

COUNTRY VICTORIA'S OWN

NEIL LECKIE



150-YEAR HISTORY OF 8th/7th BATTALION
ROYAL VICTORIA REGIMENT
AND ITS PREDECESSORS
1858-2008

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Australian Army History Unit
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COUNTRY VICTORIA'S OWN

150 Years of 8/7 RVR and its Predecessors

Major Neil Leckie RFD



2008

First published in Australia – 2008

by AUSTRALIAN MILITARY HISTORY PUBLICATIONS

13 Veronica Place, Loftus 2232 Australia.

Phone: 02- 9542-6771 Fax: 02-9542-6787

Website: www.warbooks.com.au

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Written by: Neil Leckie

ISBN 978-0-9804753-6-4

Printed in Australia by: Trojan Press Pty Ltd, Preston Victoria

Typesetting by Margaret McNally, Canberra, ACT

CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Acknowledgements	x
Foreword	xii
Introduction	xiii
List of Illustrations	xiv
Abbreviations	xvi

PART 1: FROM THE BRITISH FORCES UNTIL THE SECOND WORLD WAR

1	British Land Forces in Victoria	2
2	Victorian Colonial Forces	5
3	Post Federation	22
4	The First World War Battalions	32
5	Between the Wars	44
6	Country Victorian CMF Battalions and the VDC in the Second World War	51
7	The Second AIF Battalions	68

PART 2: THE BATTALION'S TOWNS

8	Ballarat and District	74
9	Bendigo and Castlemaine District	90
10	Mildura and District	102
11	Shepparton and District	114
12	Geelong and District and Deakin University Company	121
13	Warrnambool, Hamilton, Portland and the Western District	126
14	The Smaller Towns	136

PART 3: THE LAST 60 YEARS

15	8th/7th Battalion	152
16	2 RVR Pentropic	170
17	A Country Battalion Again	180
18	Return to 8/7	209

Appendices:

1	British Army Units that Served in Australia	240
2	Country Victorian Volunteer, Militia, CMF and AIF Infantry Units and their Commanding Officers	241
3	Regimental Sergeant Majors: 1948-2008	251
4	Battlefield Experiences of the Country Victorian AIF Battalions	252
5	Battalion Depots	264
6	Colours	284
7	Battle Honours	295
8	Freedom of Entry to Victorian Country Cities	299
9	Mottos, Marches, Mascots and Badges	306
10	Alliances of Predecessor Battalions of 8/7 RVR	313
11	Awards and Decorations	315
	Bibliography	323
	Index	330

PREFACE

Australia is the only continent whose people enjoy the advantages of being under one national sovereignty, without land frontiers with another nation. This unique situation had its beginning in May 1787, when Captain Arthur Phillip, Royal Navy (RN), the first governor of New South Wales (NSW), sailed from England with a fleet of eleven ships. This First Fleet arrived at Botany Bay on 18 January 1788, but moved to Sydney Cove in Port Jackson on 26 January, the day now celebrated as Australia Day.

To look at the beginnings of the 8th/7th Battalion, the Royal Victoria Regiment (8/7 RVR) is to look at the military history of Britain and colonial Australia in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. This history developed from the first white settlement, when 1373 men, women and children, including ships' crews and four companies of Marines, 245 personnel, landed with Phillip.¹ The Marines were commanded by the lieutenant governor, Major Robert Ross. They joined the convicts in the daunting task of building the colony and developing it as a military station. The first free immigrants arrived in 1793.

Phillip and his successors had commissions giving them powers to establish a system of justice, pardon and reprieve criminals, raise and discipline defence forces, control land grants and generally supervise the colony. The initial tour of duty for the Marines ended in 1790 and a force had to be provided to replace them. These replacements volunteered to serve in a special colonial garrison force adapted to the conditions in NSW. The force was designated the New South Wales Corps, but is more commonly known as the Rum Corps due to its dealings in rum.

The four companies of the New South Wales Corps were raised and commanded by Major Francis Grose. Three companies were raised in Britain, many members coming from the riff-raff of the British Army, and one was raised locally.² The Corps arrived with the Second Fleet in 1790. When Phillip returned to Britain late in 1792 with the last of the Marines, Grose became the administrator. The three years of his governorship saw the Rum Corps virtually running the colony. When Captain Philip King, RN, became governor in 1800, he set about developing an 'emancipist class' rather than an 'expirees class' in the colony, to counter balance the influence of the Corps.

On 31 December 1809 Colonel Lachlan Macquarie arrived to replace Captain William Bligh, RN, as Governor. He brought the 73rd (Royal Highlanders) Regiment, giving him a reliable military organisation, and immediately disbanded the Rum Corps, then the 102nd Regiment. Some former members of the 102nd joined the

73rd, some returned to Britain and some remained as civilians. The 73rd was the first of 26 British infantry regiments that served in Australia after the 102nd. Only the 40th (2nd Somersetshire) and 50th West Kent (Queen's Own) returned for a second tour. Regiments sent to Australia had a nominal strength of 800-1000. Detachments of each regiment were posted among the Australian colonies. British army units that served in Australia are listed in Appendix 1.

The early history of the Australian colonies was dominated by the military. Of 34 governors, lieutenant governors and administrators between 1788 and 1855, only three were civilians.³ Many soldiers ended their military service in Australia. One such, Private William Prayle, served 16 years with the 40th Regiment. He enlisted on 15 December 1840 at Chelmsford and was discharged in Melbourne on 26 January 1857. His discharge certificate stated he was of 'very good' character and possessed three good conduct badges.⁴

There were many attempts to raise local defence forces in Australia from settlement through the nineteenth century, often in response to threats perceived from countries such as Russia, France, Germany and the United States (US). King made the first attempt, when he supported the formation of a volunteer force known as the Loyal Association, to reinforce the New South Wales Corps in times of danger. In 1840 the first locally raised military force, the Royal South Australia Militia, consisted of two troops of cavalry and a company of infantry. By 1845 it existed in name only.

In 1844 during the 1st Maori War, a detachment of the 99th (Lanarkshire) Regiment was rushed from Sydney to New Zealand to reinforce the British forces fighting the Maoris. The 58th (Rutlandshire) and 96th (Manchester) Regiments were also engaged.

The Australian Colonies Government Act received Royal assent on 5 August 1850. It formally separated Victoria from NSW on 1 July 1851 and made legal a situation that had effectively existed since 1840.⁵ Constitutions framed under the Act established houses of parliament in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia (SA).

As the colonies developed, they attempted to provide greater military self-defence and also support Britain. During 1854 news of the outbreak of the Crimean War reached the colonies and efforts were made to raise volunteers to supplement the small imperial garrison. There was considerable enthusiasm throughout the colonies, and the South Australian Militia Act was passed to allow call out of up to 2000 men. However, this Act was never implemented.

Against the background of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, British parliamentary committees and political leaders warned of the huge costs involved in maintaining military garrisons in the colonies. In March 1862 the House of Commons resolved that those colonies that had achieved responsible government would have to bear the cost of their own internal defences. While the RN would control the seas, and Britain

would provide 15 companies of infantry for land defence, the colonial governments paid for those companies.⁶ This decision further stimulated military development in the Australian colonies, before the withdrawal of British garrisons in 1870.

By 1861, during the 2nd Maori War, Britain had six regiments of infantry stationed in New Zealand. Major General Sir Thomas Pratt, now Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the Imperial forces in the Australian colonies, had sent much of his garrison there. The entire Victorian Navy, the steam corvette *Victoria*, was loaded with 100,000 rounds of ball ammunition and sailed from Victoria to Hobart where two companies of the 40th Regiment embarked for New Zealand. In 1863 a force of 1475 militia volunteers embarked from Australia for New Zealand.

In 1864 a further 1200 military settlers (with 1000 wives and children) deployed to New Zealand with the intention of settling there after the war ended. The Australian troops became soldier-settlers, who occupied redoubts built around the countryside, allowing European civilization to spread in safety. By the end of their engagement most of them had either sold or abandoned their land.⁷

On 11 February 1885 Australia received news of the death of General Charles Gordon in Khartoum, in the Sudan, on 26 January. The premier of NSW offered a contingent of two batteries of permanent artillery and a battalion of 500 militia for the Sudan. Other colonies also offered forces, but these were declined. The NSW contingent arrived at Suakin on the Red Sea on 29 March. They did little fighting and departed for Australia on 17 May, arriving home on 23 June. This was the first Australian inspired and recruited expeditionary force.⁸ The next such deployment was of colonial contingents to the war against the Boers in South Africa. These were subsumed by the new Commonwealth after federation.

Endnotes

- 1 Gillen, *Founders of Australia*.
- 2 Kuring, *Redcoats to Cams*, p4.
- 3 Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p6.
- 4 British Forces in Victoria 1836-1870.
- 5 www.parliament.vic.gov.au/onthistoday/decade.
- 6 Vazentry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p1-10.
- 7 Firkins, *The Australians in Nine Wars*, pp3, 4.
- 8 Firkins, pp5, 6.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My introduction to the life of a citizen soldier came when I joined 22 RVR, a Citizen Military Forces (CMF) infantry battalion, at the end of two years of compulsory national service. Almost 30 years of citizen soldiering in three periods and in three units followed, including almost 20 years with 8/7 RVR (formerly 2 RVR).

During the 1990s I undertook the research for and consequent writing of the book *Bushmen's Rifles, The History of 22 RVR*.¹ This experience, and my posting as executive officer (XO) with 8/7 RVR, which entailed being the museum manager as an extra-regimental appointment, gave me the impetus to write the history of 8/7 RVR. With the battalion's birthday being the date of commencement of the Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment (BVRR) in 1858, it was obvious that the history should be launched in conjunction with the battalion's 150th birthday celebrations in 2008.

There has been much written about the military in Australia and the volunteers, militia, CMF and ARes in Victoria, in books, articles and newspapers. All that was needed was to combine the material on those areas covered by 8/7 RVR into one book. This book has been written using that information, and many interviews in person, over the telephone and using email. A lot more could have been included, but the question always remains, where do you stop?

This book would not have been completed without the help of many people. Help and guidance, and assistance with production of the book, was given by Mr Roger Lee, head of the Army History Unit (AHU), and Mr Brian Manns and Dr Andrew Richardson of AHU. The Australian War Memorial has also proved to be a great resource for the production of this history.

On a local level, a small committee was formed. It consisted of Lieutenant Colonel Ted Lynes (Retired), a former commanding officer (CO) of 2 RVR, Major Bill (Yank) Akell (Retired), a former battalion second in command (2 IC), Major Nigel Townsend, a former officer commanding (OC) C Company, 8/7 RVR, (Bendigo), Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO 2) Mark Broemmer, the 8/7 RVR caterer and museum curator, and Mr John Dellaca, a former national serviceman, Vietnam veteran and local military history collector. Sergeant Arthur Mazur assisted in research and scanning photographs in Ballarat. The CO of 8/7 RVR during 2007-08, Lieutenant Colonel David McKerral, and the regimental sergeant major (RSM), Warrant Officer Class 1 (WO 1) Darren Murch, supported this committee whole-heartedly.

Many people freely gave assistance. All surviving COs gave advice and information: Geoff Swan, Bert Fry, Kevin Dower, Don Ellis, Barry Ingram, Ted Lynes, Jim Mack, Geoff Skardon, Douglas Ball, Paul Riley, Wayne Dunbar, Robert Barnes, John Paterson, Robert Haughton, Craig Hinchliffe and Robert Marsh.

Information on Ballarat came from Bernadette Ackland, Ian Archibald, David Chinn, Allan Douglass, Don Dow, Claire Gervasoni (University of Ballarat), Lindsay Govan, Darrell Strickland and Amanda Taylor; on Bacchus Marsh from John Hannah and Bob Prewett; on Cobram from John Bourke; on Deniliquin from John Trist; on Echuca from Kevin Hone and Peter Ramm; on Geelong from Ian Barnes, Mirko Brandich and Dick Wilkie; on Hamilton from Phillip Baulch; on Kyneton from John Munro; on Maryborough from Creighton Kaye; on Mildura from Bill Burns, Vince Fundak, Gary Pearse and Garry Wescombe; on Portland from Hugh Forrest and Peter Polwarth; on Shepparton from Les Earl, Peter Ford, Ed Hawkes and Dennis Scott; on Swan Hill from Bruce Clare and Tony Melis, and on the VDC, Graeme McKenzie-Smith. I could not, of course, forget the battalion's receptionist Dee Saunderson who has, as always, met every request for assistance with a smile. Many others also helped with small points.

I also thank the writers of the books listed in the Bibliography, from which I have unashamedly taken much information, and the editor provided by the AHU, Mr John Donovan, without whose patience the finished product would not be what it is.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Kaye once again for her patience while I spent hours and hours researching, travelling, telephoning, emailing and typing this book.

Endnote

FOREWORD

I thank my long-term friend Neil Leckie for the honour and privilege of providing this foreword to his book '*Country Victoria's Own*'. This book is certainly a labour of love and dedication as it weaves through the history of Victoria to the present day. Renaming 2 RVR as the 8th/7th Battalion reconnected the present with the past, the numerous towns in Victoria and southern NSW that have direct links with the battalion, and the thousands who have served in it, who all leave a rich tapestry of history, service and commitment.

The personal issue of having to provide your own uniform, or taking a pay cut, the necessity of regular attendance at parades, the effects of the depression and the 'once off' mutiny make fascinating reading.

The contribution of our forebears during the First and Second World Wars is considerable. The landing at ANZAC, the Battles of Pozzières, Ypres, Bullecourt, Hamel, Amiens and Mont St Quentin, and the counter attack at Villers-Bretonneux, are proud elements of our past.

The people and characters (and there are many) who make a battalion include our VC winners, commanders, soldiers and events, the red and white colour patch and the battalion mottos: *Cede Nullis* and *Celer et Audax*. Like many units the 8th/7th Battalion has excelled at being reorganised, regrouped or redesignated, often, it appears, at the whims of higher command, or as circumstances dictated, adding to the author's challenge in tracking changes.

This history is lively, entertaining and informative. Underlying it are the struggles, personal challenges, visits, inspections and reports, all of which create their own tensions and heighten the tempo and expectations whilst remaining calm on the surface. Visits by senior staff officers and the results would require a chapter of their own.

This book will be mandatory reading for all new arrivals on joining this proud unit, essential reading for history buffs and people who have served in the unit, and enjoyable reading for military historians.

I congratulate Neil on his efforts, for clarifying the facts and producing a reference book that defines the history of a proud unit and making it a joy to read.

Brigadier Douglas J. Ball, AM, RFD (Rtd)
The Regimental Colonel
The Royal Victoria Regiment

INTRODUCTION

The battalion that today serves as 8/7 RVR is the culmination of 150 years of citizen soldiering in northern and western Victoria. There have been numerous name changes to all the country volunteer, militia, CMF and Army Reserve (ARes) units since they were raised in 1858 in Ballarat and Bendigo. Only the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers between 1858 and 1883, and the 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment) between 1921 and 1943, have had the same title longer than 8/7 RVR.

There have been three infantry battalions in Melbourne as part of the RVR, which was raised in 1960: the 1st, the 5th and the 6th. They were eventually amalgamated into one battalion: 5/6 RVR. In the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) raised for the First World War, the 5th and 6th Battalions were both raised in Melbourne, so the historical connection with the battalion numbers was retained.

The 7th and 8th Battalions of what became known as the 1st AIF were both raised in country Victoria. The 8th Battalion was the battalion on which the television series ANZACS¹ was based. After the Second World War the CMF was re-raised and its western Victorian battalion was named the 8th/7th Battalion, (North Western Victorian Regiment), using the numbers of the two battalions raised for the First World War, and carried on by the CMF between the Wars. The 8th was placed first as the unit headquarters (HQ) was located in Ballarat, the HQ location of the previous 8th Battalion.

When the RVR was formed in 1960, all previous numbers were replaced by simple 1st and 2nd Battalion numbers. These numbers had no historical connection to the areas they served, so on 14 November 1987 the 2nd Battalion was renamed the 8th/7th Battalion, RVR, and the historical links remade.

With the 150th birthday of the battalion approaching, I decided around 2002 to put the battalion's history together for those celebrations. It has been a massive task, with around 20 towns in Victoria and southern NSW at some time having a depot of the battalion.

Endnote

1 Channel 9, 1985.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Members of the Volunteer (unpaid) Forces of Victoria in the 1860s.	10
Swan Hill Cadets, 1910.	27
The 70th and 71st Infantry at the 17th Brigade Camp at Lake Burrumbeet, 1913.	29
The 39th Battalion AIF marches in Ballarat.	35
Australians taking part in the Victory March through Trafalgar Square, 1919.	45
The 8th Battalion on a 30-day camp in 1939.	56
The 38th Battalion Band at Mt Martha, 1940.	59
The 58th/59th Battalion Bren Gun Carriers parade in Grafton, 1942.	63
58th/59th Battalion Medic, 1943.	64
A Ranger uniform, circa 1860.	75
Major Wallace with his officers and NCOs in 1860.	76
Ballarat Volunteer Rangers at the laying of a foundation stone, 1861.	77
2nd Corps, Ballarat Volunteer Rangers at Clunes Council yards, circa 1870.	77
Ballarat members of the First Contingent to South Africa.	82
Visitors Day at the 7 AIR Langwarrin Camp, circa 1905.	83
The winning 7 AIR Schumacher Cup Shooting Team postcard, 1908.	84
The 8th Battlion Guard for the Governor General in Melbourne, 1939.	87
5th Battalion members preparing to march off to the Boer War, 1900.	94
The 38th Battalion AIF with the Colours presented in 1916.	94
Mildura 73rd Infantry outside the Olympia theatre in Mildura, 1913.	102
The 7th Battalion Officers, Gol Gol, 1937.	104
8th/7th Battalion, 2 RVR Pentropic and 1st Independent Rifle Company members.	108
The 1st Independent Rifle Company Flag, produced in 1971.	109
3" mortar training in the Shepparton Barracks yard, 1956.	118
CO Geelong Volunteer Rifle Corps, circa 1861.	122
Geelong Volunteer Artillery outside the McKillop Street Orderly Room, 1900.	122
Warrnambool Volunteers, circa 1860.	126
21st Battalion Colour Party at Warrnambool Cenotaph, 1926.	128
Former Hamilton Drill Hall, 2003.	132
New recruits to the reopened Swan Hill 2 RVR depot, 1981.	137
Horsemen of the 38th Battalion, 1938.	139
Deniliquin Town Hall, 2007.	139
Salamaua Barracks, 2007, former Cobram depot.	141
The flag comes down for the last time at the Maryborough depot, 1999.	146
The Sargood Shooting Trophy.	147
Mortar Platoon training in Bren Gun Carriers at Puckapunyal, 1950.	157
Visit to Ballarat in 1954 by the Governor General.	162
B Coy 8th/7th Battalion, Puckapunyal, 1959.	166
SLR and M60 MG field equipment at the School of Infantry, Ingleburn, 1962.	174
2 RVR Portsea Camp 1962.	175

