

THE VOICE

February 2014 Edition

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Did You Know...

During the 1940 German offensive that culminated with the Dunkirk evacuation, the British Expeditionary Force managed to evacuate only 322 of the 2,794 artillery pieces that had been in service with the BEF; and of the total of 66,618 motor vehicles involved only 2,739 were brought back.

Editor's Opening

(boring but important)

Yes, for the second issue in a row my words grace (despoil?) the front page. My ego knows no bounds. This is an update on various matters, some touched on in the last issue and a few which have risen since.

Firstly, I'd like to thank John Boyer, Ramon Mason and Allen Riches for their prompt response to my call for stories and/or photos and/or back issues of *The Voice*. John and Ramon's contribution can be read in this edition (and in the latter's case, subsequent editions) or viewed on the website. Speaking of which...

The new official KVAA Inc. website is now up and running. The old decrepit site is now forever cast into the deepest recesses of cyberspace never to be heard of again. The new showpiece of the KVAA can be found at www.kvaa.org.au. So what will you see there?

Well, for starters, the photos taken at the Melbourne KVAA Inc. Christmas Luncheon in December. Yours to view and download and print. No more members sidling up to me at the monthly committee and inquiring as to the possibility of getting a copy of the photo I took of them at the luncheon with their [insert name of relative/friend here]. Now they can do it themselves.

One final point about the web presence. It's primary purpose is as a resource for the non-veteran. It is for the researcher or student interested in the origins and resolution (or lack of resolution) of the conflict. The stories/experiences of Australian and other Commonwealth veterans will, we hope, prove useful to them. Just remember: it is a work in progress and will alter over the next few months both as more material is added to it, and our enthusiastic webmaster, Rob Huntley, progresses in his studies in coding and html.

Eagle-eyed members who read every line of this publication (and who doesn't?) will notice on Page 2 that the email addresses for both the Editor and Secretary have changed to the more generic secretary@kvaa.org.au and editor@kvaa.org.au. Please use these in future rather than our previously advertised email accounts.

One final matter...

In order to prepare for this years Revisit Korea Program, any Korea War veteran WHO HAS NEVER RETURNED to Korea and wishes to go, please contact Alan Evered on 03 9874 2219 or 0412 521 488 ASAP.

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www.kvaa.org.au

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KVAA pocket badge	\$10.00	\$	Kapypong battle print	\$ 6.00	\$
KVAA lapel badge (undated)	\$10.00	\$	The Hook 1953 battle print	\$ 6.00	\$
KVAA lapel badge (1950-57)	\$ 5.00	\$	RAN silk print: Ships in Korea	\$15.00	\$
KVAA windscreen decal	\$ 5.00	\$	Tie (with KVAA Inc. logo)	\$20.00	\$
KVAA beer (stubby) holders	\$ 5.00	\$	Car number plate surrounds (set)	\$10.00	\$
Korean War map (laminated)	\$ 6.00	\$	Woollen scarf	\$35.00	\$
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President's Report

Once again, I thank the Executive/Committee for their work ethic in running our Association during my sojourn in Hospital and subsequent rehabilitation. The hip replacement is working fine with the support of weekly visits to the physio.

My thanks also to all for the get-well cards/flowers/phone calls and visits. They were deeply appreciated and helped me on the road to recovery. This includes cards and gifts from the Korean Embassy (Ambassador and Military Attaché) and the Korean Consul here in Melbourne. Extremely kind and thoughtful.

The Hankuk University in Seoul offered 32 Scholarships to descendants of United Nations veterans. Eleven young people were accepted into the University: seven girls and four boys. One young Australian was among the lucky students given the chance to study in Korea through the generosity of the Hankuk University.

I was very well looked after by family during the Festive Season, and I trust that your Christmas was equally pleasant. As we move into the New Year there will be numerous memorial ceremonies taking place. Our Association will make every endeavour to attend every invitation that we receive.

Origin of the Digger

It is surprising how the origin of even modern traditions and usages is sometimes doubtful and shrouded in mystery. That applies to the Australian term 'digger'. It is commonly accepted that it first referred to the miner on the gold fields of the 1850s. English people then generally regarded all Australians as diggers for gold and rolling in wealth. But how did the word become the description of the Australian soldier?

Some date this custom back to the South African War, though no record confirms their claim. Much more feasible and widely accepted now is the claim by Charles Everitt of Birdgrove (N.S.W.), that he introduced the term in its modern connotation. But gold diggers were then furthest from his mind.

He was stationed with the 17th Battalion at Gundagai Post on the Sinai Peninsula. "All we did," he recalled, "was dig trenches." Drifting sand made the work almost futile and again and again they had to dig the same trenches. "We aren't soldiers, we're diggers!" he complained. Use of the term soon became common throughout the Middle East and the soldiers of the A.I.F. adopted it as the proud title now emblazoned in the annals of Australian history.

