory of her husband. It is in a small green cloth covered 6¾" x 4½" limp notebook from the 'Egypt' Series, and was perhaps purchased in Alexandria. It is handwritten in ink, with some earlier entries probably transcribed from another book. The diary is especially valuable today, as security regulations at the time prohibited the keeping of such personal accounts.

An extract follows (and we will publish more in future Newsletters.):-

9th July 42. We are to be used as shock troops for a big attack— good show our fellows are well trained— look out Jerry. We attack at dawn. We are to take Hill 26.23.33; The Tel-el-Elisa station & Hill 22; the famous "Hill of Jesus". We sit near our guns chewing biscuits & making a last minute check of our gear. One of the Batmen makes a cup of tea; we drink it while waiting for Zero hour; we talk about anything but the war; ours is to be the job of moving forward with the Infantry— should be rather a "Sticky" job. Lt (Snow) Steer[2] is going out as F.O.O.[3]

An hour to Zero and the tension has increased; you don't feel frightened but terribly calm; though there is a little tightness in your stomach which you can't quite explain. My machine gunner gives his gun a final check. Zero hour?& we move slowly forward; the whole sky is a blaze of flame as our guns open up on the enemy positions — we wish each other "good luck". Now we move out through the gap in our wire — now into the minefield; our machine-gun carrier is

blown up— one killed, one wounded; we go around it; shells are dropping fast now; and shrapnel is splashing along the roadway. I look at my driver; he grins and puts his thumbs up. Distress rockets are blazing up from the enemy positions as he calls for still more artillery support; some of the shells are very large & sound like an express train going through a tunnel; his fire is becoming more accurate now; tanks rumble past us & we can hear heavy machine- gun fire in front; day is just breaking. Two white Verey light blaze up— good show, Hill 26 is ours— the first objective has fallen. We go into action & commence pumping shells into him as fast as we can load & fire.

There are several Italians laying near me; one has his back all shot away; poor devil, give him a cigarette & he murmurs "Gracios". I send for the Medical Corporal who gives him Morphia. The prisoners are streaming back now; there must be 2,000 of them; their own Artillery mistake them for us & open fire; some of them are blown up; they panic and scatter. Hear aircraft engines; look up— "Stukas"— I can

count 30 of them; and they are diving; they have seen our guns; now they are screaming down; we go to ground there comes a series of piercing screams as their bombs come down; our machine-guns open fire but it's futile; there is a terrific detonation; the whole world seems to fall apart; you cannot see for 20 feet for the dust & smoke— they miss us — only by a matter of yards but still it's a miss! Now they are machine-gunning; we grovel in the sand and hope for the best; several burst horribly close. The smoke clears away; two men scratched by shrapnel otherwise all O.K.— seems like a miracle. We open fire again. Ammunition getting low; call for more & up it comes; nice shiny new shells for Jerry. More bombers; again "Stukas" Jerry is throwing all he has into knocking our guns out— again the bombers miss us; our ack-ack guns fill the air With shells but miss them. Our guns are fast becoming red-hot & the paint is peeling off them from the incessant firing. Two more Verey lights go up. The second objective has fallen (Hill 23). More prisoners; this time quite a few Germans amongst them; Ambulances roar past full of our wounded. These Italians are good; they'll fight alright. Notice there are bullet holes in my slit trench; funny didn't notice them before; guess it must be the excitement. Then come the "Jerry" bombers again; they scream down on us machine-gunning & dropping H.E. The earth trembles & part of my trench caves in — now they are gone again. Here comes some of our fighters; right on their tails. Good show R.A.F. Give it to 'em; one "Stuka" bursts into flames, we cheer & wave our helmets. Jerry must be able to see us quite clearly; his shellfire is right on top of us. Move— four tanks move through. Counter attack! Enemy tanks have broken through; our O.P opens fire on them; we tear down our camouflage nets & get out the armour-piercing shells— let 'em come! Already we have fired over 1,000 shells from our troop; the gunners are stripped to the waist & sweating profusely. More prisoners. Our Infantry are in trouble & call for more support; give 'em all we have got. Prisoners wander in; our guns knocked their tanks out; notice they are from a Panzer division; these two are only lads of about 22 & rather frightened of us; one is shell-shocked;

these certainly ain't the tough looking Germans Hitler would lead us to believe; our fellow could eat 'em alive. Somehow I don't feel any hate towards them; guess I am soft or something. Endeavour to ask them a few questions by signology & a few odd German words I know; but they shake their heads. They are both all in; give them a drink of water which they gratefully accept; you can see the look of wonder in their eyes when one of the boys offers them a cigarette; they are the sole survivors of 5 tank crews. These fellows are told that the Australians will do all sorts of things to them if they are taken prisoner.