Inspecting a bent rifle at Ballarat Airfield, 1964.	177
Annual Camp Jamieson, 1964.	179
3 RVR Camp, 1973. Helicopter re-supply.	191
Patrolling in the snow at Mt Hotham, 2RVR Camp 1976.	193
Canungra Camp run, 1978.	195
Big Desert Camp, 1979.	196
Handing over the CO's cane, 1981.	199
Swan Hill members prepare to fly to the 1985 annual camp at Eildon.	201
Watermanship training at Eildon Camp, 1985.	201
Hotbox meal delivery under threatening skies at Eildon camp, 1985.	202
2 RVR soldiers about to load into a Blackhawk Helicopter.	204
Setting a Claymore mine in the lava on the 'Big Island' of Hawaii, 1987.	205
New Colour Patch on the slouch hat, 1988.	210
Instruction on the IWESS System in New Zealand, 1988.	212
Ex Tasman Reserve.	213
Centenary of the Australian Army Colours Parade, Canberra, 2001.	227
Soldiers arriving at the Government Camp in Ballarat, 1854.	265
The Ballarat Orderly Room under construction, 1885.	265
Ranger Barracks Ballarat, 2007.	267
Former Allingham Street depot, Bendigo.	269
The magnificent Orderly Room built in 1872.	270
New Castlemaine Orderly Room. 2007.	271
Former Bob Dubi Barracks Echuca, 2007.	272
Newland Barracks, Geelong, 2008.	273
Glastonbury, 2008. Former home for Deakin University Company.	274
Boswell Avenue depot DUC and A Coy, 8/7 RVR.	274
8/7 RVR Depot at Laverton, 1999.	276
Laverton Depot, 2006.	276
Kiarivu Barracks, Mildura, 2007.	278
Former Red Cliffs Drill Hall, 2008.	279
Monegetta portable depot, 2007.	280
Somme Barracks Shepparton, 2006.	281
Old Orderly Rooms, Warrnambool, 2007.	282
Tel el Eisa Barracks, Warrnambool, 2008.	283
William Dunstan being presented with his VC, 1916.	286
Presentation of King's Colours to militia battalions, Melbourne, 1920.	287
8th Battalion Colours, 1958.	288
8/7 RVR Colours after Freedom of Entry to Bendigo, 2006.	288
38th Battalion Colours outside Passchendaele Barracks, 1958.	290
The Old Colours are marched off, 1958.	292
Freedom of Entry to the City of Shepparton scroll.	300
Freedom of Entry to the City of Maryborough.	301
Freedom of Entry to the City of Ballarat.	302
A selection of badges used by some of the units.	309

ABBREVIATIONS

2 IC	Second in Command
A and I Staff	Administrative and Instructional Staff
AACAP	Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program
AAMC	Australian Army Medical Corps
AATTV	Australian Army Training Team Vietnam
AC	Commander of the Order of Australia
ACH	Australian Commonwealth Horse
ADB	<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i>
ADF	Australian Defence Force.
ADFA	Australian Defence Force Academy
AFC	Air Force Cross
AFL	Australian Football League
AG	Adjutant General
AHU	Army History Unit
AHQ	Army Headquarters
AIC	Australian Instructional Corps
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AIR	Australian Infantry regiment
AIRN	Army Individual Readiness Notification
ALSG	Australian Logistics Support Group
AM	Member of the Order of Australia
AMF	Australian Military Forces
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
AO	Officer of the Order of Australia
AO	Area of Operations
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
AR	Automatic Rifle
ARA	Australian Regular Army
ARD	Advanced Reinforcement Depot
ARes	Army Reserve
ASC	Army Service Corps
ATF	Australian Task Force
AWM	Australian War Memorial
AWOL	absent without leave
BASB	Brigade Administrative Support Battalion
BCOF	British Commonwealth Occupation Force
BFA	Basic Fitness Assessment
BM	Brigade Major

BMRA	Bacchus Marsh Rifle Association
BRR	Bendigo Rifle Regiment
BVRC	Bendigo Volunteer Rifle Corps
BVRR	Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment
CA	Chief of Army
CB	Commander of the Order of the Bath
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
CDF	Chief of the Defence Force
CER	Combat Engineer Regiment
CFTS	continuous full-time service
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CMF	Citizen Military Forces
CMG	Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George
CO	Commanding Officer
CP	Command Post
CQMS	Company Quartermaster Sergeant
CRA	Commander Royal Australian Artillery
CRAEME	Commander Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
CRes	Chief of Reserves
CRW	Counter Revolutionary Warfare
CSC	Conspicuous Service Cross
CSM	Company Sergeant Major
CSS	Combat Service Support
CSSB	Combat Service Support Battalion
CSTU	Command and Staff Training Unit
CVRC	Castlemaine Volunteer Rifle Corps
DAG	Deputy Adjutant General
DCM	Distinguished Conduct Medal
DFSW	Direct Fire Support Weapon
DMF	Darwin Mobile Force
DO	District Order
DPCU	disruptive pattern combat uniform
DQMG	Deputy Quartermaster General
DRSC	Defence Reserves Support Council
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
DTU	Direct To Unit (enlistees)
DUC	Deakin University Company
ED	Efficiency Decoration
EM	Efficiency Medal
FAC	Forward Air Controller
FER	Field Engineer Regiment
FESR	Far East Strategic Reserve

FGA	Fighter Ground Attack
FPCG	Force Protection Company Group
FRCS	Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons
FSB	Fire Support Base
GBE	Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire
GCB	Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath
GCIE	Knight Grand Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire
GCMG	Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George
GCVO	Knight Grand Cross of the Victorian Order
GO	General Order
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GPMG	General Purpose Machine Gun
GVRG	Geelong Volunteer Rifle Corps
HMVS	Her Majesty's Victorian Ship
HNA	Hardened and Networked Army
HQ	Headquarters
HRC	Hamilton Rifle Club
IET	Initial Employment Training
IG	Inspector General
IRC	Independent Rifle Company
IWESS	Individual Weapon Electronic Sighting System
JTC	Jungle Training Centre
JTF	Joint Task Force
K89	Exercise Kangaroo '89
K92	Exercise Kangaroo '92
KBE	Knight of the Order of the British Empire
KCB	Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath
KCMG	Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George
KCVO	Knight Commander of the Victorian Order
KG	Knight of the Garter
KStJ	Knight of the Order of St John
LAD	Light Aid Detachment
LCI	Landing Craft Infantry
LH	Light Horse
LHR	Light Horse Regiment
LHQ	Land Headquarters
LMG	light machine gun
LOAC	Law of Armed Conflict
LRRP	Long Range Raiding Party
LWC	Land Warfare Centre
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MC	Military Cross
MD	Military District

ABBREVIATIONS

MFC	Mortar Fire Controller
MG	machine gun
MID	Mention(ed) in Despatches
MM	Military Medal
MMG	medium machine gun
MMGFC	Medium Machine Gun Fire Controller
MO	Military Order
MonUR	Monash University Regiment
MOUT	military operations in urban terrain
MP	Military Police
MSM	Meritorious Service Medal
MUD	Multi User Depot
MUR	Melbourne University Regiment
MVRB	Melbourne Volunteer Rifle Brigade
MVRR	Melbourne Volunteer Rifle Regiment
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NBCD	Nuclear Biological and Chemical Defence
NCO	non-commissioned officer
nd	no date
np	no page number
NSTB	National Service Training Battalion
NSTS	National Service Training Scheme
NZ&A	New Zealand and Australian
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
OC	Officer Commanding
OCS	Officer Cadet School Portsea
OCTU	Officer Cadet Training Unit
OPFOR	Opposing Force
OPSO	Operations Officer
OR	Other Ranks
OTC	Officer's Training Corps
PC	Privy Councillor
PIR	Pacific Islands Regiment
PMF	Permanent Military Forces
PNG	Papua/New Guinea
PoW	Prisoner of War
PT	Patrol-Torpedo
PTI	physical training instructor
PWLH	Prince of Wales Light Horse (Regiment)
PWVLH	Prince of Wales Victorian Volunteer Light Horse (Hussars)
QM	Quartermaster
QMG	Quartermaster General
RA	Royal Artillery
RAA	Royal Australian Artillery

RAAC	Royal Australian Armoured Corps
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAAOC	Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps
RAAPC	Royal Australian Army Provost Corps
RAASC	Royal Australian Army Service Corps
RACT	Royal Australian Corps of Transport
RAE	Royal Australian Engineers
RAEME	Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RANR	Royal Australian Naval Reserve
RAP	Regimental Aid Post
RAR	Royal Australian Regiment
RCB	Rifle Company Butterworth
RCL	recoilless rifle
RCU	Regional (Army) Cadet Unit
RE	Royal Engineers
RFA	Royal Field Artillery
RFD	Reserve Forces Decoration
RFSU	Regional Force Surveillance Unit
RGJ	Royal Green Jackets
RIO-B	Rifleman Infantry Operations Basic
RIO-P	Rifleman Infantry Operations Platoon
RM	Royal Marines
RMC	Royal Military College, Duntroon
RMO	Regimental Medical Officer
RN	Royal Navy
RNSWR	Royal New South Wales Regiment
RNZIR	Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment
RO	Routine Orders
R of O	Reserve of Officers
RQMS	Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant
RRC	Royal Regiment of Canada
RRF	ready reaction force
RSAR	Royal South Australia Regiment
R&SL	Returned and Services League
RSL	Returned Services League
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
RSO	Regimental Signals Officer
RSS&AILA	Returned Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia
RTB	Recruit Training Battalion
RVR	Royal Victoria Regiment
RVVAR	Royal Victorian Volunteer Artillery Regiment
RVVYC	Royal Victorian Volunteer Yeomanry Cavalry

ABBREVIATIONS

SAS	Special Air Service
SFMG	Sustained Fire Machine Gun
SIO-S	Supervisor Infantry Operations Section
SLR	L1A1 Self-Loading Rifle
SMB	Ballarat School of Mines
SO 1	Staff Officer Grade 1
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SR	Supplementary Reserve
SUR	Sydney University Regiment
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TE	Tropical Establishment
TEWT	Tactical Exercise Without Troops
TF	Task Force
TOET	Tests of Elementary Training
TS	Training Ship
UN	United Nations
UNMO	United Nations Military Observer
VAP	vital asset protection
VC	Victoria Cross
VCP	Vehicle Check Point
VD	Volunteer Decoration
VDC	Volunteer Defence Corps
VRV	Victorian Rifle Volunteers
VVAA	Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
VVAR	Victorian Volunteer Artillery Regiment
VVLH	Victorian Volunteer Light Horse
VVRR	Victorian Volunteer Rifle Regiment
VVYC	Victorian Volunteer Yeomanry Corps
WO	Warrant Officer (Class 1 or 2)
WRAAC	Women's Royal Australian Army Corps
WTSS	Weapons Training Simulation System
WVRC	Warrnambool Volunteer Rifle Corps
XO	Executive Officer
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

PART 1

FROM THE BRITISH FORCES UNTIL
THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Part 1—Chapter 1

BRITISH LAND FORCES IN VICTORIA

Victoria's military history began in 1803 when a 50-strong detachment of Royal Marines (RM), successors to the Marines who landed with the First Fleet, guarded the first attempt to colonise the Port Phillip district using convicts. This settlement was near the current location of Sorrento, on the Mornington Peninsula, and the RM detachment was the first armed force stationed in Victoria. For several reasons, including lack of fresh water and constant skirmishing with aboriginal warriors, the settlement was abandoned in 1804.¹

Melbourne was founded in 1835, and 1836 brought Captain William Lonsdale of the 4th (King's Own) Regiment with a detachment to control the settlement. In 1840 Superintendent Charles La Trobe (later lieutenant governor of the colony of Victoria) requested that a detachment of artillery be sent to Port Phillip to provide a presence to quell unrest among the population and to give some control of shipping when there was no RN presence.

When Clunes became Victoria's first gold town in 1851, 44 members of the 11th (North Devonshire) Regiment were in barracks in Melbourne. The Buninyong/Ballarat gold strikes in August and the Mount Alexander strike in October stretched the British garrison to the limit. A draft of the 11th was sent from NSW and a contingent of military pensioners was raised in Van Diemens Land for service in Victoria. When the 40th Regiment arrived in Melbourne in October, there were few skilled workers available, and only one bricklayer and one carpenter were available to build barracks for them.

In 1853 the Bendigo Goldfields Petition, complaining about the unpopular licensing of miners by the colonial government, was signed. The unrest in Bendigo brought another contingent of military pensioners and a large draft of the 99th Regiment from Van Diemens Land. Such instability was considered a threat to the authority of the government and to the economy, causing the despatch of troops of the 40th Regiment from Melbourne to Bendigo.

Colonial administrators would have remembered the Chartist movement in Britain. This was also seen as threatening the authority of the government, which used yeomanry cavalry, a form of local volunteers, to put down demonstrations and

riots. These events led to pressure for local troops to be raised, to assist with the maintenance of government control within the Australian colonies. The Geelong Volunteer Rifle Corps (GVRC) was raised before the passage of the Volunteer Act of 1854. Once passed, the Act authorised and funded the raising of a force of 2000 volunteers in Victoria. Subsequently, the Melbourne Volunteer Rifle Regiment (MVRR) was raised.²

Disputes over licensing led to miners fighting police and troops at the Eureka Stockade, near Ballarat, on 3 December 1854. Elements of the 12th (East Suffolk) and 40th Regiments were in action as part of the government force. Believing reinforcements were necessary, Governor Charles Hotham requested that a further detachment of the 99th Regiment be sent to Victoria.³

Sir Robert Nickle, then C-in-C of military forces in Australia, established his HQ in Melbourne in August 1854. This was preferred to Sydney, the previous HQ, due to the rapid expansion of the colony of Victoria, ease of communication (primarily postal) with Britain and the fact that Melbourne was the centre point in military command. From the 1860s, Melbourne was the HQ of the Australia and New Zealand military command. For a year or two in the early 1860s it was also the HQ of the RN's Australia Station. A Royal Artillery (RA) battery was stationed there between 1861 and 1866, with some short absences. In addition to the British regiments and detachments that served as garrisons in Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat, senior British officers helped plan the coastal defences of Victoria.⁴

During the middle of the nineteenth century, few years passed without the British Army being involved in skirmishes and punitive expeditions somewhere in the Empire. Apart from the rebellion at Eureka, the Australian colonies caused few problems. However, the Maori Wars continued intermittently in New Zealand (NZ) after 1845 and by 1860, during the 2nd Maori War, Australia was almost denuded of British forces. Volunteers took over garrison duties from the British troops, while in 1863 a force of 1475 militia volunteers including 76 from Bendigo, under Lieutenant Colonel George Dean-Pitt, embarked from Australia for New Zealand. This was the first time that formed bodies of Australian soldiers went overseas to fight.⁵

In 1859 nearly 170 acres (70 hectares) of land in St Kilda was reserved for military purposes. On it was built Victoria Barracks, which still stands in St Kilda Road opposite Government House. The barracks complex is representative of nineteenth century military barracks design, incorporating axial planning, parade grounds enclosed by a perimeter wall and a formal, restrained architectural style. These severe Georgian structures in rock-faced basalt included barracks, an ordnance store and armoury and a hospital, as well as a perimeter wall and crenellated keep, which now stands alone without its flanking walls. Victoria Barracks was HQ for the C-in-C until the withdrawal of British garrisons in 1870.⁶

After federation Victoria Barracks became the HQ for the Commonwealth Department of Defence, and the central administration remained there until 1960, well after most other central departmental offices had moved to Canberra. Military units in Victoria still deal with Army units and civilian organisations based in Victoria Barracks.

Endnotes

- 1 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p1-1.
- 2 Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p20.
- 3 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p9-3.
- 4 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p1-5.
- 5 Firkins, *The Australians in Nine Wars*, p9.
- 6 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p19-1.

Part 1—Chapter 2
VICTORIAN COLONIAL FORCES

The first attempt to form a volunteer or militia force in Victoria came in July 1838, when trouble with the aboriginal population in some areas reached a point at which the colonists felt the need for a militia. It was to be made up of men who wanted to move from Melbourne to open new areas, so the primary objective was a soldier-settler force, with the capability to wage war against the aboriginals if necessary. The plan failed when Her Majesty's Store would not issue arms and ammunition.

A series of attacks by bushrangers in 1842 on homesteads in the Plenty River area, north of Melbourne, led to calls for a volunteer military force. A yeomanry corps, to be called the Port Phillip Volunteers, was envisaged. It was illegal to raise any armed force in any part of the British Empire except with the express approval of the Crown, and as a special act would be required to overcome this obstacle, interest in the idea quickly evaporated.

By 1846 the defence of the colony remained the responsibility of a small British garrison. The mayor and town council of Melbourne forwarded a petition to the governor in Sydney requesting an increase in the military presence, as Melbourne could be a target in the event of war. The response was a proposal to send an engineer officer to report on the situation, but it was considered improbable that imperial resources would be provided for this task. Mention was made in the NSW legislature that a local militia force could be raised for defence of the colony.

On 11 November 1850 notification was received that the colony of Victoria would separate from NSW on 1 July 1851. In January 1854 a select committee of the Victorian Legislative Council was appointed to consider steps to meet any defence emergency. On 7 June 1854 a public meeting was held, which eventually resulted in the formation of Victoria's first official volunteer force. Some suburbs and country towns already had rifle clubs, which became official volunteer organisations almost immediately. The GVRC had already been formed in Geelong in May.

Following the outbreak of the Crimean War efforts were made to raise volunteers to supplement the imperial troops stationed locally. The determination of the Victorian colonial government to provide additional troops was demonstrated on 3 November 1854 when the Volunteer Act (1854) was passed.¹ This authorised the raising of a

volunteer corps with a maximum strength of 2000 men, to be commanded by an imperial field officer. On 30 November Lieutenant Colonel William Anderson, late of the 65th (2nd Yorkshire North Riding) Regiment, was gazetted to command the MVRR.^{2, 3} He was commandant of the Victorian military forces from 1 January 1863 to 23 January 1882.

In February 1855 the MVRR title was altered to the Melbourne Volunteer Rifle Brigade (MVRB),⁴ while the Victorian Volunteer Yeomanry Corps (VVCY) under Lieutenant Colonel James Ross, was formed. The MVRB changed its name again in 1855, to the Victorian Volunteer Rifle Regiment (VVRR). Effective from 1 January 1856, the regiment was reformed as the Victorian Volunteer Artillery Regiment (VVAR). Although the Crimean War had ended, by 1857 the Williamstown Division of the regiment was formed, while on 9 August 1858 the BVRR was formed.⁵

At this time the Victorian government became anxious about the defence of Melbourne and Port Phillip. In 1858 a Royal Commission, with Major General (later Sir) Edward Macarthur as president, was appointed to consider the defence of Victoria. The report suggested that the defence consist of forts situated around Hobsons Bay and at Queenscliffe (now Queenscliff). These recommendations were implemented in 1859 when the governor, Sir Henry Barkly, made two proclamations on defence. One specified the units to be raised, and called on 'loyal and faithful subjects resident in ... [Victoria] ... to enrol themselves and be prepared to assemble for the purposes of drill and instruction at times and places as may be appointed'.⁶ The other covered the selection of officers, minimum length of service and issues of equipment.

This led to the establishment of new volunteer rifle detachments, along with cavalry, engineers and artillery. The government had purchased a number of cannon, three of which were positioned at Queenscliff by 1863, overlooking the Heads. They were manned by the Queenscliff detachment and the 2nd Geelong Corps.⁷ The cannon gave adequate cover over the channels at the entrance to Port Phillip Bay, with enemy ships attempting to enter the bay potentially being under fire for some 15 minutes.

In 1859 the volunteers became the Royal Victorian Volunteer Artillery Regiment (RVVAR), the GVRC, the Royal Victorian Volunteer Yeomanry Cavalry (RVVCY), the Volunteer Rifles and the Naval Brigade. Ten corps of the Volunteer Rifles were located in Melbourne, while three more were located at Portland, Warrnambool and Belfast (Port Fairy).⁸ The list of units and corps might seem to indicate that the volunteers were well supported, but in July 1859 the *Age* reported that a 'meeting for the formation of a volunteer rifle corps would have been held yesterday at the Mechanics Institute had anyone attended'.⁹ The *Argus* also noted that in:

answer to a summons issued by Colonel [James] Ross, about 60 members of the [RVVYC] mustered on the Emerald Hill ground yesterday. Although the weather was most unfavourable ... the corps went through various evolutions with great precision. There were, however, a few who, from not having attended drill for a considerable time, appeared to be at a loss when orders were given ... which of itself is sufficient to prove the necessity of attendance on parades being more regularly observed.¹⁰

The volunteer units were placed under the inspection and control of the Deputy Adjutant General (DAG) of the imperial garrison forces, Lieutenant Colonel J.M.B. O'Neill. A few days later, however, he died following a fall from his horse and Dean-Pitt, the inspecting field officer of the 80th (South Staffordshire) Regiment, was given the task of raising the volunteer corps and designated colonel of volunteers.