Source: *How Did It Begin?* by Rudolph Brasch, Angus & Robertson 1993

Time Travelling Bob



I'm a big fan of the Royal Australian Regiment Association (Victoria Branch) newsletter. I pinch, ahem, I mean, I borrow, all my best jokes from it. Their last edition left me agog, however, for it revealed that not only is Bob Richardson the Secretary of the Association in addition to being editor, but he's a time-traveller as well!

Imagine my delight when I received the December 2014 edition 12 months in advance of its publication date. My happiness turned into disappointment when there was no mention of tattslooto numbers, stock market trends, or who won the Melbourne Cup or the AFL final this year – no information whatsoever that I could use to my advantage, and by advantage, I mean put money on and win a fortune.

On second thoughts, however, Bob is probably right to keep this information to himself. A million tattslooto winners will reduce the 1st division prize pool to about three dollars each and initiate a police investigation into rigging. Although some people might like to see Bob in jail, I do not count myself among that number. So I urge everyone not to badger the time-travelling Bob for future information. Equally I urge Bob himself not to splash around the millions of dollars he has undoubtedly earned through his knowledge of the future. No limousines and Toorak mansions. Play it safe, Bob, and pretend to be poor.

Notices

HQ 1 ALSG Mildura Reunion

The Headquarters Company 1st Australian Logistic Support Group reunion will be held over the Anzac weekend 2014. This reunion is for veterans and wives, & wives and children of veterans who have since passed on.

When: 4.30 pm Thursday 24 April – Sunday 27th April 2014

Where: Inlander Resort, 373 Deakin Avenue, Mildura, Victoria

Meet & Greet at the resort starting at 4.30 PM on 24th April and finishing with the main dinner on Sunday 27th April. Note: a lunch time BBQ for those staying on will be held at the Raymond Deed Veterans Retreat on Monday the 28th April.

For accommodation and reunion details contact reunion organiser, Tony Brown, on 0350212066, mobile 0428852736 or email: tonyraye11@bigpond.com

RAR Merchandise

KVAA Inc. Life Member, Doug Wilkie, has located a source of RAR Merchandise no longer available via RAR Associations:

- RAR Cuff Links Gold local (MS 2342L) \$10.50
- RAR Cuff Links on Card Gold local (MS 2363L) \$10.95
- RAR Belt Buckle Brass local (MS 2602L) \$39.95

From: The Military Shop
PO Box 166, FYSHWICK, ACT, 2609
Phone: 02 6123 2950
Email: sales@militaryshop.com.au

Seeking...

Judy Sorensen's cousin, John Alfred Mealing, 9696, 3RAR, was killed in the battle of Kapyong on 24 April 1951, aged 21. Judy would like to speak to any veterans who knew/served with her cousin. If you can help, contact her at judysorensen1@gmail.com

Seeking...

Born in Sydney in September 1928, Maurice Frederick Levy, 2/4477, 3RAR, served in Korea from 6 August 1951 to 9 August 1952. His son, Ron, would like to talk to any veteran who served with his father. If you can help, contact Ron on 02 9871 6406 or via email at ronlevy@optusnet.com.au

The Forgotten Flotilla

by Len Cox

In 1940 Admiral Cunningham praised the men serving in the old V and W destroyers, affectionately known as the Scrap Iron Flotilla, saying they deserved better ships. He suggested they should man the new N class destroyers then under construction in the UK.

However, this was not to be and the new ships were crewed mainly by drafts from Australia and men left in the UK from the decommissioned Armed Merchant Cruisers *Moreton Bay* and *Arawa*. The two AMCs were Royal Navy, but they had been fitted out in Sydney and manned by Australian personnel.

The eight N class destroyers were *Napier*, *Nizam*, *Nestor*, *Norman*, *Nepal*, the Dutch *Van Galen* and *Tjerkiddes*, and the Polish *Piourun*. While the Polish destroyer remained in the European area, the other N ships served in every theatre of war from the Arctic to Tokyo Bay. The little ships displaced 2000 tons, with their 40,000 Shaft HP giving them a speed of more than 36 knots. They carried six 4.7 inch guns, one to four 40mm Pom Poms, six 20mm Oerlikons and ten torpedo tubes.

In 1941, *Napier* had the distinction of carrying the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill and his wife to Scapa Flow for a meeting with American envoy Harry Hopkins. *Nizam* and *Napier* took part in the Crete evacuation and the Tobruk run. *HMAS Nestor* sank the U-boat U127, but was sunk herself in the Mediterranean in 1942, fighting under the flag of a country she sadly was never to see. *Norman* took the British Prime Minister's Trade Mission to Russia in 1941.

Nepal was the last of the five Australian Ns to commission because of damage caused by German aircraft in a hit-run raid. But when afloat, she was fitted with the new High Frequency Direction Finding, which was to prove vital in the Battle of the Atlantic. She sailed with a task force into the Arctic to protect a convoy and later, in the South Atlantic, her two HF/DF telegraphists saved many lives when they detected a U boat transmitting a sighting report of her convoy. The liner, *Windsor Castle*, laden with troops was altering course as torpedoes crossed the bows of the destroyer.