The attack has progressed & so we move further forward. The CO's batman is killed; Mountjoy[4] killed; Moore wounded.

[1] There is a published history of the regiment (Charles & Mary Morton, *2/8 Australian Field Regiment Remembers World War II 1939-1945*, 1992): we have a copy in the RUSI Library, presented by Lt Batiste in 1992.

[2] TX 525 Lieutenant J.L. Steer

[3] Forward Observer Officer.

[4] VX18576 Gunner R. Mountjoy.



VISITOR (at Private Hospital): "Can I see Lieutenant Barker, please?"

MATRON: "We do not allow ordinary visiting. May I ask if you are a relative?"

VISITOR (boldly): "Oh, yes! I'm his sister."

MATRON: "Dear me! I'm very glad to meet you I'm his mother."

More Gambling With Our Future

Neil James – Executive Director, Australian Defence Association

An extract from his address to RUSI - Victoria –27th May 2004

There is a widening chasm in contemporary Australian public debate on national security issues between the reality of our strategic situation on the one hand, and our national willingness to acknowledge this and adequately fund the response on the other. There are several reasons for this situation but the principal one remains the tendency for media comment on national security issues to be largely focused on its perceived or actual effect on the domestic party-political contest.

Another principal cause of the situation is the widespread lack of knowledge on defence and strategic issues by much of the new generation of Australia's leaders – both inside and outside parliament. There is only one combat veteran in federal parliament and despite the rhetoric, many parliamentarians from all parties understand little on defence issues and/or show little interest.

The recent federal budget exemplified these trends. The overall allocation for defence is \$16.3 billion comprising an appropriation of \$15.9 billion and other revenue (asset sales, etc) of \$400 million. This is about \$725 million (or 2.4 per cent) more than last year. Defence spending is about 8.5 per cent of the total federal budget (\$192.3 billion) and is estimated it will be around 1.8 to 1.9 per cent of projected GDP.

Purely for comparison, social security (\$82.6 billion) is about 43 per cent of the federal budget, health (\$35 billion) around 18 per cent, and education (\$14.2 billion)

about 7.5 per cent. Given that defence is wholly Commonwealth funded, but these other three areas also receive significant inputs from the states and territories, this budget again puts paid to the myth that somehow we are 'wasting' too much on defence and not allocating enough for social spending.

Put another way, in terms of national resources (both federal and state spending) we spend 8 ½ times as much on social security, 4 ½ times as much on health and just on 4 times as much on education as we spend on defence. Given that for much of the 20th century spending in these four areas was generally about equal the increasing gravity of the current situation should be obvious. Most Australians, however, prefer to look elsewhere because it is the Australian way, under governments of both political persuasions, to avoid hard decisions.

The 2004/05 budget continues the sustained underinvestment in defence of the last three decades. It will not tackle large pockets of bloc obsolescence in the defence force and will further postpone or limit much-needed ADF modernisation. The small real increase in defence funding this year still lags well behind both GDP and general expenditure growth. Our short-term focused allocation of national resources to defence still fails to match the long-term strategic challenges we face. As a nation we could and should spend more on defence but we choose not to, as we did in the 1920s and 1930s, in an uncalculated gamble on the future.

Swords

We have received several requests for information regarding the vexed question of swords and their current legality. We stress that we are not experts but offer the following, gleaned from an advertisement accidentally sighted in *The Age*.

On 1 July 2004, swords and crossbows became prohibited items under the *Control of Weapons Act 2000*. However, an amnesty applies until 31 August 2004.

The Act provides for exemptions to the ban, approval for which must be obtained from the Chief Commissioner of Police.

Assuming we are more interested in swords than crossbows, which are no longer used in our front line defence, it seems that the following groups of people may be allowed to retain their swords, provided they comply with requirements about transport, security and storage:-

- People who use swords for religious and cultural reasons;
- Museums, Galleries and groups using swords for theatrical performance;
- Tai Chi and Kendo practitioners;
- Legitimate sword collectors who are registered members of collector clubs;
- People with one or two swords as heirlooms;
- Serving and former military officers and the Returned and Services League;
- Historical re-enactment groups;
- Highland sword dancers, including highland dance schools and their students;
- Fencers;
- People who own swords which have never had a sharpened edge or edges.

As mentioned above, this information is taken from an advertisement published by the Department of Justice Victoria and it is recommended that members who seek further clarification and information contact that Department. Information can also be obtained from the Licensing Service Branch of Victoria Police on 1300 651 645.

We hope this information assists those who are uncertain as to what to do, but we do stress that RUSI – Victoria is not a body which can give informed advice on this issue.



"This tear-gas spray-gun is just what you need, madam, to protect you against arms dealers who accost you in the street."