On 21 December 1860 a roll of personnel serving in the volunteers appeared in the *Victorian Review*. This showed:

Naval Brigade:	Williamstown Company	118
	Sandridge Company	99
RVVAR:	Headquarters	32
	Melbourne Division	49
	West Melbourne Detachment	34
	Hotham Detachment	31
	St Kilda Division	53
	Collingwood Division	66
	Richmond Detachment	60
	Williamstown Division	50
	Emerald Division	100
	South Yarra/Prahran Division	31
	A and B Mounted Troop Artillery	52
	Queenscliff Artillery	78
RVVYC		74
	Mounted Rifles	64

Apart from the Queenscliff Artillery, the roll showed only metropolitan units, although at the time, country units such as the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers, the Warrnambool Volunteer Rifle Corps (WVRC), the Castlemaine Volunteer Rifle Corps (CVRC) and the Bendigo Volunteer Rifle Corps (BVRC) all existed. The roll also showed the first reference to mounted rifles. This was the South Melbourne Company of Mounted Rifles, raised in 1860.

The Volunteer Act provided almost exclusively for the formation of infantry units. An amending act in 1860 approved a volunteer force of 10,000 and the establishment of mounted forces. The most significant enrolment came from the town of Kyneton,

which raised its minimum number of 50 following an advertisement in the *Kyneton Observer* on 30 August 1860.

One of the mounted rifles drill instructors was Thomas (Tom) Price, who in 1885 raised the Victorian Mounted Rifles (VMR). He was born in Hobart in 1842. On 2 December 1859 he began his military career at the East India Military College at Addiscombe, and served in India for two decades. He returned to Melbourne in mid-1883 with the rank of lieutenant colonel. In 1884 Price supervised the strengthening of existing rifle clubs and formation of new ones. He refused the opportunity to become secretary of Defence, but in 1885 took command of the 133 existing rifle clubs. On federation he became acting commandant of the military forces in Victoria, before becoming commandant in Queensland.

In September 1860 Captain (later General Sir) Peter Scratchley, Royal Engineers (RE), who in 1861-62 was instrumental in establishing the Victorian Corps of Volunteer Engineers, submitted a report on the defence of Melbourne.¹¹ He recommended construction of four batteries with a total of 38 guns at the entrance to Port Phillip Bay, and suggested Shortland Bluff at Queenscliff as the site for one of these batteries. The location of this battery remains today at Fort Queenscliff. He also recommended the construction of an inner ring of gun batteries around Hobsons Bay to provide a more intimate protection for Melbourne and three batteries to protect Geelong.¹² At that time there were 820 regular defence force members, 3320 volunteers and 200 yeomanry.

The transfer of British troops to New Zealand in 1860 after the outbreak of the 2nd Maori War left Australia almost denuded of British forces, and required the volunteers to undertake garrison duties. Dean-Pitt remained in charge of raising the volunteers until he joined his regiment in New Zealand in 1862. He is credited with organising the Victorian volunteer forces first encampment Easter in March 1861, at Werribee. Country Victoria was represented by the GVRC.¹³ The second Easter encampment was also held at Werribee, attended by some 2400 volunteers, and became known as Wet Werribee due to the Good Friday heavy storms that demolished almost 80 percent of the tents and almost forced cancellation of the activity. The BVRC went to Melbourne to dry out.¹⁴

The 1862 Easter encampment saw the first band contest held in Victoria. The bands participating were those of the 1st Geelong Corps, RVVAR, the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers and the CVRC. The Ballarat band came third, a nice way of saying they came last!¹⁵

In 1862 the ultimate need for the colonies to rely on their own local defences was foreshadowed. A letter from the Ministry of Finance in Britain, addressed to the Adjutant General (AG), stated that in time of war the colonies would principally have to depend on their own defences as Her Majesty's troops stationed in Victoria would probably be withdrawn for the defence of Britain.¹⁶ Local troops should be under command of the local government.

The years 1860-63 were most confusing in Victoria. In 1861 there were almost 50 different organisations operating. New rifle companies were formed in 1859 when the RVVAR was still operating. Some suburbs had both a rifle company and an artillery battery, and in some cases the same men were enrolled in each. In 1861 country Victoria had the following military units:

Bacchus Marsh Mounted Rifles;
 Geelong Mounted Rifles;
 Kyneton Mounted Rifles;
 Sandhurst (now Bendigo) Troop;
 Castlemaine Light Dragoons;
 Victorian Volunteer Light Dragoons;
 Queenscliff Battery 1st Brigade RVVAR;
 Ballarat Corps;
 Belfast Corps;
 Castlemaine Corps;
 Daylesford Detachment;
 Maryborough Corps;
 Portland Corps;
 Sandhurst (now Bendigo) Corps; and
 Warrnambool Corps.¹⁷

On 3 October 1862 the government announced that the volunteer forces would be divided into four districts:

Headquarters District;
 Northern District commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Bull, CVRC;
 North Western District commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Wallace,
 Ballarat Volunteer Rangers; and
 South Western District commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rede, 2nd
 Brigade RVVAR.

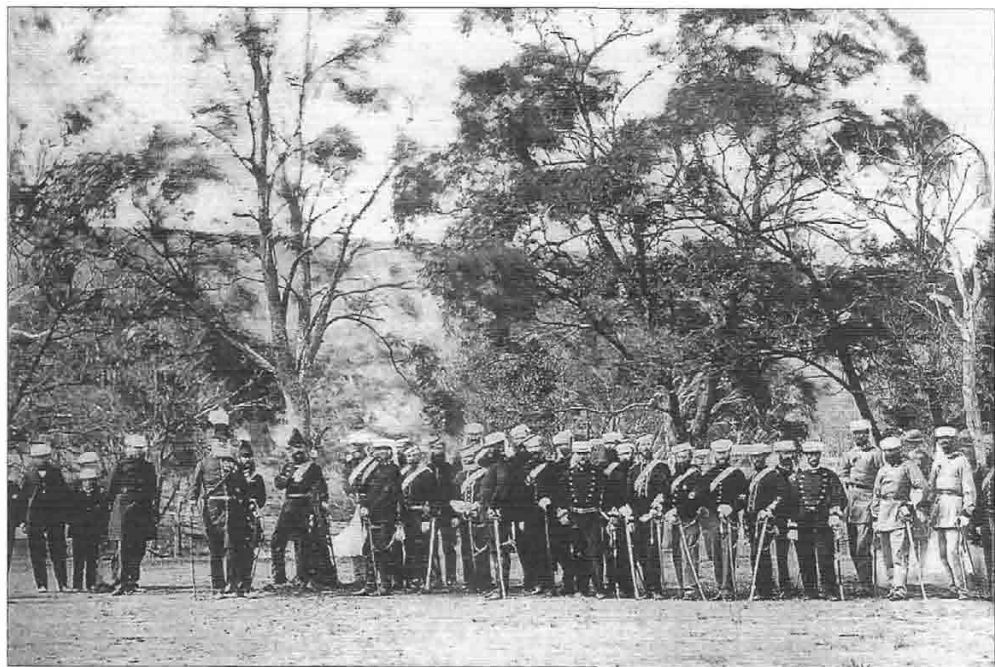
The third annual encampment took place in February 1863 at Geelong, allowing western Victorians an opportunity to view the training of the 1230 troops attending. The Victorian naval ship, Her Majesty's Victorian Ship (HMVS) *Victoria*, also took part.¹⁸

In June 1863 a letter from the Secretary of State for the Colonies discussed an increased dependency of the colonies for their own defence and the reduced allocation of funds from Britain.¹⁹ By Gazette notice of 14 October 1863 the governor in council dispensed with the services of the volunteers, with the exception of the cavalry, and gave authority to maintain in their place seven units of artillery, one of engineers and 13 of rifles, all being volunteers under the 'effective' system.²⁰ Under this system, the

CO of each corps was granted an allowance for each volunteer who fulfilled certain criteria, such as attendance and shooting. The payment of the drill instructor could be made from this allowance.²¹

The mounted units had undergone change earlier in 1863, which combined them into one regiment, the Victorian Volunteer Light Horse (VVLH), while allowing detachments to train independently. In August the title was changed to the Prince of Wales Victorian Volunteer Light Horse (Hussars) (PWVVLH). At the end of 1863 the country units were:

- 1st Geelong Corps RVVAR;
- 2nd Geelong Corps RVVAR, Geelong detachment;
- 2nd Geelong Corps RVVAR, Queenscliff detachment;
- 1st Corps Ballarat Volunteer Rangers;
- 2nd Corps Ballarat Volunteer Rangers, Creswick and Clunes detachment;
- 2nd Corps Ballarat Volunteer Rangers;
- 1st CVRC;
- 2nd CVRC, Kyneton detachment; and
- 2nd CVRC, Maldon detachment.²²



Members of the Volunteer (unpaid) Forces of Victoria in the 1860s.
Each unit had distinctive uniforms of their own design.
(National Library Australia)

A Volunteer Corps Amendment Act was passed in 1863, which aimed to convert the volunteers into a more organised and efficient force. The new force would consist of a Naval Brigade, the RVVAR, the Victorian Corps of Volunteer Engineers and the Victorian Volunteer Rifles.²³ On 1 January 1864 the engineers joined the rifle units to form five battalions, which at Easter went into camp at Sunbury. Almost 2400 men attended. Encampments were again held at Sunbury in 1866, 1867, 1874 and 1877, while the 1870 encampment was held in the You Yangs near Werribee. The 1865 Volunteer Act (or Volunteer Statute) tidied up a number of issues, and was proclaimed in the *Victorian Government Gazette* on 14 May 1866.²⁴ On 21 September 1865 Brigadier General George Carey became the commandant of Victoria's volunteer forces.

The 1866 Easter encampment had 2346 men attending. On his arrival Carey ordered the alarms to be sounded, and it was reported that the whole force turned out within ten minutes. A turn out of the 3156 men at the 1867 encampment was undertaken in six minutes. The Ballarat and Castlemaine Corps were among the defenders in a 'sham' battle and the Ballarat men had to be ordered to retire by Carey when they refused to withdraw and attempted to hold their ground with fixed bayonets.

A select committee of the Legislative Assembly was appointed on 14 May 1867 and presented a progress report on the problems within the Victorian forces. Its main points were that:

- the volunteers were too expensive;
- the number of paid officers needed to be reduced to two and volunteers should form the rest of the staff;
- the number of drill instructors (paid) be reduced; and
- the volunteer cavalry be made available for artillery purposes.²⁵

In 1867 the country forces were:

Ballarat Volunteer Rangers:

- 1st Corps (Ballarat West);
- 2nd Corps (Creswick), including Clunes; and
- 3rd Corps (Ballarat East).

Corio District

PWVVLH:

Geelong Troop.

RVVAR:

- 1st Geelong Corps Drysdale detachment; and
- 2nd Geelong Corps Queenscliff detachment.

Mount Alexander District

PWVVLH:

Castlemaine Troop;

Sandhurst (now Bendigo) Troop; and

Kyneton Troop.

Infantry:	1st CVRC; 2nd CVRC, including Maldon and Kyneton detachments; and BVRC.
Portland District RVVAR:	Western Artillery; Portland battery; Belfast battery; and Warrnambool battery. ²⁶

Although the British troops stationed in New Zealand returned to Australia in 1866, on 21 August 1870, after extended negotiations between Britain and the colonies, the last imperial soldiers, the 2nd Battalion (Royal Irish), departed from Victoria, while the C-in-C and his staff departed on 8 October.

Britain had always felt that the natural destiny of the colonies was to become independent nations. Now Victoria and the other colonies had to provide for their own defence. Under the British 1871 Naval and Military Act colonial governments were empowered to maintain permanent military forces and a small element of permanent troops was established to act as a nucleus to develop the citizen forces, and to maintain forts and defence works.²⁷ After the withdrawal of the British garrison the Victorian forces stood at 206 permanent members and 4084 volunteers.²⁸

An 1875 Royal Commission recommended that the strength of the volunteer forces should be:

Engineer, Torpedo and Signals Corps	200
Garrison and Field Artillery	2000
Infantry	1200

At the end of 1875 the strength stood at 137 permanent forces and 3725 volunteers.²⁹ During the year the infantry were grouped into battalions under an administrative brigade organisation.³⁰ Two years later the possibility of another Russian war gave stimulus to the volunteer movement and establishments were increased.

As early as 1860 it had been decided that any attack on Victoria must come as a raid on Melbourne. In 1875 a colonial Royal Commission recommended that the Director of Works and Fortifications in London, Lieutenant General Sir William Jervois, be invited to Victoria to advise on defences. He arrived in 1877 and collaborated with the now Colonel Scratchley. Their joint report recommended that the basic defences of the colony be concentrated on the Heads, and consist of fortifications at the entrance to the bay and on the shoals between the main shipping

channels.³¹ These recommendations were progressively implemented between 1879 and 1886.³²

By 1883 Victoria's population had grown to over 850,000. The paid military forces numbered 128, along with the RVVAR, a Torpedo Corps (renamed the Submarine Mining Company in 1888) of 66 volunteers, and a large volunteer force of riflemen, infantry, cavalry and artillery. These forces had attended Easter encampments since 1861, but although an average of 2500 attended at least one day, the value of these camps left much to be desired. Victoria's defences were almost defunct and its ordnance store in disarray, while the other five colonies had small armed forces, none of which could be deployed in support of another colony.

However, following a change of government in 1881, the Victorian Discipline Act came into effect on 3 December 1883 and established a Department of Defence with Mr (later Sir Frederick) Sargood as minister. He had joined the RVVAR in 1859 as a private and had risen to the rank of lieutenant colonel.^{33, 34} The Act also established a Council of Defence and provided military forces to resist maritime attacks by a few fast vessels, or up to a 2000 man attack on land.

Sargood submitted to Parliament a general scheme for the defence of Melbourne. In November Colonel Thomas Disney assumed command of the Victorian forces. In 1884 Scratchley and Major General Sir Andrew Clarke (the former Surveyor General of Victoria) prepared further papers on the defence of Port Phillip Bay. Work progressed on the defences until the 1890s.³⁵

The Council of Defence was appointed and a staff of officers brought out from Britain to organise and instruct the militia on proper military principles. The first meeting of the Council was held on 4 January 1884, when resolutions were passed for the gradual disbandment of the volunteer force and enrolment of the militia. General Order (GO) 6 of 9 January 1884 set down that the militia would consist of three battalions of infantry, to be known as the Victorian Rifles.³⁶ GO 8 of 17 January 1884 amended the number to four battalions:

1st (West Melbourne) Battalion, Victorian Rifles, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Freeman;

2nd (East Melbourne) Battalion, Victorian Rifles, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Templeton;

3rd (Ballarat) Battalion, Victorian Rifles, raised from the 1st and 2nd Corps of the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Sleep; and

4th (Mount Alexander) Battalion, Victorian Rifles, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Aitken, two companies from which were based in Castlemaine and two in Sandhurst (now Bendigo).

The first militia parade was held on 28 June 1884 at Powlett Street, East Melbourne, and was inspected by Disney. By then the strength of the Victorian forces was:

Permanent	406
Militia	4389
Volunteers	2565
Rifle Reserves	7314
TOTAL	14,674. ³⁷

Under GO 147 of 11 May 1885, plans for the defence of Victoria were announced. Battalions were allocated defensive areas at:

1st Battalion, Victorian Rifles:	Frankston;
2nd Battalion, Victorian Rifles:	Balla Balla (near Langwarrin), detachment at Cranbourne;
3rd Battalion, Victorian Rifles:	Frankston; and
4th Battalion, Victorian Rifles:	HQ Swan Island, detachments at Queenscliff, Point Franklin and Geelong.

In April 1886 the establishments of the four battalions were specified in GO 309 as 506 for the 1st and 2nd Battalions and 406 for the 3rd and 4th Battalions.

Deciding that the defences of the colony needed something more than a militia, however efficient, to ensure the safety of the community, the government also established rifle clubs. These absorbed the widespread volunteer enthusiasm and provided a body of riflemen who could be called on to increase the militia in time of war. Sargood encouraged the formation of rifle clubs in towns where militia corps did not exist. Eventually, there were 7000 members in 204 rifle clubs. The clubs were a second line of defence for time of war. Members could obtain rifles and ammunition from the ordnance store at reduced rates, and were given free rail travel for rifle practices and shooting matches. An annual allowance was made to clubs for each effective marksman, the money being used for range maintenance and ammunition purchase.

At this time, when steps were being taken to enrol and train a militia force to form the nucleus of an army capable of being increased in time of war by civilians, the importance of providing a nursery for recruits to replenish the ranks of the militia was also recognised. This led to the formation of a Cadet Corps in 1884. The cadets were mainly boys who had left school and were in employment. The government provided rifles and accoutrements, and an effectives' allowance was given to help provide uniforms. A battalion of senior cadets was established to form a link between the cadets and the militia.

Cadet companies could be formed in larger Victorian schools, in detachments of no fewer than 20 members. Annual camps were held each spring in Melbourne and the principal inland towns. Schoolmasters and teachers undertook cadet officers' training, and militia and volunteers often gave cadet instruction in their spare time.

By March 1885 Price had convinced Sargood that a body of mounted riflemen was needed in Victoria, and on 1 May he was appointed to raise and command the VMR.³⁸ The VMR was the first of the new volunteer corps that would serve alongside a militia force of cavalry, artillery, engineers and infantry about 4000 strong, and a permanent force of about 400.

Price toured country Victoria for three months, explaining the VMR's training and regulations and obtaining support. In early 1885 Victoria's only mounted volunteers belonged to the Sandhurst Cavalry Troop at Bendigo which, with a detachment at Dingee (48 km to the north), was all that remained of the PWVVLH.³⁹ In his early days as commander of the VMR, Price recruited men from the former Melbourne and Dandenong Cavalry Troops and from selected volunteers from the rifle clubs he still commanded.

By June 1885 men were being sworn in, and on 11 June the government announced the establishment of VMR detachments in the Geelong and Colac regions. The 16th saw approval for Kyneton and the 29th Sale and Woodend. By 17 July Price had recruited 320 men and the number was growing.

By 2 November 45 detachments had been organised into nine companies, totalling over 1000 men, many drawn from rifle clubs. By July 1886 muster places in case of 'call out' had been determined, usually railway stations. Metropolitan and eastern Victorian elements were A Company (Melbourne), C Company (east Gippsland), D Company (west Gippsland) and E Company (northeast Victoria). The other companies were then based on:

Gisborne (B Company HQ), Castlemaine, Daylesford, Kyneton and Woodend;
Broadford (F Company HQ), Katandra, Nagambie, Numurkah and Wunghnu;
Caramut (G Company HQ), Camperdown, Dunkeld, Hexham, Mortlake and
Penshurst;

Hamilton (H Company HQ), Bransholme, Casterton, Coleraine, Digby,
Heywood and Merino; and

Kerang (I Company HQ), Elmore and Pyramid Hill.⁴⁰

A restructure of the VMR occurred in June 1891, when the 64 detachments then existing were split into two battalions. The 1st Battalion was based in Melbourne and eastern Victoria. The 2nd Battalion had its HQ at Ballarat, and companies at:

Broadford (B Company HQ), Avenel, Katandra, Murchison, Seymour, Shepparton;
 Koroit (G Company HQ), Camperdown, Caramut, Allansford, Nirranda, Woodford and Warrnambool;
 Hamilton (H Company HQ), Branhholme, Byaduk, Casterton, Coleraine, Heywood, Merino, Myamyn and Narrawong;
 Elmore (I Company HQ), Kerang, Pyramid Hill, Durham Ox, Rochester;
 Maryborough (J Company HQ), Ararat, Avoca, Elmhurst and Talbot; and
 Clunes (K Company HQ), Ballarat, Gordon and Egerton (now Mount Egerton) and Warrenheip.⁴¹

During the next few months Toongabbie formed a detachment for C Company while Heyfield, Glengarry, Merino, Coleraine and Dandenong disbanded.