Finally, in September 1942, the ships were all together at last, after each had travelled about 10,000 miles every month. Steaming behind the battleship *HMS King George*, *Nizam* was the first Australian ship into Tokyo Bay and *Napier's* Captain, who accepted the keys of the city's Naval Base Depot from a Japanese Commander, was the first free Australian ashore.

Source: *Navy News* Vol.38, No.5, 24 March 1995

The Bombardment of Chinampo

by John Boyer ex-HMAS Bataan

Response to a new threat.

With the entry of the Chinese Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) into the Korean War, the UN forces became hopelessly outnumbered and a general retreat began along the entire front. *HMAS Bataan*, having already been detached from the US 7th Fleet and ready to return to Australia, was immediately ordered to sail to the west coast of Korea and commence patrol operations at the mouth of the Yalu River, the border between Manchuria and North Korea.

On the 4th of December, 1950, *Bataan* was ordered to proceed to the Taedong River estuary and join her sister ship *HMAS Warramunga*, three Canadian destroyers (*HMCS Cayuga*, *Habaskan* and *Sioux*) and the American destroyer, *USS Forrest B Royal*. In total darkness and being blacked out, the ships dropped anchor and the captains held a conference on *Acayuga*, being the senior ship, to decide what moves would be appropriate given the present situation. Communication with the threatened forces in Chinampo confirmed the decision to proceed up river to cover and assist in the evacuation of the UN troops.

A nightmare journey begins.

At 2200 the order was given to sail and so began a nightmare journey. A blinding snowstorm immediately enveloped the vessels making visual observation impossible. Each navigating officer would have his ability and skill tested to the utmost facing the hazards that lay ahead.

The available charts were old and probably no longer accurate. The treacherous eddy and flow of the river current meant constant wheel changes by the ever-alert helmsman. Mud banks, large and small, and the varying depth of the riverbed all contributing to a most unpleasant voyage. Added to this were the minefields. Uncharted and unknown, this was the most serious threat to face each ship.

Within an hour of departure, *Sioux* signalled that she had run aground and was stuck fast. Shortly after that *Warramunga* suffered the same fate and both ships were left to their own devices, being advised not to attempt to refloat until daybreak.

The remaining destroyers cautiously carried on with their mission, and after long and nerve-racking hours, finally arrived at Chinampo at 0400. It had taken six hours to traverse the 45 kilometres. It was a tired but relieved crew that settled down at relaxed action stations to await the coming daylight.

Astonishment is the only way to describe the feeling of those on board when it was realised that the entire city was ablaze with lights. Frenzied activity was taking place along the whole of the waterfront. After being in near total darkness and restricted to minimum physical movement, it took some time for the scene to register. The morning light began to reveal what was actually occurring. Equipment was being swung inboard and lowered into the holds of waiting craft, orderly lines of troops making their way along the jetties and up gangways onto transports. Individuals in khaki were rushing backwards and forwards indicating with their arms at who knows what. Then, as the sun rose higher, another drama began to unfold. Further along the waterfront, away from the controlled loading of the troops and equipment, were several jetties jammed with panic-stricken civilians.

The death of innocent civilians.

To escape the oncoming Chinese troops, they had fled towards the river and were trying to board the small craft tied to the wharves. In the mad rush to get to the boats some were pushed off the wharves. Others fell, while still others were carried over by the constant surge of people behind them. Others were trampled on, some were crushed between the pier poles and the boats and even then, after making the sanctuary of the craft, some were bodily thrown overboard to make room for others following behind.

It was complete chaos and the onlookers could only stare in disbelief at what was happening, unable to intervene. On the river, large and small vessels were scurrying downstream as fast as they could. A constant flow of humanity sailing past the anchored warships with one common purpose – escape!

Suddenly it was realised that many small boats were making their way towards the destroyers, no doubt seeing them as a means of rescue. Unfortunately for these poor people, the warships could not cope with an influx of such numbers. The Canadians, being closest inshore, were first to react. Fire hoses were directed at the oncoming craft with immediate and disastrous effect. The leading boats took the initial blast of water and the occupants began a mad scramble to the rear to dodge the water jets. This caused the stern to dip and in no time water began to pour in.

Knowing their boat was doomed they tried to move forward again, but were caught in a fight with those who had stayed put. Then the boat sunk and its entire load was now struggling in the water. Being dressed in

(continues on Page 6)

heavy winter clothing, some soon disappeared from sight. Others now tried to swim to the nearest boat but were quickly dissuaded by those onboard, who beat their hands or hit them to make them let go.