In 1894 a further reduction saw each battalion lose one company and the number of detachments was reduced to 50. In 1895, the 2nd Battalion then consisted of HQ in Ballarat and companies at:

Warrnambool (G Company HQ), Allansford, Camperdown, Koroit, Nirranda and Woodford;
 Hamilton (H Company HQ), Branhholme, Byaduk, Casterton, Heywood and Narrawong;
 Elmore (I Company HQ), Durham Ox, Kerang, Pannoomilloo and Pyramid Hill; and
 Clunes (K Company HQ), Avoca, Ballarat, Daisy Hill, Gordon and Egerton and Warrenheip.

In December 1897 43 detachments remained in the nine companies of the two battalions. A further seven detachments were disbanded between November 1897 and November 1899, but detachments were re-formed at Clunes and Maryborough and two new detachments were raised.⁴² Price remained in command of the rifle clubs until 1900 and the VMR until 1902.

Under Price, between June 1885 and June 1903, 105 detachments of the VMR had been formed. Of these, 46 were transferred to the light horse at federation. The detachments at Branhholme, Broadford, Camperdown, Casterton, Elmore, Euroa, Hamilton, Kerang, Moe, Pyramid Hill, Sale, Violet Town and Yea retained their identity from 1885 to 1903. Preston amalgamated with Melbourne to form the Metropolitan Melbourne detachment, while Drouin was amalgamated with Warragul. In contrast, Castlemaine, Digby and Woodend had been disbanded within two years of being raised in 1885.⁴³

In January 1903 the VMR's earliest champion, Sargood, died. The regiment struggled on with little support and all administration done by volunteers. It finally

ceased to exist in 1903, when the military forces of the Australian colonies were amalgamated under Major General Sir Edward (Curly) Hutton, KCMG, KCB, the first General Officer Commanding (GOC).

On 16 January 1888 Regulations for Victorian Rifle Volunteers (VRV), based on the rifle clubs, were notified and the first elements were raised and notified in GO 188 of 20 March 1888. Companies of 120 men from rifle clubs could be formed, made up of detachments of no fewer than 20 men. Training consisted of twelve daylight and twelve night compulsory parades per year, and members were required to attend a musketry course. Dress was similar to that of the VMR. On 1 May Price was appointed to command the VRV, in addition to his command of the VMR. His adjutant was Lieutenant John Low (1st Brigade, Garrison Artillery). Three companies of the VRV were raised:

- A Company: detachments at Rapunyp, Lubeck, Stawell, Great Western and Ararat;
- B Company: detachments at Charlton, Inglewood, Dunolly and Donald; and
- C Company: detachments at Sheep Hills, Horsham, Warracknabeal and Minyip.

Every member was required to provide himself with the authorised uniform consisting of a khaki cloth jacket with scarlet collar and cuffs, and khaki trousers with a scarlet welt. The head dress consisted of a brown felt hat looped up on the right side and held in place by a lion's head as a brass badge, the puggaree with a pleat of three folds of material, also khaki. The dress was completed by brown canvas leggings and black ankle boots. At a later period, the head dress was altered from the felt hat to a khaki cloth helmet.

In March 1889 the VRV was renamed the Victorian Rangers and by 1890, there were sufficient rifle clubs for the organisation to be split into six districts, while at least one club was mounted. Major Alfred Otter took command in April. He had earlier experience in the RN, and at the time of his appointment was a captain in the permanent artillery at Queenscliff. He later led the 5th VMR in South Africa. The concept of ranger units had gained favour in the Maori Wars, where ranger militia proved especially effective. Their ability to engage the Maoris unexpectedly on their own ground provided a major advance in British battle tactics. Before then, massed British forces had been unable to bring the Maoris to any decisive encounters.⁴⁴

The Rangers grew rapidly. Their heyday was in the early 1890s, with three battalions. In January 1891 the Rangers were commanded by Otter, now a lieutenant colonel, and its northern and western Victorian elements consisted of:

- 1st Battalion, HQ Ararat, Major Richard Wilson.
 A Company: HQ Stawell. Detachments at Rupanyup, Lubeck, Glenorchy Great Western and Deep Lead;
 C Company: HQ Warracknabeal. Detachments at Sheep Hills, Murtoa and Horsham; and
 D Company: HQ Ararat. Detachment at Moyston, Cathcart and Beaufort.
- 2nd Battalion, HQ St Arnaud, Major William Bassett.
 B Company: HQ St Arnaud. Detachments at Dunolly, Donald and Timor;
 E Company: Echuca;
 F Company: HQ Inglewood. Detachments at Charlton, Wedderburn, Bridgewater and Eaglehawk; and
 K Company: HQ Kerang. Detachments at Swan Hill and Pyramid Hill.

The 3rd Battalion, commanded by Major Robert Rigg, had its HQ at Cheltenham, and companies in Melbourne and eastern Victoria.⁴⁵

In July 1890 the Rangers gained an artillery battery at Hastings for the defence of Westernport. The battery consisted of 40-pounders on travelling carriages, which could be drawn by bullocks. In 1891 the authorised strength of the Rangers was 1356 men, but losses to the VMR had become worrisome, and a GO forbade those taking discharges from the Rangers joining the VMR for at least six months. It was similarly impossible to a mounted rifleman to join the Rangers for six months after taking his discharge.

In August 1897 the Victorian Rangers were reorganised into two battalions, but with the numbers of companies remaining about the same:

- 1st Battalion: HQ at Dandenong, A, C, D, G, H and I Companies, and
 2nd Battalion: HQ at Donald, B, E, F and K Companies.⁴⁶

As federation approached, the infantry units in the Victorian military forces comprised:

Militia:

- 1st Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade (West Melbourne);
 2nd Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade (East Melbourne);
 3rd Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade (Ballarat);
 4th Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade (Castlemaine); and
 5th Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade (Bendigo).

Volunteers:

- Victorian Scottish Regiment (formed at Albert Park 1898);
- Victorian Rangers; and
- Victorian Railways Infantry or Victorian Railways Volunteer Regiment (formed 1900).⁴⁷

An inter-colonial military conference in 1894 had proposed a council of defence for the Australian forces, and Major (later Major General Sir) William Throsby Bridges prepared a federal defence plan in 1896. After 1902 some elements of the Victorian Rangers formed squadrons of the 9th and 10th Light Horse (LH) Regiments. However, detachments from Stawell, St Arnaud, Murtoa, Ararat, Inglewood, Cheltenham and part of the Swan Hill and Lake Boga sections were organised into an infantry unit, retaining the name Victorian Rangers.

Further reorganisations took place in 1912 and 1913, during which companies were separated to form the nucleus of new infantry battalions. The Victorian Rangers became the 73rd Infantry. During the First World War the Rangers formed the basis of the 21st Battalion.

A notable member of the Victorian Rangers was Godfrey Irving who joined in 1885, when still at school. He was commissioned as a lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion in 1887 and joined the Victorian permanent forces as a captain in 1891. Irving served in South Africa (arriving after the war ended), in Egypt during the First World War, and commanded the 4th (SA) and 1st (Queensland) Military Districts (MD), and was Deputy Quartermaster General (DQMG) at Army Headquarters (AHQ) in Melbourne in 1921. In 1922 he was placed on the unattached list and promoted to major general on his retirement in 1925.

In 1887 the Victorian Legislative Assembly was advised that the absence of an Australian federal union invited aggression by foreign powers. Local political leaders invited British Major General Bevan Edwards to report on the state of Australia's land defences. His report concluded that so large a land mass could not be defended by the small population and the meagre funds available. Two years later he declared that a common system of defence could only be implemented by a federation of the military forces of the colonies.

The depression of the early 1890s had a marked effect on the colonial forces, with some units disbanding due to a lack of funds and men. The permanent force in Victoria was reduced, and those remaining suffered a pay cut. Militia pay dropped almost 50 percent. These measures led to resignations from both the permanent and militia forces that reduced costs, but also effectiveness. In the middle of the decade there was a revival of the volunteers, and many of those who had been forced by economic circumstance to reduce their involvement in the part-time forces were able to resume their interest.⁴⁸

During 1896 the commandant, Major General Charles Holled-Smith, advised that the effectives' allowance for the VMR and Rangers should be restored to put the military forces back in a satisfactory state of defence preparedness.⁴⁹ But the depression was severe and many like John Monash, a Melbourne engineer and captain in the Garrison Artillery, did not recover financially until the decade's end.

War was declared between Britain and the Boers in South Africa on 11 October 1899. As early as 11 July Queensland had offered mounted troops should hostilities break out.⁵⁰ The next day the Victorian governor, Lord Brassey, also offered assistance. The colonies passed Acts allowing for overseas service either as separate entities or combined. The military commandants of the six colonies had recommended in 1899 that a combined Australian contingent be organised in the event of war, but separate contingents were sent. On 17 October the first contingent of Victorians assembled for service in South Africa: 125 infantry and 125 mounted men. They departed from Port Melbourne on 28 October.

The second Victorian contingent, commanded by Price, left Melbourne on 13 January 1900, arriving in Cape Town on 5 February. The third contingent departed on 10 March and the fourth on 1 May. The fifth, and largest, contingent sailed on 15 February 1901. By December 1901 ten contingents had arrived in South Africa, with five from Victoria, SA, Queensland and Tasmania forming the 1st Australian Regiment under Colonel John Hoad, a former adjutant of the VMR. Three months later they were absorbed into the 1st Mounted Infantry Brigade under Hutton.⁵¹

Apart from the state-provided contingents, eight battalions of Australian Commonwealth Horse (ACH) were raised in 1902 for service in South Africa. Victorians made up part of each of the 2nd and 4th Battalions, while the 6th Battalion was completely Victorian, including Mounted Rifles, Rangers and recruits from the MD. The 2nd and 4th Battalions saw little action, while the 6th Battalion was still two weeks away from landing when the peace agreement was made in South Africa on 31 May 1902. A Victorian, Nurse Fanny Hines, was the first Australian woman to die on active service, in South Africa.⁵²

Endnotes

- 1 18 Vict No.7, Public Records Office Victoria.
- 2 Austin, *Bold Steady Faithful*, p4.
- 3 Vazenry, *The History of the RVR*, p1.
- 4 Austin, *Bold Steady Faithful*, p7.
- 5 *The Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment*, p2.
- 6 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p1-7.
- 7 Ward, *Victorian Land Forces*, p79.
- 8 Ward, p19.

- 9 *Age*, 27 July 1859.
- 10 *Argus*, 30 July 1859.
- 11 Youl, *Swan Street Sappers*, p164.
- 12 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p15-3.
- 13 Ward, p31.
- 14 Thomason, *Marching On*, p10.
- 15 Ballarat Historical Society notes, undated.
- 16 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p1-9.
- 17 Ward, p23.
- 18 Ward, p32.
- 19 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p1-11.
- 20 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p1-13.
- 21 Ward, p25.
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- 23 27 Vict No. 183, Public Records Office Victoria.
- 24 28 Vict No 266, 14 May 1866, Public Records Office Victoria.
- 25 Ward, p36.
- 26 Ward, p37.
- 27 Odgers, *Army Australia*, p28.
- 28 *History of A Battery*.
- 29 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p2-1.
- 30 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p2-1 and 3-81.
- 31 Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p41.
- 32 *A Soldier's Five Minutes on the Fort*.
- 33 *Australian Dictionary of Biography* online edition, Sir Frederick Sargood.
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- 35 *A Soldier's Five Minutes on the Fort*.
- 36 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p2-7.
- 37 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p2-3.
- 38 *Victorian Government Gazette* 49 of 8 May 1885.
- 39 Calder, *Heroes and Gentlemen*, p19.
- 40 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p4-8.
- 41 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p4-10.
- 42 Calder, p27.
- 43 Calder, p68.
- 44 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p3-35.
- 45 Vazenry, p3-38.
- 46 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p3-41.
- 47 Kuring, p28.
- 48 Calder, p57.
- 49 Calder, p29.
- 50 Firkins, p9.
- 51 Calder, p81.
- 52 Calder, p86.

Part 1—Chapter 3 POST FEDERATION

On 31 December 1900, the eve of federation, the strength of the military forces in Australia was 27,353, not including cadets, reservists and rifle club members.¹

	Establishment			Strength		
	Officers	ORs	Total	Officers	ORs	Total
NSW	549	9295	9844	505	8833	9338
Victoria	394	6050	6444	301	6034	6335
Queensland	310	5035	5845	291	3737	4028
SA	141	2847	2988	135	2797	2932
WA	140	2553	2693	135	2561	2696
Tasmania	131	2605	2736	113	1911	2024
Total	1665	28,385	30,550	1480	25,873	27,353

Of these, 1544 were permanent soldiers, approximately 15,000 (paid) militia and 11,000 (unpaid) volunteers.²

On Tuesday 1 January 1901, the first day of the twentieth century, a parade, which included a Victorian contingent made up of Victorian Rangers and VMR soldiers, was held in Sydney. When it ended in Centennial Park a proclamation from Queen Victoria that the six colonies had formed the Commonwealth of Australia was read. Lord Hopetoun was then sworn in as the first governor general. From that moment the armed forces of the six states came under the control of the Commonwealth government. The governor general became the titular C-in-C of the naval and military forces and was authorised to proclaim a date for the transfer of all armed forces from the states to the Commonwealth. At the birth of the nation Australian soldiers were at war in South Africa and a contingent of Australian sailors was serving in the Boxer Rebellion in China.³

The first defence minister was Sir James Dickson, who died during his second week in office. Sir John Forrest, known as ‘the emperor of the west’, replaced him. On 1 March 1901, the date considered to be the birthday of the Australian Army,

Forrest took control of all Australian military forces. After thirteen years as head of the Victorian Defence Department, Naval Captain Robert Collins was appointed as the secretary of the Commonwealth Defence Department.⁴ The strength of the military forces on 1 March was 28,886.⁵

On 6 May 1901 more than 14,000 troops assembled for the opening of the first Parliament in the Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne by the Duke of Cornwall and York, attended by his Duchess. Price commanded the mounted troops, with Major (later General Sir) Harry Chauvel as his brigade major (BM).⁶

Not until 1902 was a commander selected for the Australian land forces. The fiery British professional soldier Hutton was chosen ahead of local contenders. He had completed his term as commandant in NSW in 1896, and had then served in Canada and South Africa, where his command included Australian mounted troops.⁷

From 29 January 1902 Hutton commenced the task of combining into one Army the separate military forces of the states.⁸ Hutton was an able administrator, but autocratic and lacking in tact. Within three years he had created a sound structure that comprised a regular force, including instructional, artillery, engineer, medical and service personnel, and a field force of six light horse brigades and three infantry brigades. Administration was through the MDs, the boundaries of which corresponded basically with state boundaries. Back up forces were a reserve of officers, with the rifle clubs, forming a defence auxiliary. Hutton encouraged talented professional subordinates such as Bridges and Chauvel. He also had to fight economic pressures from governments intent on cutting the defence budget. By 1904 the strength of the Army had fallen to 19,880.⁹

In 1902 William (Billy) Hughes, later the prime minister, argued for compulsory military training for all able-bodied citizens. Parliament rejected the proposal, but as notified in *Commonwealth Gazette* 35 of 25 July 1903, the Defence Act gave the government the power to conscript all males between the ages of 18 and 60 for service in Australia during time of war.

In 1903 the militia field force was reorganised into 12 infantry regiments in three brigades. The 1st Infantry Brigade (NSW) comprised the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Australian Infantry Regiments (AIR), while the 3rd Infantry Brigade was made up of the 9th (Queensland), 10th (SA), 11th (Western Australia) and 12th (Tasmania) AIRs. The Victorian militia infantry units were renumbered as the regiments of the 2nd Infantry Brigade, commanded by Colonel Robert Robertson, VD:

1st Battalion: 5th AIR, '*Semper Paratus*' (*Ever Ready*) Melbourne:
Lieutenant Colonel William Reeve, VD;¹⁰

2nd Battalion: 6th AIR, '*Nulli Secundus*' (*Second to None*) Melbourne:
Lieutenant Colonel James Burstons, VD;¹¹

3rd Battalion: 7th AIR, '*Celer et Audax*' (*Swift and Bold*) Ballarat:
Lieutenant Colonel Robert Williams, VD;
4th and 5th Battalions: 8th AIR, '*Cede Nullis*' (*Yield to None*) Castlemaine
and Bendigo:
Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable James McCay, VD.¹²

At this time the Victorian volunteer units were:

Victorian Scottish Regiment, '*Nemo me Impune Lacessit*' (*Provoke me not with Impunity*):
Lieutenant Colonel Richard Linton; and
Victorian Rangers, '*Pro Deo et Patria*' (*For God and Country*) (A, B, C, D, E [less Rochester detachment], F and G Companies, and Swan Hill, Kerang and Lake Boga detachments of K Company):
Major Harry Dunkley, VD.

Additional volunteer units were raised later:

Victorian Rifles, '*Mori quam Foedari*' (*To Die rather than be Dishonourable*)
(120 men in two companies):
Lieutenant Colonel R.E. Courtney, VD;¹³ and
Melbourne University Rifles (1910).¹⁴

On 13 March 1903 Hutton announced that the light horse Easter encampment would be held at Sunbury. Moves had been made as early as August 1902 to form a field force. Hutton reorganised the VMR, the Victorian Rangers and the former Melbourne Cavalry Troop into 20 squadrons grouped into five light horse regiments. While the VMR had two battalions split east/west through the state, the light horse brigades were split north/south.¹⁵ The 7th (HQ Seymour), 8th (HQ Euroa) and 9th (HQ Ballarat) LH Regiments (VMR) formed the 3rd LH Brigade. The 10th (HQ Melbourne) and 11th (HQ Warrnambool) LH (VMR), along with the 12th LH from Tasmania, made up the 4th Light Horse Brigade.

On 1 May 1903 a report from Hutton indicated that the name of the light horse would change to Australian Cavalry, and may also have indicated what he had in mind for Australia's mounted troops.¹⁶ Hutton's reorganisation continued through 1904 under difficulties as he served four different ministries and six different ministers for Defence. But few would care when the light horse swept to fame in the First World War, overshadowing the exploits of the Australian mounted troops in South Africa.

Legislation enacted in December 1904 saw the position of C-in C abolished and that of Inspector General (IG) established. The IG was responsible for discipline and training, while a Military Board (MB) was established to look after administration. Hutton fought against the changes, but returned to Britain after accepting defeat. Major General Harry Finn was appointed as IG. In 1906 Finn proposed that training in drill and musketry should become part of 'the ordinary curriculum of all school boys'.

A further renumbering of Victorian units was promulgated in District Order (DO) 14 of 10 April 1906. There was no change to the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th AIRs, but the Victorian Scottish Regiment became the 1st Battalion, Victorian Scottish Regiment and the Victorian Rangers became the 1st Battalion, Victorian Rangers. In 1908 the 7th AIR was now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Bennett, VD, and the 8th AIR split into:

1st Battalion, 8th AIR, ' <i>Cede Nullis</i> '	Castlemaine:
Major John Field, VD; and	
2nd Battalion, 8th AIR, ' <i>Cede Nullis</i> '	Bendigo:
Major Charles Davis, VD. ¹⁷	

These unit titles remained until 28 May 1912, when the military forces of the Australian Commonwealth, later called the Australian Military Forces (AMF), which comprised the Permanent Military Forces (PMF) and the CME, were reorganised under Military Order (MO) 277.

Publicity has always been needed for the military forces and the *Ballarat Courier* of 29 October 1907 advised that recruiting had commenced at the orderly room in Ballarat, but that it was not too late for eligible young men to join the training squad. Two days later the paper advised that the recruits to the 7th AIR had begun training, but it was still not too late if new members wished to join the current squad under training. The instructors for the squad were Sergeant Majors Creaney and Ryan.¹⁸

At the invitation of the prime minister, Alfred Deakin, Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener visited Australia in 1909 to inspect the existing state of defence preparedness, and advise on the best means of providing Australia with land defence. Kitchener's report, submitted in February 1910, recommended the introduction of compulsory military training.¹⁹

It is often thought that the compulsory military training scheme was instigated by Kitchener after his inspection, however, the scheme was proposed as far back as 1899 by the then Captain (later Major General) James Legge, a former teacher and lawyer, who between 1908 and 1912 was Quartermaster General (QMG) of the Australian forces.²⁰ When the scheme commenced it was initially administered by Legge, but such training was not his strength.

The bill providing for compulsory military training in peacetime (referred to as universal training) was introduced to Parliament by Deakin in 1909, and the compulsory clause of the Defence Act 1903 came into force on 1 January 1911. All males whose 14th to 17th birthdays occurred in 1911 had to register in January as senior cadets. Boys aged 12 to 13 had to enrol through schools as junior cadets. Those aged 18 to 26 would train in the CME.

If a boy was medically fit (about three to four percent were not) and not exempt (living in a sparsely populated country district gave about ten percent exemptions), he was liable to serve. About 25 percent found a long route home (over eight kilometres) and thus gained an exemption. Of the 155,000 who registered in 1911, only 92,463 (59 percent) were finally liable for training. The scheme effectively worked only in areas that could produce 60 boys liable for senior cadet training (generally limited to localities with 2000 people within a radius of eight kilometres). Other exemptions were given to teachers training cadets at school, members of the PMF and theological students (but not conscientious objectors).²¹

Cadets had been a part of the state school system since the 1880s, but only in 1905 did the state governments consent to fund a scheme where cadet units would be established in all primary and secondary schools. Officers were qualified teachers with prerequisite training. In 1906 Major Walter Campbell, a Victorian state school inspector, was appointed as the state commandant of cadets. Campbell believed that proper training of boys in shooting competitions and parade ground protocol was beneficial, as it enhanced 'their intelligence and broadened their horizons'. By July 1906, when the cadets were accepted as part of the military forces, it was assumed that they, along with their officers, would form the cadre of any future army to assist in defending the British Empire.

The introduction of compulsory training expanded the cadet system substantially. Under compulsory training, junior cadets did not have uniforms and were originally required to train for 120 hours, but this was reduced to 90 hours at school per year. This included physical education (not less than 15 minutes a day), marching drill and two hours of miniature rifle shooting, as well as swimming, running exercises in organised games, or first aid.

Senior cadets had less, but more serious, training. Their target of 96 hours per year was reduced to 64 during 1911. This consisted of four full day (four hour) drills, 12 half day (two hour) drills and 24 night (one hour) drills. They could also do voluntary parades and drills to make up for missed drills. There were also short voluntary camps to attend. Conscientious cadets put in a lot more than 64 hours, all without pay. They were organised into companies of about 120 members. The training was limited to physical exercises, company (and sometimes battalion) drill, field training and musketry. Senior cadet training was, in effect, a substitute for recruit training.

Most CMF members were required to train for a minimum of 16 days each year, but those in the artillery and engineers had to train for 25 days, of which 17 were in camp. The light horse could only be joined if the member provided his own horse. They were paid three shillings (thirty cents) per day in their first year and four shillings (forty cents) per day thereafter. The basic wage at the time was six shillings (sixty cents) per day. After completing their last year of service, CMF members had to attend an annual unpaid muster parade.²²



Swan Hill Cadets, 1910.
(Bruce Clair)

All schools were required to join the scheme. On 31 December 1913 8044 schools were training a total of 55,850 junior cadets, and the strength of the Army rose from 19,880 in 1904 to 48,383 in 1913. It was anticipated that the strength in 1920 would reach 130,000. In addition there were 1133 rifle clubs with a membership of 47,500. These clubs were encouraged by the loan of government rifles and an annual allocation of 230 rounds per member.²³

Australia was divided into six MDs:

- 1st MD: Queensland (later included the Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea);
- 2nd MD: New South Wales;
- 3rd MD: Victoria;
- 4th MD: South Australia;
- 5th MD: Western Australia; and
- 6th MD: Tasmania.²⁴

Broken Hill was included in the 4th MD, while Wodonga was included in the 2nd. The MDs were divided into 21 infantry brigades each of four battalions (84 battalions and 215 training areas). This later became 23 brigades (92 battalions and 219 training areas), although not all brigades and battalions were raised.

The training area was the foundation of the system. The officer-in-charge (or area officer) of each training area would eventually be a member of the PMF, but most

started with a part-time officer who was paid £150 (\$300) per annum. Area officers were responsible for registration, medical examination, equipment and allocation of cadets. They gave some instruction, but were assisted by PMF WOs or non-commissioned officers (NCO) from a pool that grew to 400. They were also assisted by compulsory trainees who won promotion.

Area officers volunteered for the task and attended a school of instruction and testing in Albury in late 1910. All 206 who attended had previous military experience. Most held commissions, but there were some sergeants. In general they were men of some substance and position in the community, or had prospects that led them to accept the job. Although not everyone was impressed by the new officers, they did not fail.

The first parades of senior cadets were held in July 1911, comprising boys born in 1894, 1895, 1896 and 1897. In the first year of operation, 38,000 senior cadets reported for duty. This number grew to nearly 90,000 by 1914, with 55,000 junior cadets under training. Between 1911 and 1914, 28,000 boys were prosecuted for failing to register or complete their training.

In July 1912 the first CMF unit in Footscray (one company) came into being with the drafting of the 1894 quota of cadets into E Company of the 66th Infantry. In July 1913 the 1895 quota of cadets passed into the CMF, and in the 66th Infantry they formed G and H Companies. These, along with the previously formed E and F Companies and the Castlemaine and Kyneton companies of the 66th Infantry, attended the first CMF camp at Waubra near Ballarat.²⁵

One of those who commenced military involvement with the cadets was Ballarat born Leslie Morshead. He attended the appropriate courses, passed his examinations and was commissioned a lieutenant in 1908. He served in the First World War and ended the Second as a lieutenant general commanding the 1st Australian Corps.

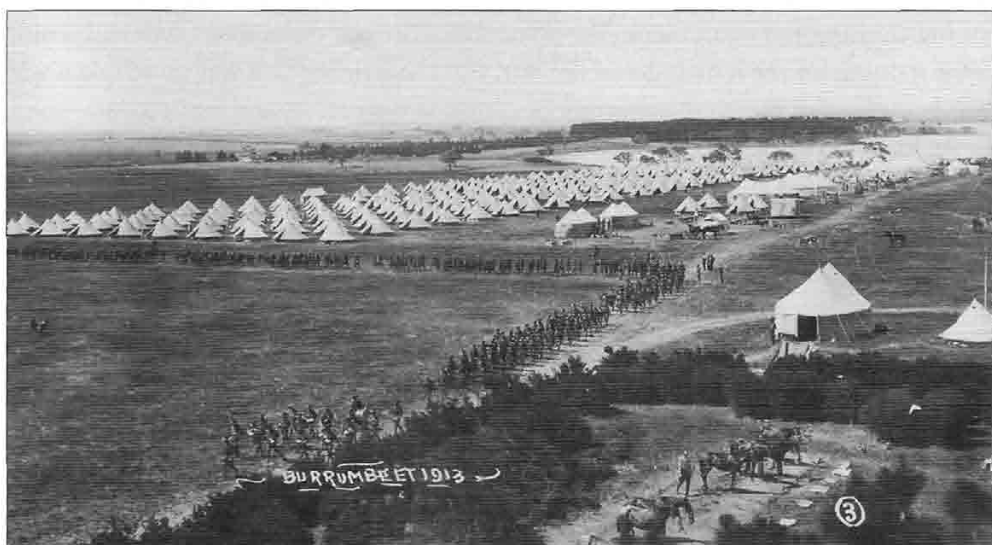
By 1912 the infantry units planned to be raised in conjunction with compulsory military service were:

1st MD:	1st to 12th Infantry;
2nd MD:	13th to 44th Infantry;
3rd MD:	45th to 73rd Infantry;
4th MD:	74th to 82nd Infantry;
5th MD:	84th to 89th Infantry; and
6th MD:	90th to 93rd Infantry. ²⁶

Note: The 83rd Infantry was not used, and 16 of the units, including the 68th Infantry, had not been raised by 1918.

The northern and western country Victorian battalions were:

66th (Mount Alexander from 1913) Infantry;
 67th (Bendigo from 1913) Infantry - included 68th Infantry;
 69th Infantry (1915);
 70th Infantry (Ballarat Regiment from 1914);
 71st (City of Ballarat from 1914) Infantry;
 72nd Infantry (1915); and
 73rd Infantry (Victorian Rangers).



The 70th and 71st Infantry at the 17th Brigade Camp at Lake Burrumbeet, 1913.
 (Mark Broemmer)

It was hoped that the training received as a cadet would be directly transferable to a soldier's military service, and that new recruits would have a higher degree of efficiency than those who had not been cadets. However, after several years of operation the scheme was clearly not working. General Sir Ian Hamilton's 1914 defence review indicated that the training received by cadets failed to produce adequate soldiers. He noted that CMF officers had complained of having received cadets who were ignorant of the rudiments of drill, or worse, so badly trained that much effort was needed to remove the faults of poor initial training.

When war with Germany was declared in 1914, the government issued mobilisation orders to 10,000 citizen soldiers, bringing the fortresses up to full strength and providing local units to repel enemy landings. The early days of August

proved to be the high point of the 'home' army's role in the First World War. Japan's declaration of war on Germany on 23 August removed the primary purpose of the CMF, deterrence of invasion. By the end of 1914 the government stood down most of the guard detachments, and artillery garrisons served at reduced levels.

Although the government's primary focus was on raising the AIF, the army's leaders intended to maintain the CMF. In November 1914 there were 41,000 men committed to overseas service, but the CMF still had an establishment of 56,000 (not including cadets and rifle clubs). By the following month over 10,000 serving soldiers had already agreed to join the AIF.

As early as 1915 the government had to abandon its intention of maintaining CMF training, and on 11 September suspended training for six months and stopped issuing clothing and equipment. The demands of the war dislocated CMF and senior cadet training for the remainder of the war, and the training that was undertaken was largely ineffective due to the shortage of qualified instructors and equipment.

In May 1916 the MB decided not to hand over the incoming quota of cadets, as ten percent had already opted for service in the AIF, and many more were likely to do so. The Board decided that it would not recommend the resumption of CMF training as the instructors were so young and inexperienced that their training ability would be poor. The army did resume training for the 1917-18 cycle, and the infantry attended eight day camps of continuous training, half the days required by regulations. Military leaders realistically did not expect many positive benefits from the 'home' army. The IG reported to the minister for Defence, Senator George Pearce, that more than 75 percent of the officers and 50 percent of the other ranks (ORs) of the CMF were serving abroad, and those who remained had done little training in three years. He suggested that it was vital to keep the units in existence, because as long as the structure remained it would be possible to bring them back up to strength.

In 1918 Pearce decided to re-number CMF units to align with the AIF unit raised in the area, as this would 'preserve the traditions and honours won by units of the AIF on active service, and, so far as possible, ... associate the records of such units with the local tradition of old militia units'.²⁷ Pearce put aside all the procedural problems and objections, as the CMF units themselves were only recently raised, and the universal training scheme units were given the number of an AIF unit that corresponded most closely with their recruiting district. The redesignation was a way to have something left to build on at war's end.

The universal training scheme had a chequered history. While some objected to doing the training, most participated with vigour, and many who served in the 1st AIF had done some training through the scheme. The junior cadets were abolished in June 1922, and universal military training and the holding of military camps were suspended from 1 November 1929, pending a general review of defence policy.²⁸

Endnotes

- 1 ABS, p8.
- 2 ABS, p8.
- 3 Calder, *Heroes and Gentlemen*, p119.
- 4 Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p64.
- 5 ABS, p10.
- 6 Calder, p119.
- 7 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Sir Edward Hutton.
- 8 Calder, p123.
- 9 Odgers, *Army Australia*, pp45-46.
- 10 Austin, *Bold Steady Faithful*, p43.
- 11 NAA website/Courtney/1899-1914.
- 12 *Military Forces List 1904*, p50.
- 13 *Commonwealth Gazette* 64 of 10 November 1906.
- 14 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, pp3-45 and 3-47.
- 15 Calder, p129.
- 16 Calder, p131.
- 17 *Military Forces List 1908*, p54.
- 18 *Ballarat Courier* 29 and 31 October 1907.
- 19 Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p75.
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- 21 Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p74.
- 22 Barrett, *Falling In*, p12.
- 23 Odgers, p49.
- 24 Palazzo, *Defenders of Australia*, p54.
- 25 Footscray Historical Society.
- 26 Kuring, *Red Coats to Cams*, p40.
- 27 Palazzo, p75.
- 28 NAA Fact Sheet 160.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR BATTALIONS

A day before war was declared on 4 August 1914 the Australian government offered Britain an expeditionary force of 20,000 troops, ready to sail within six weeks. Based on experience in South Africa, the government offered an infantry division and a light horse brigade to operate as a national unit under Australian command. Recruiting began on 14 August 1914. An additional infantry brigade was provided from men who volunteered in the first rush.

When the war started the Australian Army included the PMF, the CMF and a Reserve Force. The PMF had 2989 members on five years full-time duty, insufficient to staff the proposed force. The CMF had a field force establishment of 16,000 in peace and 32,000 in war, and a garrison force establishment of 9000 in peace and 16,000 in war. The reserve was made up of rifle club members.¹

The Defence Act could not require members to serve overseas unless they specifically volunteered to do so. As the CMF battalions of 1914 could not go to war as battalions, a separate volunteer force was raised: the AIF. It was made up of a mixture of CMF volunteers with no overseas experience, serving and former members with South African and earlier experience and civilians with no military experience.

By the end of 'the war to end all wars' Australia had enlisted 416,809 men and women of whom 331,781 served overseas.² Many CMF members continued to serve in that force, with some joining the AIF later in the war, while others remained in Australia for the duration. Still others, who served overseas but were wounded and repatriated to Australia, returned to the CMF and served the rest of the war there.

The 1st Australian Division, raised in 1914, was made up of three brigades, each of four battalions. The 1st Brigade was raised in NSW and comprised the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions. The 2nd Brigade was raised in Victoria and comprised the 5th and 6th Battalions from Melbourne, the 7th Battalion from the Bendigo to Mildura area and the 8th Battalion from Ballarat and western Victoria. The 3rd Brigade was raised in the 'outer states', with the 9th Battalion from Queensland, 10th Battalion from SA, 11th Battalion from WA and the 12th Battalion half from Tasmania and a quarter each from SA and WA. The 4th Brigade, which did not

include a country Victorian battalion, was also formed, and became part of the New Zealand and Australian (NZ&A) Division.

The 1st Division and the 4th Brigade sailed in October 1914. After a brief stop in Albany, where a convoy of 26 Australian and ten New Zealand troopships with 21,431 men and 7882 horses assembled, they arrived in Egypt on 2 December.³

After the departure of the 1st Division and the 4th Brigade, more men were offering their services than were needed to reinforce troops in the field. These volunteers were formed into companies at the Broadmeadows Infantry Depot north of Melbourne. The 3rd LH Brigade embarked in February 1915, while the 2nd Division was formed in March. Following the format of the 1st Division, the 5th Brigade was raised in New South Wales, the 6th Brigade in Victoria and the 7th Brigade in the 'outer states', while the 4th LH Brigade was also formed in Victoria. The 21st, 22nd and 23rd Battalions of the 6th Brigade were from Victoria, while the 24th Battalion was originally to be from SA, but formed as a Victorian battalion one week before sailing.

The 21st Battalion, which was nominally aligned with the 73rd Infantry (Victorian Rangers), was recruited from all over the state. The 23rd Battalion was nominally aligned with Geelong. The later enlistment of these men, and their average age of 29, would seem to indicate a more considered decision to enlist that set them apart from those who enlisted amid the heady enthusiasm of late 1914.

On 2 February 1916 Australia decided to raise a 3rd Division. The division was formed with the 9th Brigade comprising NSW battalions, the 10th Brigade three country Victorian battalions: the 37th (Seymour), 38th (Bendigo) and 39th (Ballarat), and the 40th (Tasmania) Battalion; and the 11th Brigade the 41st and 42nd (Queensland) Battalions, 43rd (SA) Battalion and 44th (WA) Battalion. Monash commanded the division, while the 10th Brigade was commanded by Colonel (later Brigadier General) Walter McNicholl (a former Geelong member of 70th (Ballarat Regiment) Infantry). The 3rd Division used the same colour patches as those of the 1st, except that they were elliptical in shape.

During the doubling of the AIF in Egypt in February 1916, the 4th and 5th Divisions were raised. There were no battalions from country Victoria in the 4th Division, but two, the 59th and 60th, were raised in the 5th Division on cadres from the 7th and 8th respectively. Half of their members were Gallipoli veterans, and the other half fresh reinforcements from Australia. Most of both groups were Victorians. Brigadier General Irving, who had served as adjutant and acting CO of the Victorian Rangers, raised the 15th Brigade. On 2 March Irving was transferred to temporary command of the 14th Brigade and handed command of the 15th to the former CO of the 7th Battalion, Harold (Pompey) Elliott. The colour patches for the 14th and 15th Brigades were those for the 1st and 2nd Brigades respectively, worn vertically with the battalion colour on the left and the brigade colour on the right.

The 1st Division landed at ANZAC on 25 April 1915. Early in May the 2nd Brigade was transferred to Cape Helles for the attack on Krithia, where the brigade lost almost a third of its strength. In August the 1st and 2nd Brigades fought at the battle of Lone Pine. The division served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.

In March 1916 the 1st Division sailed for France and the Western Front. Its first major actions in France were at Pozières and Mouquet Farm in the Somme Valley, where it fought between 23 and 27 July and from 15 to 21 August. After Pozières the division occupied trenches in the Ypres salient in Belgium, before returning to the Somme. It saw out the horrendous winter of 1916-17 rotating between training, working parties and duty in the trenches.

In early 1917 the Germans withdrew to the Hindenburg Line and the division participated in the brief advance that came to a halt before Bullecourt. The 1st Division did not return to action until the Ypres offensive of September and October, where it fought major battles at Menin Road on 20 September and Broodseinde on 4 October, and then spent much of ensuing winter in the Ypres mud.

In March and April 1918 the division helped stop the German spring offensive in northern France. At one time it provided the only formed body of troops between the Germans and Calais. With an extended front to defend, the 7th and 8th battalions withstood the weight of the German Army attack until the remainder of the division arrived the next day.

The 1st Division later participated in the Allies' great offensive of 1918 that began with the Battle of Amiens on 8 August. The advance by British and Empire troops on that day was the greatest success in a single day on the Western Front, one that German General Erich Ludendorff described as the 'black day of the German Army in the history of this war'.⁴ Monash attacked with the whole Australian Corps, with the 1st Division being the reserve division, available for exploitation. The division continued operations until late September 1918.