In an effort to escape the freezing jets of water, the following boats tried to turn around and some were rammed. Others were flooded and more people went into the icy river. The whole scene could not have lasted for five minutes but it was long enough for other escapees to know there was no rescue to be had. For several minutes pathetic bundles drifted slowly downstream before finally sinking below the surface. And still, oblivious to the happenings around them, fleeing ships went downstream ignoring the cries for help from those unable to leave.

Disquieted, the crews are called to action.

For the destroyer crews going about the various duties there was a feeling of disquiet. They were witnessing the other side of the coin of war, and they were unable to change what was unfolding. Then, at 1600 the signal was received that the evacuation of the 8000 American and South Korean troops had been successfully completed and the transports were already leaving.

Another signal was then transmitted saying, "Destroy everything that could be of use to the enemy." Then came the announcement "Hands will go to action stations at 1630." Every man on board began to ready himself to carry out his allotted task when the time came. At 1630 the order was given, "Hands to action stations." And the waiting began.

Enduring images of war: an eyewitness account.

An uneasy calm seemed to settle over the scene as those on board prepared for their next task. At 1700 the order was given "Commence firing." Immediately the silence shattered as broadsides fired from the ships, each shell landing into a preselected target area. With each blast the destroyers rocked and heeled. Asbestos began to fall from pipes and trunking in the mess decks and the other spaces where the material was in use.

Following a direct hit ashore, an enormous smoke-ring mushroomed skywards. It was huge and it rose majestically upwards. It stayed visible for a long time before finally dissipating and losing its shape high in the still atmosphere. The shelling continued unabated, the orange and yellow shell bursts preceding the clouds of dust and smoke.

As the firing went on the smell of cordite began to permeate the entire ship. Mess decks, magazines, store-rooms, boiler rooms, engine room, all compartments being filled with the acrid fumes. Asbestos dust now floated lazily about and covered most flat surfaces.

The noise of the gunfire was deafening. There was the heavy blast of the 4.7 inch, the lighter crack of the 4.0 inch, the peculiar 'cough, cough, cough' of the 40mm bofors, and the rapid 'pmmf, pmmf, pmmf' of the 20mm pom poms, all adding their own contribution to the cacophony of thunderous sound.

Fires were now beginning to show ashore. Some were large, some small – all starting to burn out of control. Slowly and efficiently the calculated placement of shot was not only destroying the targeted area, but was providing the fires with a steady supply of material to burn, assisting in the destruction of the city.

Darkness fell quickly and now the fires were becoming the focal point of the operation. Explosion after explosion hurled flaming debris high into the darkness. It fell back into the raging inferno below. Tracer shells glowing red sped through the dark and disappeared into the flames. The whole waterfront was now ablaze. At 2000 came the order "Cease firing." The guns fell silent and an eerie hush prevailed.

To the onlookers the scene was awesome. As far as the eye could see in either direction was one unbroken wall of flames. Their reflections danced on the inky black waters and a bright red glow dominated the skyline. For several minutes those responsible surveyed the results of the bombardment, then it was time to leave.

One by one the ships slipped away from the devastation and began the journey downstream. There was no jubilation or bravado amongst the crew. There was subdued talk. Snatches of quiet conversation like "Point blank range," "Just like target practice," "Couldn't miss at that range," and "God help those poor bastards ashore," seemed to sum up the mood of those on board.

Fifty years on: a symbol of hope

On the 25 June 2001, I attended the annual Korean War Memorial service held at the Korean Uniting Church in Malvern. For the first time in years, I felt that here in this church was perhaps the reason for the wastage of Chinampo. The congregation were free to worship and live the life that was theirs by choice. At least that is what I hope.

First published in 2001 in Do This In Remembrance: Healing the Wounds of War Addresses, Sermons and Scripts from the St. George's East St. Kilda Uniting Church Annual Memorial Service 1992-2001 (ed. John Bottomly)

This is an edited version of the original 2001 piece.

The Moving Bush

by Ramon J. Mason 24592 3RAR & 1RAR

Ramon Mason enlisted in the Army in February 1951 and arrived in Korea on 12 October that year where he joined 5 Section, 5 Platoon B Coy 3RAR on Hill 317 (Maryang San). Wounded in action on 7 February 1952 he was evacuated to the Norwegian M.A.S.H. and from there to a Canadian F.D.S., F.M.A. in Seoul and finally the Song Dok convalescent camp. Returning to the front line he was again wounded (shrapnel) but otherwise finished his year unharmed, returning with B.C.O.F. to Sydney in 1952. He was posted to the Armoured School at Puckapunyal for 11 months before joining "N" Sqn., 1st Armoured Regiment at Easthills, N.S.W. Volunteering for another stint in Korea he was assigned to 1RAR as a machine gunner; later a M.G. driver; then joined the Btn. HQ Signals Platoon before returning to Australia in February 1956. Assigned to "E" Coy., 19 N.S. Btn. as a drill instructor, he left the army in July 1957.