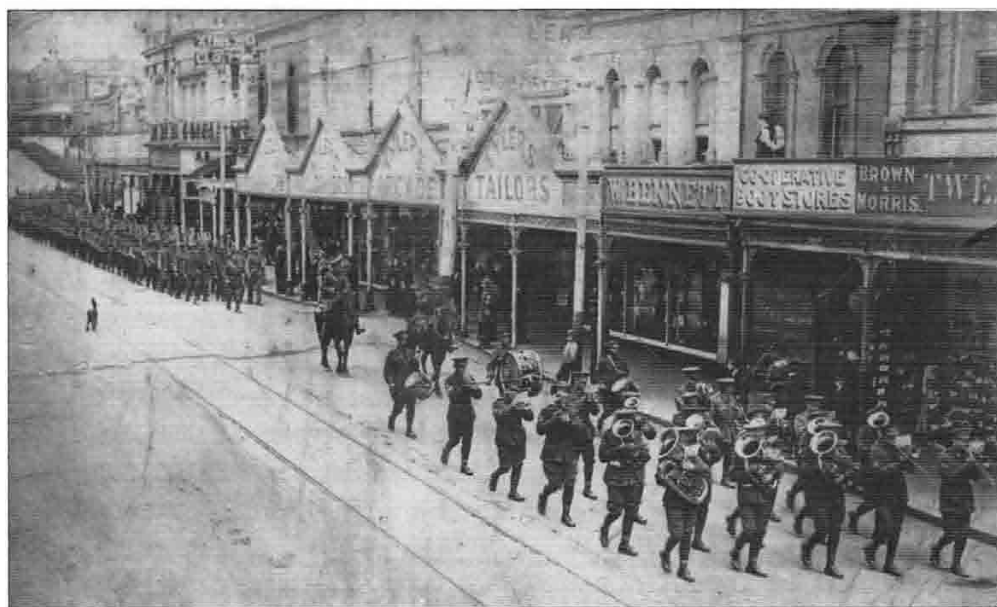
The 2nd Division moved to Gallipoli in late August/early September 1915. After the evacuation, the division moved to France, where it fought at Pozières and around Mouquet Farm. In early May 1917 it fought in the 2nd Battle of Bullecourt, and then in October participated in the advance that captured Broodseinde, east of Ypres. Like the rest of the AIF, the division saw out the year recuperating from the trials of the Ypres sector.

After helping to blunt the German spring offensive of April 1918, the 2nd Division participated in the battles that marked the beginning of Germany's defeat – Hamel, Amiens and Mont St. Quentin. It fought its last battle around the town of Beaufort over 3-4 October 1918, and was resting when the armistice was signed.

The 3rd Division sailed for Europe in June 1916, arriving in Britain in August. It trained on Salisbury Plain before crossing to France. On 1 December 1916 the

division moved into the trenches of the Western Front at Houplines, relieving the New Zealanders. During the harsh winter of 1916-17 the 3rd Division was heavily involved in raiding the German trenches. The division fought in its first major battle at Messines, in Belgium, over 7-9 June 1917. It fought in another two major attacks in this sector, at Broodseinde on 4 October and Passchendaele on 12 October. Broodseinde was a success, reflecting careful planning and preparation. Passchendaele, however, was a disaster, executed in haste in horrendous conditions brought on by torrential rain.

Belgium remained the focus of the 3rd Division's activities until it was rushed south in late March 1918 to meet the German spring offensive. The division was in the attack on 8 August 1918. It continued to play an active role throughout August and early September in the advance along the Somme Valley. The 3rd Division participated in its last major action of the war between 29 September and 2 October 1918, as part of the Australian-American operation that breached the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line along the St Quentin Canal. In early October it was withdrawn from the line.



The 39th Battalion AIF marches down Sturt Street and along Bridge Street Ballarat in 1916, prior to sailing for England with the 3rd Division.
(Ballarat Gold Museum)

The 5th Division arrived in northern France on 9 July. Ten days later it became embroiled in its first major engagement on the Western Front, Fromelles. This was a disaster, with some 5533 Australian casualties. Despite their grievous casualties, the units of the 5th Division manned the front line around Fromelles for a further two months, but saw little further offensive action in 1916.

The division spent the winter of 1916-17 rotating in and out of the front line. In March 1917 it followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, but was spared having to assault that position. It did, however, defend gains made during the 2nd Battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 5th Division's major battle there was at Polygon Wood on 26 September. This attack was a success, a product of the systematic way in which the early actions during the third battle of Ypres were fought.

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, and the major German offensive on the Western Front in late March 1918, the 5th Division moved to defend the sector around Corbie. During this defence some battalions participated in the counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April. When the Allies launched their own offensive around Amiens on 8 August 1918, the division was among those in action. It fought around Peronne in the first days of September and entered its last battle of the war on 29 September, mounted with the 3rd Division, in co-operation with American forces, to break through the formidable German defences along the St Quentin Canal. The division withdrew to rest on 2 October, and was still resting when the war ended.

At 11am on 11 November 1918, the guns fell silent. The armistice was followed by the Peace Treaty of Versailles signed on 28 June 1919.

Between March and May 1918, the losses in the Australian divisions far outweighed the reinforcements and wounded returning to their units. The government agreed that some battalions would need to be disbanded. However, attempts were made to retain some of the *esprit de corps* built up in those battalions. By September 1918 the strength of most battalions was so low that orders were given to disband more battalions. The men of three battalions, including the 21st, mutinied on 25 September after being ordered to disband and reinforce their sister battalions. By day's end the order was withdrawn.⁵

At a battalion parade on 25 September the 60th Battalion was also ordered to disband, and the men mutinied. After being addressed by Elliott, they complied with the order and the battalion disbanded on 27 September 1918. The following day Elliott found out that the order to disband the other battalions had been rescinded. The actions of the 60th Battalion are indicative of the high regard in which Elliott was held, and of its high standard of discipline. It was the only Australian battalion ordered to disband in September 1918 that did so.

At war's end there were approximately 165,000 men to be returned to Australia. They had enlisted for the duration of the war 'and six months beyond', so their return was urgent, however, it was a long and tedious process. Selection for return was based on length of service, family responsibilities and assured employment. Quotas of 1000 men per division (one train or ship load organised as a battalion) were selected, and as ships became available, they left after pre-embarkation leave in Britain.

As men left, battalions were reduced to company size and merged with the other battalions of their brigade forming single brigade battalions. For example, by February 1919 the 7th Battalion was so reduced that it was re-formed in two companies: Number 1 Company comprising the veterans under Captain Hewlett Wright and Number 2 Company the newly arrived reinforcements under Captain Lester Kelly.⁶ On 1 March the 6th and 7th Battalions were amalgamated to form a composite battalion, A Battalion, with the 6th forming Number 1 Company and the 7th Number 2 Company. In turn, this battalion was merged with another, formed from the 5th and 8th Battalions, to form the 2nd Brigade Battalion.

The last 10,000 men were brought from France to the Australian camps on Salisbury Plain in May 1919, bringing the total there to 70,000. At the end of September 1919 there were still 10,000 men in Britain. Monash, who organised the return of the AIF to Australia, returned to Melbourne on 26 December. The AIF officially ceased to exist on 1 April 1921, and on 1 July the military hospitals in Australia passed into civilian hands.

During the First World War eight battalions raised in country Victoria served overseas. Short summaries of their service, prepared by the Australian War Memorial, and reproduced with the Memorial's permission, are at Appendix 4. The experiences of individuals who served in those battalions are recorded below.

On 19 August 1914 the 7th Battalion assembled for the first time as a unit at Broadmeadows, north of Melbourne. The battalion took in the north-western suburbs of Melbourne and the country 65th, 66th, 67th and 68th Infantry areas. Captain Herbert Hunter from Bendigo's 67th Infantry was the OC of G Company. He was killed at Krithia on 8 May 1915. Captain Ivie Blezard, from the 67th Infantry, commanded H Company. After the war he commanded the 38th Battalion in Bendigo.⁷

The 7th Battalion was raised in August 1914 by Elliott, formerly CO of the 58th Infantry (Essendon Rifles). Another 58th Battalion member was Ballarat-born Albert Coates. He was serving as a medic with the Benalla company of the 58th Battalion, and enlisted as Regimental Number 23. After qualifying as a doctor after the war, Coates served for three and a half years as a prisoner of war (PoW) in Japanese hands during the Second World War, and is credited with saving hundreds, if not thousands, of lives.

After Elliott was wounded at ANZAC, Major Robert Gartside of the 8th Battalion was promoted to temporary lieutenant colonel and took command of the 7th. Gartside died on 8 May during the 2nd Battle of Krithia. Major Alfred Jackson, previously with the 64th Infantry (City of Melbourne Regiment) and the 58th Infantry, commanded the battalion temporarily from 10 September until 7 December.

Father Joseph Hearn was the 7th Battalion chaplain. On Gallipoli he showed continuous courageous devotion to duty attending the wounded and dying. When he left the battalion in late 1916 he was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for constant devotion to duty while under fire in France. He was 62 years of age and never had a day's illness in his time with the battalion.⁸

In the 'doubling of the AIF' that took place in Egypt early in 1916, Elliott was promoted to brigadier general and given command of the 15th Brigade, comprising the 57th, 58th, 59th and 60th Battalions. The 7th Battalion provided officers, NCOs and men for the newly formed 59th Battalion.

Major Carl Jess from Monash's 4th Brigade, and formerly the Administrative and Instructional (A and I) Staff, commanded the 7th Battalion from 28 February 1916. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel on 12 March. The battalion entered the front line trenches for the first time on 3 May. On 16 June Jackson was transferred to command the 60th Battalion and was promoted to lieutenant colonel. A new CO, Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Herrod (formerly 24th Signals Company, Australian Engineers), arrived on 10 May from the 2nd Battalion, and commanded the battalion for the remainder of the war. During the war the 7th Battalion lost 1045 men killed and 2076 wounded (including gassed). The battalion was awarded four VCs for the Battle of Lone Pine over the period 9-10 August 1915.⁹

The 8th Battalion was raised in August 1914 by Lieutenant Colonel William Bolton, former CO of the 70th Infantry (Ballarat Regiment). The battalion consisted largely of members of the CMF and civilians from country and city areas without military training, with a small leavening of South African war veterans and some Indian Army men. The COs of two other country CMF units, Gartside, former CO of the 66th (Mount Alexander) Infantry from Castlemaine and Field, also from Castlemaine (formerly 66th Infantry and CO 8th AIR), reverted to the rank of major to join the battalion. Gartside became the 2 IC.

On 16 May 1915 the battalion was commanded by Captain Graham Coulter after the heavy casualties at Krithia, while Bolton's failing health caused him to resign on 18 May. On 20 May Lieutenant Colonel Charles Brand took over as CO. He was awarded a DSO for his work on 25 April organising leaderless men into fighting formations.¹⁰

The 8th Battalion provided officers, NCOs and men for the 60th Battalion. Field, then OCA Company of the 8th Battalion, was given command of the 60th Battalion

on 21 February and promoted to lieutenant colonel on 12 March.¹¹ Lieutenant Colonel Coulter commanded the battalion from 10 July 1916. When he was posted to the 1st Training Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel John Mitchell (73rd Infantry), a former platoon commander in E Coy, took command of the battalion on 14 April 1917.¹² Later in the war, while the battalion was out of the front line, Mitchell temporarily commanded the 2nd Brigade from 7 to 13 October 1918.

Corporal Cyril Kenyon from Dimboola had served with the 73rd Infantry. In August 1918, when he was commanding two sections of Lewis guns, he reconnoitred and located two enemy machine guns (MG), which were then destroyed, and engaged several enemy parties by himself. He was awarded a Military Medal (MM) for his actions.¹³

The battalion was awarded three VCs during the war and it can truly be said that every member of the battalion lived up to the motto *Nullis Secundus*, and their service under their red and white colour patch earned them the name of the 'Old Blood and Bandages'. Over 10,000 reinforcements passed through the ranks of the 8th Battalion, 8500 being 'bayonet men'. Of these, 877 were killed and 2410 wounded (including gassed).

The 21st Battalion was raised under Lieutenant Colonel John Hutchinson, who enlisted in Warracknabeal in western Victoria, with Major Ernest Harris of Donald, also in western Victoria, as his 2 IC. Other officers included Captain Frederick Forbes and Lieutenant Bernard Duggan of St Arnaud, who both later commanded the battalion, and Major William Bateman who later commanded the 19th Battalion.¹⁴

The 21st Battalion arrived in France in March 1916. In April it was the first Australian battalion to commence active operations on the Western Front. Forbes took command of the battalion on 1 August 1916, while in February 1917 Duggan took temporary command for a short while and then on 15 June was promoted to lieutenant colonel and given command of the battalion.

Leslie Brookes was the headmaster at Horsham High School. His family lived in Ballarat when he sailed for Gallipoli as a sergeant with the 7th Battalion. He was commissioned into the 21st Battalion, but was evacuated from Gallipoli, returning to Australia. He sailed for France as a reinforcement for the 21st Battalion. As the quartermaster (QM) and an honorary lieutenant, he was twice recommended for a Mention in Despatches (MID), and in May 1918 he was MID. Near the end of the war he transferred to the 24th Battalion, before returning to Australia in 1919.¹⁵

The 21st Battalion fought its last battle at Montbrehain on 5 October. The following day it became the last Australian battalion to withdraw from active operations on the Western Front and was disbanded on 13 October 1918. During the war it lost 872 men killed and 2434 wounded (including gassed), and was awarded one VC.

The 23rd Battalion, which was nominally aligned with Geelong, was raised in March 1915 under Lieutenant Colonel George Morton of the 71st (City of Ballarat)

Infantry, as the third battalion of the 6th Brigade. Other officers included Major George Knox and Captain William Brazenor, both of whom later commanded the battalion.¹⁶

The RSM was Tom Millar and the regimental quartermaster sergeant (RQMS) was George Morrell, who ended the war as a lieutenant.¹⁷ During initial training at Broadmeadows the CO allowed recruits from Eaglehawk leave to attend the Bendigo Easter Show on Easter Monday. The battalion took pre-embarkation leave of four days from 24 April and on the 8 May entrained at Broadmeadows for Port Melbourne and Gallipoli.¹⁸

With Morton ill, Knox took command on 20 August 1915. Major Wilfred Fethers, 2 IC of the 24th Battalion, took over as temporary CO on 25 May 1916 after Knox was seriously injured in a fall from a horse and evacuated to Britain. Fethers was promoted to CO on 28 July, but he was wounded on 29 July and Brazenor took command. Six days after Fethers returned he was wounded again. Brazenor was promoted to temporary lieutenant colonel and given command of the battalion on 2 September, and on 2 December was confirmed as CO. By May 1917, with Brazenor undertaking several stints as acting commander of the 6th Brigade, Major Bateman (21st and 58th Battalions) was in command.¹⁹

George Grant, from Williamstown, was RQMS of the 23rd Battalion. In March 1918 he was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) after the six months the battalion spent in the Ypres and Ploegsteert areas. His award was for accompanying supplies to the front line where he showed coolness under fire, tireless energy, a cheerful spirit and was a conscientious worker.²⁰

Bateman left the battalion in August 1918 and became CO of, successively, the 19th, 17th and finally, 20th Battalions. Brazenor returned to command of the battalion on 10 December 1918, and it disbanded in Belgium on 30 April 1919. During the war casualties amounted to 686 killed and 2317 wounded (including gassed). The battalion was awarded one VC.

The 38th Battalion was formed on 1 March 1916 at a camp established on the Epsom Racecourse at Bendigo. The CO, Lieutenant Colonel Davis, a barrister and solicitor, and 201 ORs were taken on strength that day. The foundation upon which to build the battalion was prepared by Captain Louis Smith from the 53rd (Glenferrie) Infantry. The early training was disrupted in May by a severe outbreak of meningitis in the camp, as a result of which the healthy members were transferred to a camp at Campbellfield on 5 June, where the battalion had to be rebuilt from fresh reinforcements.²¹

On 3 December 1916 Captain George Lansell, 67th (Bendigo) Infantry, OC A Company, was severely wounded and evacuated back to Australia.²² Between the World Wars Lansell commanded the 38th Battalion. Following a raid by the Germans on the trenches on 8-9 December, 2nd Lieutenant Keith Emonson, who

left Australia as a sergeant, was the first 3rd Division soldier awarded the MC while Private Justinus Meyerink of Sea Lake was awarded the MM.²³

During the battle of Messines three officers, including Fairweather, were awarded MCs, while 13 ORs were awarded the MM.²⁴ Fairweather was later awarded a Bar to his MC, but was killed just six weeks before war's end. On 12 May 1918 Davis was promoted to colonel to command the AIF base at le Havre. Major Geoffrey Hurry, DSO, who had been acting CO for some time, was promoted to temporary lieutenant colonel and given command of the battalion. By this time Hurry had left the battalion due to illness and was replaced by Major Arthur Maudsley (former OC D Company).

Maudsley was killed on 31 August near Clery-sur-Somme. Command of the battalion then fell to the acting adjutant, Lieutenant Harry Robbins, who had joined the battalion with the rank of sergeant, having been a lieutenant in the 62nd Infantry (Carlton Rifles), and been promoted to WO RSM Class before being commissioned on 6 January 1917. Word was received that morning that Lieutenant Colonel Robert Henderson of the 39th Battalion would take dual control of the 38th and 39th Battalions, but he was just recovering from influenza, and let Robbins run the 38th Battalion. For this and other fine work, Robbins was awarded the MC.²⁵ By 7 September 1918, when the battalion next moved into the line in the Roisel-Hervilly area, Hurry was back in command.

Jess, who became honorary colonel of the 38th/7th Battalion in 1932, inspected the battalion on 19 October 1918.²⁶ Over the next few weeks sporting activities were undertaken, until on 11 November a telegram was received advising that the Armistice had been signed.

On 17 February 1919 the first draft of 14 officers, 36 NCOs and 257 men of the 38th Battalion left the French village of Vismes-au-val en route for Australia. The 38th Battalion was disbanded in April 1919. Its casualties were 499 killed, 1478 wounded (including gassed) and five PoW.²⁷

The 39th Battalion was formed on 21 February 1916 at the Ballarat Showgrounds under Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rankine, 52nd (Hobson's Bay) Infantry, and drew most of its recruits from the state's Western District. Rankine had been the CO of the 14th Battalion for a short time in August 1915. On 11 May the battalion was farewelled from Ballarat with a march and a concert at the Coliseum in Ballarat held for it by the Citizen's Committee. The address was given by Brigadier General Williams, the state commandant and a former CO of Ballarat's 'Old Third' and 'Seventh' Battalions.

On 15 February 1917 Major Henderson, 67th Infantry, formerly 2 IC of the 38th Battalion, was promoted to lieutenant colonel and took command. On 29 March 1918 he was wounded and was replaced by temporary Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Paterson (52nd Infantry) until his return on 14 June. Henderson was

killed on 29 September and Paterson, on return from his Senior Officer's Course at Aldershot, was promoted to lieutenant colonel and took command.²⁸ The 39th Battalion was disbanded in March 1919. Its casualties during the war were 405 killed and 1637 wounded (including gassed).

Between 23 to 26 February 1916 approximately 500 recruits and around half of the veteran 7th Battalion formed the 59th Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Harris, formerly 2 IC of the 21st Battalion. Reflecting the composition of the 7th Battalion, the 59th Battalion was predominantly composed of men from rural Victoria.²⁹

In the attack at Fromelles the casualties included Harris. Three privates, George Horsey, Alfred Honey and William Delaney, were awarded the MM for rescuing wounded men while under MG fire and shrapnel over two nights following the battle. Major Herbert Layh, originally of the 7th Battalion, and previously the 60th (Brunswick-Carlton) Infantry, was promoted on 27 July and took over the battalion. On 16 June 1917 Lieutenant Colonel Charles Mason took command. Lieutenant Colonel John Scanlan (58th Infantry), also originally of the 7th Battalion, and who had been temporary CO of the 57th Battalion, took command of the battalion on 6 February 1918 and commanded it until February 1919.³⁰ The 59th Battalion disbanded on 24 March 1919. Its casualties totalled 795 killed and 1691 wounded.