Monday 5 November 1951, B Coy 3 Bn. RAR was dug in on the eastern ridgeline of Hill 317 (Maryang San). The main tall part of Hill 317 was held by the KOSB (King's Own Scottish Borderers) until Sunday 4 November 1951, when the Chinese drove them off it.

It was a fine, warm and sunny morning, when Privates Bob Van Der Loop, Ray Low and myself, proceeded down the southern slope to relieve the in post members situated in a fighting pit about 30 feet (9 metres) above the road (2 wheel ruts).

We'd been there about an hour, when I noticed on my right flank a very bushy bush moving down the middle of the road. I alerted my comrades to this phenomenon. Bob, being not only the senior soldier, but the most experienced of us, told me to move about 20 feet (6 metres) to the right and Ray to do the same to the left and to follow his example. As I moved to the right, I cocked my Owen gun, then stood pointing it at the bush as it moved towards us. As it passed, I could see the Chinese soldier carrying it.

When he got level with Bob, Bob whistled, the soldier stopped and looked at Bob. Then I whistled, so he looked at me. When Ray whistled, the soldier dropped his bush, then bent down and placed something on the ground. He then stood up facing Bob with his hands held high.

I walked down and frisked him, then I picked up the stick grenade he'd laid on the ground. I motioned towards Bob with my Owen and we climbed up to the fight pit. Meanwhile Bob rang Coy HQ and told them what was occurring. A few minutes later, two of our men came down and collected our prisoner and took him up the hill. I assume that the soldier had got separated from his comrades during the previous night's battle, and not knowing whether they'd taken the hill, was making his way past us to the Samichon Valley about a ¼ of a mile to the east. There he would have turned left up the valley to his own lines. His mistake was in trying to do so in daylight

Christmas Day

It was Christmas Day, 1951. We in B Company, 3 RAR, had just finished Christmas lunch, honoured by the presence of Josh Francis, the Minister of the Army.

'Dickie' Henderson from B Coy, Rick Annesley from A Coy and I had already drunk our two bottles of weak Japanese beer and were looking forward to a boring afternoon. It was sleeting and raining quite heavily. Rick suggested we 'borrow' a jeep from the vehicle compound and drive to the Pommie N.A.A.F.I. at Castle Hill, about five miles away, to buy some beer. We arrived at the N.A.A.F.I. at about 1430 hours and proceeded to have a few beers. At about 1900 hours we decided to leave after buying a case (24 bottles) each.

By this time it was snowing. We had only travelled about a mile down the road when the jeep stopped and refused to go any further. We flagged down a Kiwi truck and got a lift back to camp. In the process of transferring the beer from the jeep into the truck, Dickie dropped his case and broke 12 bottles. It was pathetic to see a soldier cry. We assured him we would share equally the remaining beer, which cheered him up no end.

When we got back to the lines, everyone seemed to be in bed except 'Bluey' McGrath. He was sitting by the fire sucking on a bottle of rum; so we joined him.

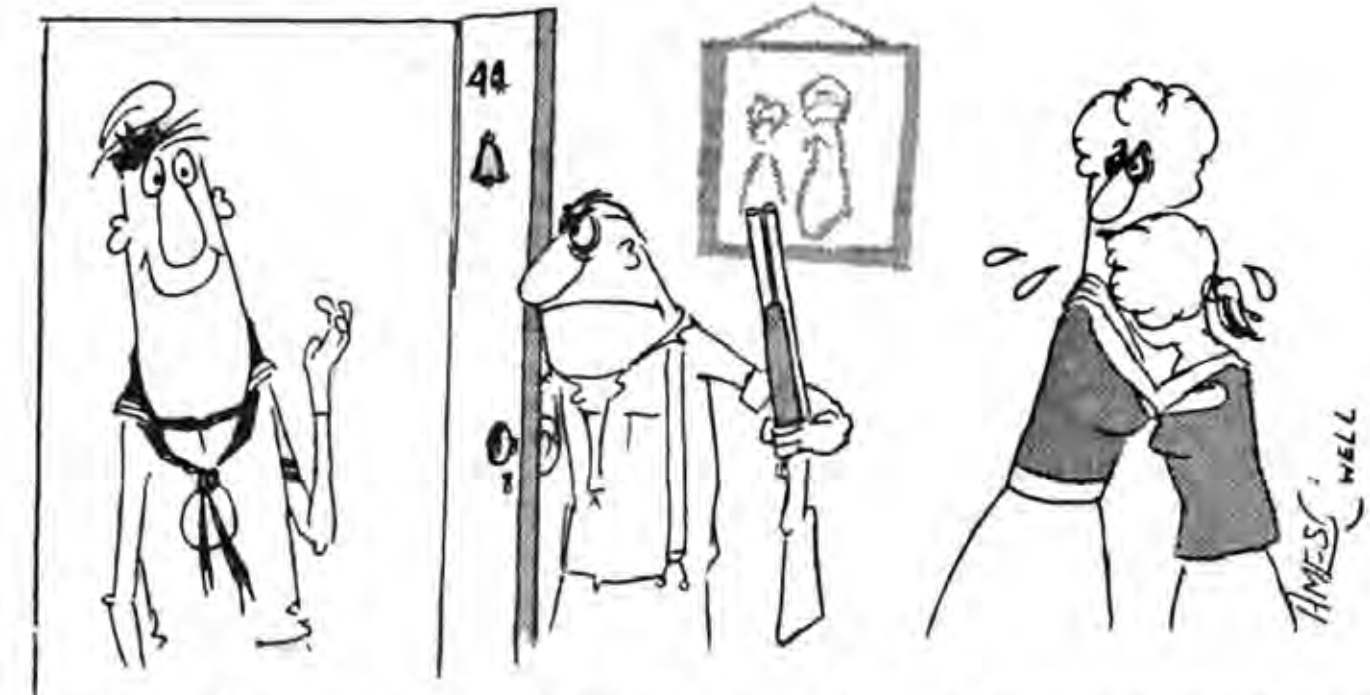
About 0300 hours we retired to our hootchies. Rick was last seen staggering off through the snow towards A Coy. I had two bottles of beer left and before I entered my hootchie I thrust one into the snow; God alone knows why. The other I took to bed with me.

When I awoke in the morning, badly hungover, I drank the bottle I had with me. Then remembering what I had done with the other bottle, I groped in the snow and found it. I then pulled the cap off and tried to drink it, but of course it was frozen solid.

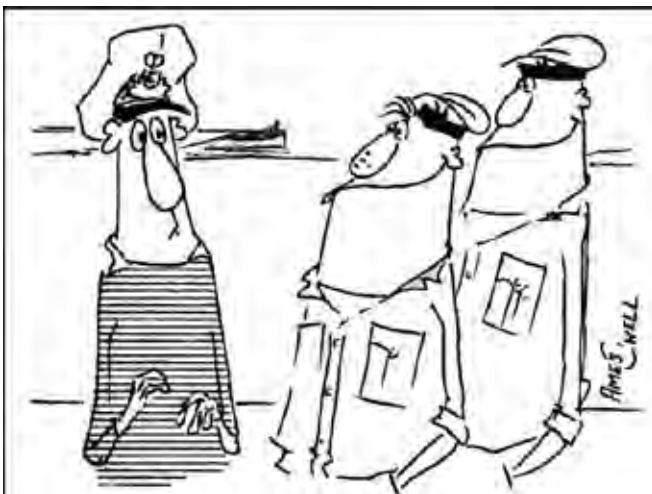
I walked into Dickie's hootchie with the bottle in my hand and asked him solicitously if he would like a drink. He answered something like he would kill his mother for one, so I handed him the bottle and headed for the door. I just managed to outrun the bottle which he threw at me, but not the invective that followed.

Dicky Front

A series of cartoons in *Navy News* by Leading Cook Ames of *HMAS Creswell*



"G'day, I'm Dicky Front! I hope your daughter mentioned me."



"Well, yes! Tomorrow will be my first day of sailing! Where can I purchase a pair of these sea legs you mentioned?"



"Frankly, Maude, I'd like to find some men really interested in free love as subjects for my essay..."



Darwin: 19 February 1942

It was a Thursday morning, and the clear sky streaked by a few wisps of cirrus cloud gave promise of a fine day. It was the wet season, and a recently-departed fierce cyclone had for six days brought all activity on the waterfront to a halt.

The harbour was crowded with shipping. Alongside the wharf waiting to unload lay the Australian ships *Barossa* and *Neptuna*. Anchored not far away were seven more merchant ships and the hospital ship *Manunda*. Dotted about the harbour or attending the boom, were 16 naval vessels, while in a floating dock half a mile south of the wharf lay the corvette *Katoomba*. Excepting the American destroyer *Peary* and the aircraft tender destroyer *William B. Preston*, all the naval vessels were Australian.

The rising sun, as it chased the last trace of night from the western sky, stirred Darwin into activity. Two thousand miles to the northwest, war raged and though seemingly remote from the ill-defended and isolated port. There was nevertheless work to be done.

A thousand miles north-west of Darwin, washed by the war waters of the Molucca Sea, lies Kendari in the Celebes. There on 17 February 1942, arrived Admiral Chūichi Nagumo with his powerful air striking force fresh from his triumphant assault on Pearl Harbour. Two great grey carriers, *Akagi* and *Kaga*, and their lighter sisters, *Soryu* and *Hiryu*, dropped anchor in Staring Bay.

Pausing only briefly, and escorted by the heavy cruisers, *Takao* and *Atago*, Nagumo sailed his carriers into the Banda Sea. At dawn on 19 February, he reached a point some 100 miles south-west of Timor. Not long after, in the bright early morning sunshine, he turned his carriers into a light westerly breeze to launch his planes for the attack on Darwin. Flight by flight, they left the decks until, according to the Japanese report, 188 aircraft, fighters and bombers, were in the air.