The 60th Battalion was raised in 1916 on a cadre from the 8th. The first CO was Lieutenant Colonel Field, an 8th Battalion officer who had taken a reduction in rank to major to serve with that battalion. He was wounded at Cape Helles on 8 March 1915. The battalion wore the 8th Battalion colour patch vertically.³¹ Lieutenant Colonel Jackson from the 7th Battalion commanded the 60th from 16 June 1916. From 1 July command of the battalion passed to Lieutenant Colonel Harry Duigan, with Jackson transferring to the 58th.³²

The 57th Battalion provided stretcher bearers to recover the dead and wounded of the 60th Battalion after Fromelles. One of them was Sergeant Simon Fraser, of Byaduk in Victoria, who left Australia as a reinforcement for the 22nd Battalion. A statue showing him carrying a 60th Battalion member back to the lines is located in the Fromelles Memorial Park in France.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Davies, who had been temporary CO of the 31st, 55th and 32nd Battalions, took command on 21 March 1917. He was replaced on 10 April by Lieutenant Colonel Norman Marshall, formerly of the 5th Battalion, who had been awarded an MC for his actions at Gallipoli.

Sergeant Stuart Harrison was a signals sergeant with the 60th Battalion when at Morlancourt, near Albert, on 4 July 1918 he maintained the telephone lines and communications during a terrific bombardment lasting most of the night. His MM recommendation reads in part that his 'courage and devotion to duty set a fine example which is worthy of recognition'. In 1917 he was awarded a Serbian Gold Medal. Layh from the 59th Battalion took command on 1 May 1918. The 60th Battalion's casualties were 701 killed and 1340 wounded (including gassed).

Endnotes

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- 6 Austin, *Our Dear Old Battalion*, p263.
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- 8 AWM Website, Honours and Awards.
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- 13 AWM Website, Honours and Awards.
- 14 AWM Website, Australian Military Units, COs, Honours and Awards.
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- 18 Austin, Ron, *Forward undeterred*, p5.
- 19 AWM Website, Australian Military Units, COs, Honours and Awards.
- 20 AWM Website, Honours and Awards.
- 21 Thomason, *Marching On*, p39.
- 22 Fairey, *The 38th Battalion*, p10.
- 23 Fairey, p11.
- 24 Fairey, p26.
- 25 Fairey, p72.
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- 28 AWM Website, Australian Military Units, COs, Honours and Awards.
- 29 Austin, *Our Dear Old Battalion*, p118.
- 30 AWM Website, Australian Military Units, COs, Honours and Awards.
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Part 1—Chapter 5
BETWEEN THE WARS

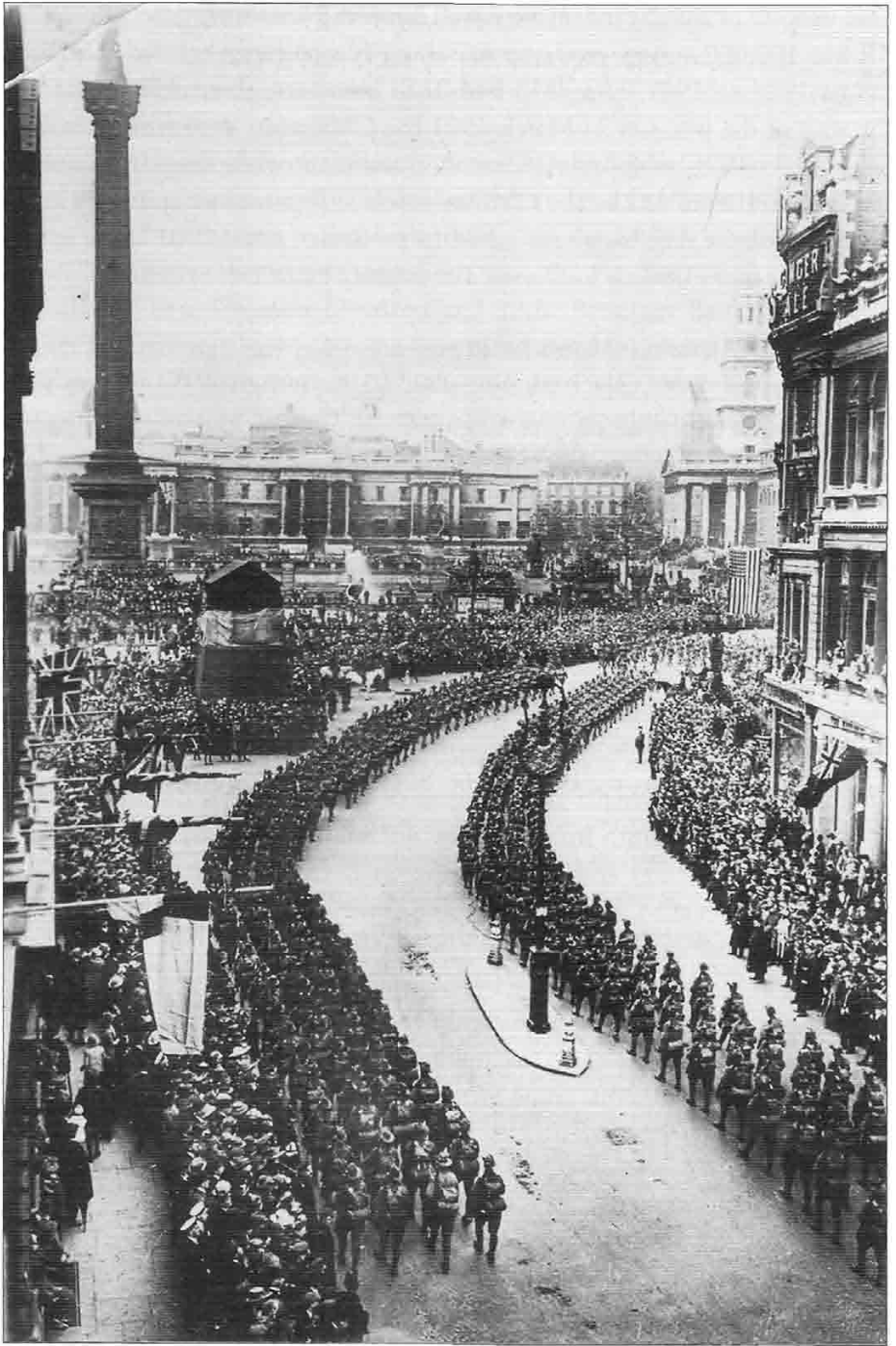
The years between the wars were difficult for the Australian Army. The public's reactions to the immense cost of the war were exhaustion, apathy and stagnation, compounded by national economic problems.

In 1918 it was decided that some means of identifying CMF battalions separately from the AIF battalions was required. All infantry battalions were redesignated as regiments. The 1st Battalion became the AIF battalion while the 4th Battalion of each regiment was for members of the AIF who had completed their service and were placed on reserve. The 2nd (and 5th if there were sufficient numbers for it to be to be raised) Battalions were for the CMF units affiliated with the AIF battalion, and the 3rd (and 6th if sufficient numbers were available) Battalions were for affiliated cadet battalions.¹

In Castlemaine the 1st Battalion 8th AIR (HQ and four companies) had become the 66th Infantry in 1912. As the 7th Battalion had been raised in its area, the 66th was redesignated the 2nd Battalion 7th Infantry Regiment, or 2nd/7th Infantry. Bendigo's 2nd Battalion 8th AIR had been designated the 67th Infantry in 1912, and as the 38th Battalion had been raised there, the 67th became the 2nd/38th Infantry.

Ballarat had four companies from the 70th Infantry in 1912, and had raised the 8th Battalion, so the 70th became the 2nd/8th Infantry, and the 65th (City of Footscray) Infantry became the 5th/8th Infantry.² Another four companies had formed the 71st Infantry. As the 39th Battalion was also raised in Ballarat, the 71st became the 2nd/39th Infantry.

The Victorian Rangers provided four and a half companies in 1912 to form the 73rd Infantry (Victorian Rangers). The Rangers provided the 21st Battalion in the First World War, so their CMF battalions became the 2nd/21st and 5th/21st Infantry. Lastly, the Rangers also provided two and a half companies to the 67th Infantry from the Bendigo area. They became the 5th/7th Infantry. At the same time, Geelong's 23rd Battalion formed the 2nd/23rd and 5th/23rd Infantry.



Australians taking part in the Victory March through Trafalgar Square
in London on 3 May 1919.
(Mark Broemmer)

The defence of the Australian mainland lay with part-time soldiers. In 1920 the CMF was 100,000 strong, made up mainly of compulsorily enlisted men born in the years 1899 to 1901. The PMF had 3150 members, about 150 stronger than at the start of the war. On 31 March 1921 the CMF units were renumbered again under MO 95/1921, adopting AIF battalion numbers, while the AIF was officially disbanded on 1 April 1921. The CMF maintained its structure and the numerical designations of the AIF battalions raised in particular areas. CMF units were also known by the name of their local area. The country battalions became:

- 7th Battalion (Mount Alexander Regiment), from the 2nd/7th and 2nd/21st Infantry;
- 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment), from the 2nd/8th and 2nd/39th Infantry and the 6th Field Ambulance;
- 21st Battalion (Victorian Rangers), from the 2nd/21st and 5th/23rd Infantry and the 19th LHR;
- 23rd Battalion (City of Geelong Regiment), from the 2nd/23rd and 5th/23rd Infantry; and
- 38th Battalion (Northern Victorian Regiment), from the 2nd/38th and 5th/7th Infantry.

The 57th Battalion was mainly a city battalion at this time, with county depots at Seymour, Shepparton, Benalla and Wangaratta, while the 59th Battalion was based in Melbourne.³ The 5th/8th Infantry, (now not related to Ballarat) joined with part of the 2nd/23rd Infantry and part of the 29th LHR to form the 32nd Battalion (Footscray Regiment).⁴ Colour patches and, in 1927, AIF Battle Honours, were granted to these battalions.

In 1921, as a result of a review by Generals Monash, Chauvel and Brudenell White, among others, the Army was again re-organised. The review recommended that the major formations be two cavalry divisions and four infantry divisions, along with three mixed brigades that could form a fifth division. On 1 May 1921 the result for the infantry was 15 brigades:

- 1st Infantry Division (1st and 8th NSW and 7th Queensland Brigades);
- 2nd Infantry Division (5th, 9th and 14th NSW Brigades);
- 3rd Infantry Division (4th, 10th and 15th Victorian Brigades); and
- 4th Infantry Division (2nd and 6th Victorian and 3rd SA Brigades).

The 11th Queensland, 12th Tasmanian and 13th WA Brigades were available to form a 5th Infantry Division.⁵

In the 1921 reorganisation battalions in the suburbs of Melbourne and in country Victoria were amalgamated. The Victorian battalions were allocated to five brigades, and although their strengths varied considerably between the wars, the catchment areas of most battalions did not.

Four of the country Victorian battalions formed the 6th Brigade, commanded by Colonel Brazenor, the former CO of the 2nd/8th and the 2nd/39th Infantry; brigade HQ was raised in Ballarat in 1921. At formation the brigade consisted of a HQ and four battalions. The original battalions were the 7th (located in Castlemaine), 8th (Ballarat), 21st (Western Districts) and 38th (Bendigo) Battalions. The 23rd Battalion was part of the Melbourne-based 2nd Brigade. Home training began in July, when the CMF numbered 127,000 and the PMF 3500. In September the organisation authorised by the MB was 144 training areas, 60 battalion areas, 15 brigades and distribution of cavalry and non-divisional units.⁶

After the international disarmament conference that met in Washington on 11 November 1921, it was decided to continue universal training, but its operation was restricted to the more populous centres and to certain quotas only. From 1 July 1922 to 30 June 1925 training in the senior cadets was limited to two quotas instead of four, and in the CMF to two quotas instead of seven. In 1922 annual training camps for cadets were cancelled due to lack of funds.⁷

Senior cadet training commenced on 1 July of the year in which cadets reached the age of 14, and on 1 July of the year they reached 18 they were transferred to the CMF, in which training continued until 30 June of the year in which they reached 26. Notwithstanding the reduction in quotas under training, all males residing within eight kilometres of a training centre were required to register during the months of January or February of the year in which they reached the age of 14. Junior cadet training of boys aged 12 and 13, which was in abeyance during the years 1922-23 and 1923-24, was also supervised by the Defence Department between 1 July 1925 and 31 October 1929.

A reduction of the peacetime establishment to 37,000 in 1922 meant that the 1921 structure was never achieved. On 1 July 1925, senior cadet training was reduced to one quota only, while CMF training was increased to three quotas. In 1927 Shepparton, Benalla and Wangaratta transferred to the 58th Battalion. Territorial titles were added to the battalions during that year.⁸

On 1 July 1929 the 6th Brigade comprised the 8th Battalion, 23rd /21st Battalion (City of Geelong Regiment) at Geelong and 38th/7th Battalion at Bendigo. In the decade prior to 1929, opposition to compulsory training scheme grew and the Labor Party, elected on a policy that included the abolition of universal training, terminated it on 1 November 1929. Henceforth, Australia had an all-volunteer nucleus Army of 35,000, primarily a part-time force reduced from a 48,000 strong CMF. The senior cadet strength was reduced from 16,000 to a peace nucleus of 7000.⁹

Under the voluntary system, personnel enlisted for an initial engagement of three years, and might be re-engaged for successive periods of two or three years until reaching retirement age. The Army's strength fell within twelve months to 27,000. In 1931, even though Japan had invaded Manchuria and international tension increased, unit strengths decreased further. The peace establishment of the CMF was further reduced to 30,000 in 1931. After 1929 the linked 38th/7th Battalion was centred on Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Golden Square, Castlemaine and Echuca. The 21st Battalion area changed from Geelong and Colac to Geelong, Colac, Terang and Camperdown under the linked 23rd/21st Battalion, while the 8th Battalion remained at Ballarat, Daylesford, Ararat and Stawell.¹⁰

The government, with severely restricted financial resources, initiated few defence improvements. While the defences of Darwin were strengthened, there was only very limited upgrading of the Army overall. Most equipment was surplus AIF stock and generally no modern equipment reached the hands of the CMF until the outbreak of the Second World War. Not until July 1936 was any emphasis placed on defence improvement, when an increase in CMF strength to 35,000 was authorised. Senior cadets remained at 7000.¹¹

In March 1933 Japan withdrew from the League of Nations because of its disapproval of her attack on China. In October that year Germany also withdrew. By 1937 Italy had annexed Abyssinia and Hitler had repudiated the Versailles Treaty. The Rome-Berlin Axis had been established and civil war had broken out in Spain. Japan used the volatile situation in Europe to defy world opinion and continue her undeclared war on China.

Strategic concerns regarding Japanese imperialist intentions were muted during the First World War years, but resurfaced in the 1920s, despite the limitations placed on Japan by the 1921-22 Washington Naval Conference. These concerns contributed to Australia's support for the establishment of a British naval base at Singapore. Australia's own coastal defences remained little changed since Kitchener's recommendations of 1910, and various attempts to improve them had failed. Little real improvement was achieved until the period 1934-37.

In 1936 the events in Europe and Asia began to concern Australia. After the lean years in the early 1930s, defence spending increased. On 9 November 1936 the 38th/7th Battalion was split, and by December CMF strength had reached the authorised target of 35,000. The 7th Battalion transferred to Mildura while the 38th covered Bendigo, Castlemaine and Echuca. There was no change to the 8th Battalion area. The 6th Brigade then consisted of the 7th Battalion (North West Murray Borderers since 1936, when the 38th/7th was unlinked), located in Mildura, 8th Battalion, 23rd/21st Battalion and 38th Battalion (Bendigo Regiment since 1936, when the 38th/7th was unlinked) in Bendigo.

While the strategic situation in Europe continued to decline, the improving economic situation in Australia allowed a three-year program of expenditure on defence to be instituted in 1938. A recruiting campaign opened in that year had increased CMF strength from 35,000 to 80,000 by March 1939.

In June 1938 British Lieutenant General E.K. Squires, CB, DSO, MC, was appointed IG and Chief of the General Staff (CGS). He recommended that a small regular army of 7500 organised as two brigades be formed to bolster the CMF in the event of war and to assist with its peace-time training. Early in 1939 the government agreed in principle to this proposal, however, following the death in April of the prime minister, Mr Joseph Lyons, Mr Robert Menzies, the new prime minister, cancelled this agreement. He hoped that war might be avoided, and was opposed to the permanent nature of the proposed new force. The size of the PMF was increased by subterfuge through the raising of the Darwin Mobile Force (DMF). Due to the restrictions of the Defence Act, only artillery could be enlisted, even though a significant portion of the 257-strong force was trained to fight as infantry.

In the late 1930s the 7th Battalion had depots at Mildura, Red Cliffs and at Wentworth in NSW. The 8th Battalion had depots in Ballarat, Ararat, Stawell and Daylesford. The 23rd/21st Battalion served Geelong, Colac, Camperdown and Terang. The 38th Battalion was at Bendigo, Castlemaine and Echuca.

The biggest changes in the country area between the wars were to the 58th Battalion, which moved from Moonee Ponds, Shepparton, Benalla and Wangaratta in 1931 to a city battalion on 1 October 1938, and the 59th Battalion, which changed from Coburg, Westgarth and Brunswick in 1931 to a country battalion based in Wangaratta (HQ), Shepparton, Numurkah, Beechworth, Rutherglen and Benalla.¹² The territorial title Hume Regiment was adopted when the 59th became a country battalion in 1931, because it drew its members from country covered by the explorers Hume and Hovell, and the Hume Highway ran through the battalion area, while the regimental motto *Fidelis et Audax* was also adopted. The Battle Honours of the 59th Battalion AIF were approved. On 1 October 1938 the 59th Battalion had its HQ at Wangaratta (formerly the 58th Battalion HQ), and elements at Shepparton, Numurkah, Beechworth, Rutherglen and Benalla. Its strength at this time was 230 all ranks.

On 21 December 1938 the first of several new training centres was opened at Corowa, followed by Bright, Euroa, Tatura, Murchison, Albury and Yarrawonga. The first camp for the reorganised battalion started on 3 April 1939 at Seymour. The strength was 970 all ranks and activity was confined to recruit training for the full eight days. In October new centres opened at Berrigan, Finley, Tocumwal and Cobram, while the 38th Battalion Kyabram detachment was transferred to the 59th. During the period 1938-40, the honorary colonel of the battalion was the IG, Squires, but he died suddenly in 1940.

Before the outbreak of war, Australia-wide the CMF had raised the infantry component of five divisions. On 2 September 1939 the governor general, Lord Gowrie, VC, PC, CMG, CB, DSO, issued a proclamation of the existence of war or of a danger thereof, and called out the CMF for war service. On 13 October 1939 the organisation of the AMF into commands came into operation. The objectives of the new organisation were:

- (a) to bring peace organisation into line with war organisation;
- (b) to provide for the personal and whole-time guidance and supervision, by a higher commander, of divisional and other formation commanders, on questions of training and general preparedness for war; and
- (c) to reduce the number of lower formations under the direct control of [AHQ].¹³

On 30 November 1939 a proclamation was issued under the Defence Act calling upon certain personnel to enlist and serve in the defence forces. The war was upon Australia.¹⁴

Endnotes

- 1 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p3-51.
- 2 Kuring, *Red Coats to Cams*, p108.
- 3 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p3-55.
- 4 Festberg, *The Lineage of the Australian Army*, p92.
- 5 Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, p91.
- 6 Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, p99.
- 7 Kuring, p94.
- 8 Festberg, p82ff.
- 9 Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, p110.
- 10 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p3-57.
- 11 AWM Website, Military Defence.
- 12 *History of the 59th Battalion*, p16.
- 13 AWM Website Wars, 1939-45, account of part played by Australian military forces and chronology.
- 14 AWM Website, Wars, 1939-45.