Ashore in Darwin, the normal work at the port proceeded in the growing heat of the tropical day. Gangs of wharf labourers oblivious of the swiftly approaching menace from the north, began unloading timber from *Barossa*. The Navy went about its daily work cleaning ship, or with working parties over the side chipping and scraping.

About 9.20am, the Japanese formations passed over Bathurst Island mission station, heading south at a great height. An urgent warning tele-radioed to Darwin went tragically unheeded. Unopposed, Nagumo's aircraft crossed the Australian coast, passed east of Darwin Island then turned and swept unsuspected on their target from the south-south-east. Aloft to stop them, and unprepared, were five patrolling Kittyhawks. Four fell victim to the leading Japanese fighters. The fifth escaped after shooting down one fighter and one dive bomber.

Three minutes before 10 o'clock, the olive green fighters roared over the harbour with the heavy bombers following close behind in a "V" formation at 14,000 feet. Guns chattering, the fighters swept a hail of fire across the anchored ships.

At the boom, the RAN ships, virtually unarmed, fought back with Lewis guns but suffered grievous tolls of dead and wounded. *HMAS Gunbar* recorded that "nine fighter aircraft attacked at 9.57am from ahead astern and starboard. Our single Lewis gun was hit, rendering the ship defenceless." One crew member died and nine were wounded. Lieutenant Muzzell, her commander, though hit in both knees, remained on his bridge and refused to leave it until the "all-clear" sounded.

At 9.59 while the warning sirens still wailed their tardy message, the first bombs began to fall, and great sprouts of water rose from the Harbour. Bombs hit the wharf at the shore end, blowing a railway engine and a group of running wharf labourers into the water.

Neptuna and *Barossa* both suffered direct hits. Moving shorewards, a steady line of explosions marked the passage of high level formations. In quick succession the hospital, the post office, the police barracks and the government building suffered hits. Fires broke out and great clouds of smoke drifted across the town.

A pause followed, soon broken by the whining scream of approaching dive bombers as they plummeted towards their targets. They came relentlessly, singly, and in pairs, or groups of out of a clear sky, and wreaked havoc in the harbour.

All the naval ships that could, got under way, and twisting and turning, fought back with every gun. Those immobilised fought where they lay, and prevented what must have been a greater toll in sunken ships. *Platypus*, the old depot ship, three times drove off her tormentors, and *Katoomba*, locked in the dry dock, forced a swooping bomber to swerve and miss its target. *Swan*, too, spoilt the bombers' aim, but suffered in quick succession three near misses which killed three of her crew and wounded 18 others.

Peary, twice hit, careered across the harbour, and a witness on the *Manunda* saw her pass, burning from bow to stern. Later, he recalled that, at that moment, *Neptuna* was obscured by great clouds of smoke. The tanker *British Motorist*, off *Mandunda's* bow, was sinking rapidly while *Meigs*, to the aft, was on fire and

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sinking.

Mauna Loa was down by the stern with her back broken. *Tulagi* was nowhere in sight, the *Portmar* had been hit and the *William B. Preston* was on fire. The other U.S. destroyer, *Peary*, was a solid mass of flame with burning oil all around her and what was left of her crew leaping into the water.

RAN crews manning a motor life boat went out to the rescue and picked up over 30 badly burnt and wounded men.

At this stage *Manunda* was unarmed, but not long after one of her officers glanced upwards and saw new formations of high flying bombers. "They came on," he said, "at what seemed to me about 10,000 feet. They ignored the anti-aircraft fire from the ships and shore, and I watched a perfect example of pattern bombing. I saw the bombs released and followed their flight, and they straddled *Neptuna* at the wharf. A ball of orange flame shot more than 100 feet into the air."

Neptuna had blown up. Half the ship was lying on its side near the wharf. The other half was about five feet above the waterline. It drifted with the tide for a short distance and then sank.

It was now *Zealandia's* turn and once more the bombs found their target. Then the *British Motorist* was again attacked, and hit, and she rolled on her side and sank.

At this stage *Mununda* was herself attacked by dive-bombers. First she was almost rolled over by a near miss which killed four of the crew and caused severe damage, then before she steadied on her keel, a bomb scored a direct hit amidships killing five more, including a nurse.

Before 10.30am the last of the dive-bombers had screamed over the harbour. Quiet, broken only by the crackling of flames, descended over a scene of desolation. Great clouds of black smoke from burning oil and buildings rolled over the town.

Zealandia, a mass of flame from bow to stern, still swung to the tide. *Portmar* and *Barossa* lay beached and burning. *Tulagi* was also ashore. *Neptuna* was gone, utterly destroyed by the detonation of the 200 depth charges in her holds. The *British Motorist* and the transports *Meigs* and *Mauna Loa* were sunk, as was the *Peary*. The wharf was wrecked and across the grey waters of the harbour drifted a great mass of debris.

At least 250 were dead and many hundreds burnt or wounded. At 11am the first "all-clear" on Australian soil sounded – prematurely, as it turned out.

An hour later the drone of planes was heard again and 54 land-based bombers passed over. They dropped no bombs on Darwin but caused havoc at the airfield a few miles away. Nagumo's planes were gone and did not return.

Four months later at the Battle of Midway, the Japanese suffered a mortal wound. On the 4 June, Nagumo lost his entire striking force. Darwin's attackers, *Akagi*, *Kaga*, *Soryu* and *Hiryu*, were all destroyed.

Source: *Navy News* 2 March 1973

Unnamed & Rigid No. 1

In June 1908, Zepellin *LZ4*, a working prototype, carried one ton of passengers over hundreds of miles of rough country. The British War Office noted the flight and realised that for the first time it was possible for a lighter-than-air machine to cross the English Channel carry men and material and land at a predetermined point - or to carry bombs and drop them on a predetermined target. In order to understand more about this potential new weapon, which meant in effect obtaining one and gathering flight experience, funds were found to purchase a foreign airship for testing (no British airship then existed).

A deal was made with the French firm of Lebaudy for a semi-rigid design 330 feet in length. The Admiralty also showed interest, authorising the Vickers company to produce a rigid airship which was given the name of *Rigid No. 1*.

Trial runs of both airships took place in 1911, the Army's unnamed Lebaudy going first. Rising on a beautiful spring day in May, the ship manoeuvred gracefully at first. Then the wind picked up, reaching 15 miles per hour. The underpowered airship demonstrated an unfortunate tendency to resist turning and would move only downwards. With the ship out of control, the captain dumped gas to bring the vessel to earth. It crashed into a large private residence, destroying the airship.

The test of *Rigid No. 1* proved as uninspiring as its name. As the ship was led out of its protective shed (a process likened to pulling a cork from a bottle) an ominous tearing sound was heard followed by sharp reports as the framework broke. The main girders had snapped and *Rigid No. 1* collapsed before leaving the ground.

Needless to say, both the War office and Admiralty lost interest in taking to the skies in lighter-than-air machines and concentrated instead on defensive measures.

Source: *Strategy & Tactics* magazine No. 282 Sept.-Oct. 2013

Out & About

Geelong Xmas Luncheon Pics

The Gateway Hotel, 11 December 2013



Rex Hoole at North Star

North Star Primary School, 18 Nov. 2013



Remembrance Day Service

Wagga Wagga, 2013

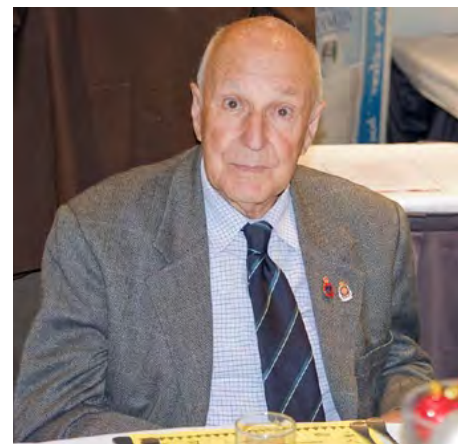


(l-r) Harry Edmonds, Alan Evans, Alex Ouchirenko, Colin Anderson, John Sullivan, Bob Menzies.

North Star in NSW (between the towns of Moree and Goondiwindi) only has a population of about 327 people in the town itself – but it also has a plaque in the town park commemorating the service of Australians in Korea. On 18 November 2013, KVAA Inc. member, Rex Hoole, attended the Remembrance Day service at the local Primary School and spoke about Korea. A special bronze plaque, commemorating the service of Australians in Korea, was presented by Mr Hoole to Mrs Kylie Pearlman (pictured). This plaque will be installed at the Anzac Park in North Star.

Christmas Luncheon Pics

Batman on Collins, Wednesday 4 December 2013



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Farewells

John L. (Jim) Baldwin, 27388, *HMAS Tobruk* in December 2013

Ivan Rupert Brumfield CBE, DSO, MID, 2507, 3RAR on 26 September 2013

Donald Breynard Davie, 4158, 3RAR & HQ, British Commonwealth Forces, Korea, on 17 October 2013

Norman Walter Glenn, 32324, 3RAR, on 8 November 2013

Jack 'John' Jagers, 1400253, 3RAR & 1RAR, on 19 October 2013

John Smith Suttie, 310666, 1st British C/Wealth Division Provost Company, in December 2013

John M. Thompson, 31944, 3RAR, in December 2013

Raymond Clarence Williams, 1400436, 3RAR, on 12 September 2013

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The Ode

They shall grow not old,
As we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun,
and in the morning
We will remember them.
LEST WE FORGET