Part 1—Chapter 6

COUNTRY VICTORIAN CMF BATTALIONS AND THE VDC IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

At the outbreak of war in September 1939 Australia possessed a partly trained CMF of 80,000 men supplemented by a small force of permanent soldiers and officers of the Staff Corps.¹ Administration of the Australian Army in 1939 was through eight commands and MDs, which were largely based on state boundaries:

Command/MD		HQ Location
Northern Command	Queensland	Brisbane
Eastern Command	New South Wales	Sydney
Southern Command comprising:		
3rd MD	Victoria	Melbourne
4th MD	South Australia	Adelaide
6th MD	Tasmania	Hobart
Western Command	Western Australia	Perth
7th MD	Northern Territory	Darwin
8th MD	New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland, Bougainville	Rabaul ²

Two divisions had been raised within the 3rd MD in 1921, and these still existed in 1939. To delineate the divisional areas the state was divided north to south between Melbourne and just east of Echuca. The 3rd Division was allocated the east of the state and the 4th Division the west. On 3 September 1939, the country infantry battalions in the 3rd Division were:

4th Infantry Brigade: HQ Melbourne:
 22nd Battalion (South Gippsland Regiment): Leongatha.
 10th Infantry Brigade: HQ Caulfield East:
 37th Battalion (East Gippsland Regiment): Sale; and
 52nd Battalion (Gippsland Regiment): Dandenong.

The country infantry battalions in the 4th Division were:

6th Infantry Brigade: HQ Melbourne:

7th Battalion (North West Murray Borderers): Mildura;

8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment): Ballarat;

23rd/21st Battalion (City of Geelong Regiment): Geelong; and

38th Battalion (Bendigo Regiment): Bendigo.

The 2nd Infantry Brigade, with its HQ in Melbourne, comprised only city battalions.³

Early in the war recruiting for the 2nd AIF was limited to quotas of 50 percent serving CMF members, 25 percent former CMF members and 25 percent men without military training.⁴ In October 1939 conscription of men known as 'universal trainees' was re-introduced for home defence to boost CMF numbers, which were being reduced by recruits for the AIF. The first conscripts were unmarried men who turned 21 during 1940. The aim was to provide a CMF strength of 75,000 volunteers and conscripts. In May 1941 transfers from the CMF to the AIF were curtailed, as 'sufficient reinforcements had already been acquired'.⁵

In 1941, 46,500 men were on full-time duty in Victoria. The 4th Division at Frankston had the 2nd Brigade at Mount Martha and the 6th Brigade at the new Balcombe Camp near there. Retained as a reserve, the 3rd Division had its 4th Brigade at Albury and its 10th and 15th Brigades at Seymour.⁶

The CMF was increased in strength when the 10th, 11th and 12th Infantry Divisions were added to the existing 1st to 5th Divisions. In 1943 a change in legislation enabled CMF units to fight outside mainland Australia and the territory of Papua/New Guinea (PNG).⁷ Along with the 2/7th and 2/8th Battalions AIF, three of the five country Victorian CMF battalions (7th, 8th and 58th/59th) fought overseas in the South West Pacific Area, while the others were disbanded to reinforce CMF and AIF battalions.⁸

The CMF was constantly drained to support the AIF, and usually it was the better soldiers who left. Experienced AIF leaders were posted to CMF units later, but this had limited success. There were bad feelings between the two parts of the Army, mainly from the AIF towards the CMF, whom they called 'chocos', short for 'chocolate soldiers'. The AIF's opinion of the 'chocos' changed after they saw what the CMF achieved at Milne Bay and Kokoda.⁹ During the war 2725 men from the PMF and 207,041 CMF members joined the AIF.¹⁰

After the opening of recruiting for the AIF, the 7th Battalion, like most CMF units that were then limited to service in Australia and PNG, had many members transfer. In October 1939 the CMF was called up in two drafts of 40,000 men for 30 days service, with the 7th Battalion in camp at Mount Martha. In early 1940 the battalion went into camp at Balcombe for 90 days.¹¹

The CO, Lieutenant Colonel Fred Goucher, retired and Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Conran took command from February until June 1940. He was then posted to command the 2nd Brigade Training Battalion at Balcombe. Conran had served with the 71st Infantry in Ballarat, the 23rd Battalion and the 5th/14th Infantry before joining the 7th Battalion. He was transferred to the 39th Battalion as its first CO, and deployed to Port Moresby with the 39th.¹²

CMF units were brought up to strength with universal trainees. Most of those allocated to the 7th Battalion were from the Sunraysia district, but others came from Nhill, Hopetoun, Warracknabeal, Rainbow, Jeparit, Donald, Murtoa, Minyip, Rapinyup and Horsham. There were also some from Maryborough and Kyneton.¹³ The uniform was changed from the CMF pattern to the AIF pattern, with the only difference being that AIF members wore a metal Australia insignia on their epaulets.

Like many CMF battalions the 7th saw service initially on garrison duty, then later against the Japanese. The battalion trained in Victoria at Hallam, Balcombe and later at Seymour, where on 13 April 1941 it went into camp at Nagambie Road, north of Seymour. It consisted of a HQ, HQ Company, four rifle companies and a support company. At the end of the camp most of the officers and NCOs were put on full-time duty and transferred to Balcombe on recruit training duties. By August the CMF had a strength of 173,000, of whom 45,000 were on full-time duty. During 1941 some battalion members attended an NCO School at Balcombe.

The 7th Battalion was in camp there when the Japanese entered the war, and by 15 December 1941 had moved into a defensive position at Dandenong. Battalion strength was then 32 officers and 376 ORs. Troops came and left at a fast rate, while the trained soldiers put up defensive works of weapon pits, wire entanglements and trip wires. On 25 January 1942, 440 ORs marched out to Ballarat's 8th Battalion, and by 2 February all 18-year-olds were transferred to Bendigo's 38th Battalion. On 5 February the battalion received its first group of AIF reinforcements.

About that time news came of an imminent move. The battalion was prepared, and was bolstered by men transferred from battalions such as the 5th, 6th, 14th, 23rd/21st, 32nd and 46th also located at Balcombe. Movement order 'Overland' saw the battalion proceed by rail to the 7th MD. By this time it was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Sadler, DSO, MC, VD.

Sadler accompanied the first draft, which departed Dandenong on 16 February 1942. They travelled via Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, Adelaide, Terowie and Quorn. On 25 February, just days after the first Japanese bombing, the advance party reached their destination south of Darwin, to be attached to HQ 23rd Brigade, formerly of the 8th Division. This brigade originally consisted of the 2/21st, 2/22nd and 2/40th Battalions, which by then had either perished or been captured in Ambon, Rabaul or Timor, or were fighting for their lives behind enemy lines. The other new battalions in the brigade were the 8th Battalion and the 27th Battalion from SA.¹⁴

By 29 February the battalion had completed the 4000 kilometre journey, the last elements being welcomed to Darwin by a severe tropical storm. The 7th Battalion quickly prepared its camp and commenced training. On 24 March it provided work parties at the Darwin docks. It moved closer to Darwin, where further defensive works were constructed. By this time the battalion was under command of the 2 IC, Major William Osmond, as the CO was acting brigade commander.

In early April Major General Edmund Herring took command of the renamed Northern Territory Force, which included the 3rd and 23rd Brigades, and by May also included the 19th Brigade.

In late April the battalion moved south to a previously used camp, which gave the members a little luxury after the privations of Darwin. The area became Livingstone Field, and the battalion again moved, this time to the Bagot Road area adjacent to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base in Darwin. With the CO and 2 IC both posted out, Major John Henry was posted in as 2 IC and acting CO until Lieutenant Colonel John Wilmoth took command in April. The 7th Battalion moved several times to different locations around Darwin, undertaking training, exercises and work parties. After 19 months in the Darwin area, during which there had been 63 air raids, the battalion moved to the Daly River area in April 1943. After a few days rest it headed to Melbourne and leave.

Enlistments from the CMF into the AIF were stopped in January 1942. Once this ban was revoked, members of CMF battalions again began enlisting into the AIF, however, they remained with their CMF unit. On 3 April 1943 the 7th Battalion reached the required 75 percent of AIF enlistments and was designated the 7th Australian Infantry Battalion (AIF). Battalion strength was 25 officers and 482 ORs (AIF) and 3 officers and 162 ORs (CMF).¹⁵

With the move of the war away from Australia came a reduction in the size of the Army. There was talk of the 7th Battalion being disbanded, but with the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Norris from the 2/6th Battalion as CO in October 1943, it lived on.¹⁶ After leave and reassembly at Watsonia in Melbourne, the battalion moved to the Atherton Tablelands. This move was completed by 25 November 1943 and jungle training commenced.

After Christmas, which was a great improvement on the previous one spent in the Northern Territory, the battalion participated in the New Year's Day 3rd Division Sports Meeting and won the championship. With reinforcements arriving in the New Year, strength had grown to 36 officers and 737 ORs. After more than two years in training, the battalion finally received the news that it was moving overseas. On 24 April 1944 the 7th Battalion sailed from Cairns, reaching Lae on 2 May. After a short stay there the battalion moved to Wau, arriving by 1 June.

The 23rd Brigade relieved American garrisons in the Bougainville area, and in October the 7th Battalion moved to Treasury Island, with a company on Munro

Island. Their task was to defend the airfield and conduct surveillance on the surrounding islands. To escape the boredom and monotony, volunteers worked as crews on American patrol torpedo (PT) boats raiding Japanese-occupied islands.¹⁷

The battalion next moved to Stirling Island, with D Coy later moving to Munda. During the journey to Stirling the battalion learned of the death of Norris in an aircraft crash. He was replaced on 18 October by Lieutenant Colonel Howard Dunkley, a Creswick-born, Ballarat-educated, former member of the 8th Battalion. He was awarded an MC with the 2/6th Battalion in the Middle East and served with the 2/7th in New Guinea. In early 1945 the 23rd Brigade began moving to Bougainville, where it was responsible for the Central and Northern Sectors.¹⁸ During April the 7th Battalion progressively moved to the Australian base at Torokina on Bougainville Island.

In June the battalion began moving along the Numa Numa Trail, in the Central Sector, to Pearl Ridge where it relieved the 27th Battalion. After years of garrison duties the 7th Battalion went into combat.¹⁹ Under Dunkley's leadership the battalion dominated the Japanese and the benefit of its thorough training became apparent. Between 7 June and 15 August the battalion captured 25 Japanese positions, including Wearne's Hill, Base Point 3, Tokua, and Sisivie. By the end of the war the battalion claimed 181 Japanese killed, 17 probably killed and eleven wounded.²⁰

The battalion remained in contact with the enemy until Lieutenant General Kanda signed the surrender terms on 8 September. By 16 September the 7th Battalion had moved back to Torokina and was transferred to Fauro Island to help guard 25,000 Japanese prisoners, concentrated there so they could be repatriated to Japan. In December 1945 Lieutenant Colonel Peter Webster became the last CO.²¹

With the war over, the battalion prepared to repatriate its members. The system used considered the number of points a member had earned, based on such factors as length of service, marital status and possibly occupation. On 10 October 1945 the first of the battalion's men marched in to the 7th Brigade holding camp for return to Australia. Over the next couple of months many members moved in and out of the 7th, 8th, and 27th Battalions sorting out leave and return to Australia.

The ranks gradually thinned as men were discharged, transferred or volunteered for the occupation of Japan. By the end of February 1946 the last of the Japanese had left Fauro and the remnants of the 7th Battalion returned to Australia in March. The battalion was disbanded on 10 March 1946, having lost 25 dead and 50 wounded. It was removed from the War Establishment of the Australian Army on 10 May 1946, having been formed on 9 November 1936.²²

In 1939, the 8th Battalion had its HQ in Ballarat, with companies in Ararat, Stawell and Daylesford. The CO was Clunes-born Ballarat College-educated Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Reed, DSO, VD, who had a distinguished career with the 51st (Albert Park) Infantry before the First World War, and at Gallipoli and on the Western Front with the 21st Battalion.



The 8th Battalion on a 30-day camp in 1939.
(Ballarat Ranger Military Museum)

During 1940 the 8th Battalion held a number of training camps. In April it went into camp with the rest of the 6th Brigade (7th and 38th Battalions) at Mount Martha. A camp was held in May 1941 at Nagambie Road, when the CO was Ballarat identity Major Stan Walker, AFC. From August to September, and again from December to January 1942, the battalion exercised at Balcombe. With Japan's entry into the war, the 8th Battalion began moving north.²³

On 19 February the battalion, now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Wallis, arrived in Darwin and went into camp at Noonamah, where it got its first taste of action as the Japanese bombed the town throughout 1942.²⁴ The 8th Battalion joined the 23rd Brigade, with the 7th and 27th Battalions. By April the battalion had another CO, Lieutenant Colonel Keith Montgomery.

In the early days after the air raids commenced, food was short. The old Ghan train could not bring enough supplies from the southern states to Alice Springs, and the road from Alice Springs to Darwin was just a track. Food was so short that there were incidents of it being taken from bombed houses.²⁵

The battalion soon moved 'up the road' to just north of Elizabeth River, a camp promptly named 'Little Ballarat'. Conditions were a little better, with some roads in the camp, but food was still scarce and the mosquitoes caused problems. The battalion moved again and dug in on high ground about 23 kilometres south of Darwin with the American 147th Field Artillery Regiment in support. This proved to be a bonus, as the Americans had more food. A few raids were carried out on their kitchen.²⁶

The 23rd Brigade stayed in Darwin until September 1943, when it moved to Melbourne for leave. After a month, the battalion again moved north, this time to the Atherton Tablelands for intensive training. From Watsonia it slowly made its way through Victoria, NSW and Cairns to a staging camp at Redlynch, where the battalion boarded a steam train and made the 328 metre climb up to the Tablelands along a railway line that had been completed in 1891. The heavily laden train could not make it to the top, so half of the carriages were disconnected and the engines made two trips to get them all up. The battalion finally arrived at its tented campsite at Kairi, past Kuranda, to commence its jungle training. Its new CO was Lieutenant Colonel Bernard Berry.²⁷

However, the 8th Battalion was destined for more garrison duties.²⁸ On 19 May 1944 it left Kairi and was transported to Cairns, from where it sailed to Lae, to work at a base supply depot.²⁹ After home leave the battalion moved to the Solomon Islands. The 23rd Brigade relieved American garrisons in nearby islands, and in October 1944 the 8th Battalion took over on Emirau Island.³⁰ Its role was to defend the airfield and conduct surveillance of the surrounding islands still occupied by the Japanese. As with the 7th Battalion, volunteers worked as crews on PT boats.³¹

In 1945 the 23rd Brigade moved to Bougainville. The 27th and 7th Battalions were the first to leave in March and April respectively, when the 8th Battalion placed a company each on Green, Treasury and Emirau Islands, while a platoon from the company on Treasury Island defended Munda.³² During June the 8th Battalion was transported to Bougainville, and by the end of the month had relieved the 31st/51st Battalion on the Bonis Peninsula in the northern sector.

Unlike the other units on Bougainville, the 8th Battalion did not go through Torokina, but directly to Soraken Peninsula, and straight into action. It was the worst time to 'blood' fresh and inexperienced troops. The Japanese had just repelled the landing at Porton Plantation, and were harassing and ambushing the Australian lines. Australian positions were regularly shelled and only towards the end of the campaign were they able to regain the initiative.

The 8th Battalion's performance was mixed and its CO was transferred for not following orders.³³ After almost six years of war the battalion finally had its first action against the Japanese on 29 June 1945 under Major Michael Moran, who administered command from 7 June.³⁴ The last CO during the battalion's active

service was Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Loughran, who had served with the 7th Battalion in Mildura before the war. He joined the battalion on 7 July 1945.³⁵

The battalion had two notable achievements. On 23 July, after successfully using a combination of active patrolling, artillery and air strikes, it captured Commo Ridge. Then on 24 July 1945 Private Frank Partridge's patrol came under heavy Japanese machine-gun, grenade and rifle fire from Japanese Base 5. For his actions that day, Partridge was awarded a VC, the only one awarded to a militiaman. Japanese Base 5 was renamed Partridge Hill.³⁶

After Japan's surrender the 8th Battalion moved back to Soraken and then to Torokina. Some members were involved in inspecting the Japanese naval base at Buka. Over time the ranks thinned, as men were discharged, transferred or volunteered for the occupation of Japan. The 8th was used as a transfer battalion, with members from other battalions discharging through it when their own units were disbanded. One such was Lieutenant Colonel Duncan Goslett from the 57th/60th Battalion, who took command on 28 November 1945.³⁷ He was present when the battalion's flag was taken down for the last time and brought it back to Australia. The 8th Battalion was disbanded on 2 May 1946, having lost 19 dead and 28 wounded.

The 23rd/21st Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Robertson, MC, VD, went into camp at Ocean Grove in April 1940. Robertson transferred to the AIF and Captain Walter Whineray took command. One of the officers at this time was Lieutenant Stuart McDonald, who as a lieutenant colonel was CO of the 8th/7th Battalion, and as a brigadier, CO of the Pentropic 2 RVR. The battalion's command passed to temporary Captain John Newstead in March 1941, and in May to Major Joseph Hall. McDonald was promoted to captain in November 1941, and on 15 December 1941 the battalion received 578 'active strength' members, mainly from towns in southwest Victoria.³⁸

In late December 1941 the 23rd/21st Battalion moved into the Geelong area. On 30 April 1942 the battalion began to feel that it was finally going into action, when it entrained at Geelong for movement to the Northern Territory, arriving at Adelaide River on 5 May. It became part of the 19th Brigade, with the 2/4th and 2/8th Battalions. On 5 June 1942 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Ainslie, who had served with the 16th Battalion and the 2/11th Battalion, took command.

In September 1942 the battalion moved from Adelaide River to Darwin for fortress defence, returning in early October. It returned to Darwin for boat training in January 1943 and to Adelaide River in February. Shortly after, the battalion moved to Berry Springs, returning to Adelaide River a week later.

Battalion members went on leave in Victoria in late June, and Ainslie left the battalion on 22 July, during the leave period. At the end of their leave, members were required to report to Watsonia in drafts. The first leave draft of 76 reported on 28 July, the second of 131 on the 29th and the third of 220 on 30 July. Under the acting

CO, Major Leonard Ralton, the battalion left for Queensland by train on 21 August, arriving at Selheim on 28 August.

Disappointingly for all the members after the training that they undertaken together, the battalion was disbanded and its members used to reinforce other units on 1 September 1943. The break up was:

51 to the 2/3rd MG Battalion;
87 to the 2/4th Pioneer Battalion;
91 to the 2/4th Battalion; and
147 to the 2/8th Battalion.

The remainder became general reinforcements attached to the 5th Australian Advanced Reinforcement Depot (ARD).³⁹



The 38th Battalion Band at Mt Martha, 1940.
(Bendigo District R&SL Museum)

Shortly after war was declared, two companies of the 38th Battalion were mobilised for garrison duties in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Their task was the security of oil storage at Port Melbourne and a radio station at St Albans. In November the battalion moved to Mount Martha, where it remained for four weeks. In March 1940 the first intake of universal trainees was received when the battalion returned to Mount Martha for three months training. An officers' and NCOs' course of six weeks duration followed at Geelong. In September the battalion re-entered camp for a further three months training, this time at Balcombe.

A further three months at Nagambie Road and Balcombe commenced in April 1941. In August the battalion returned to Nagambie Road, and after completion of three months training, all officers and NCOs and 25 percent of privates were required to remain for full-time training. Immediately after the declaration of war against Japan in December, the battalion was mobilised and transferred to Dandenong.

February 1942 saw new members join the 38th Battalion after initial training with the 6th Brigade Training Battalion at Balcombe. While at Dandenong the battalion provided platoons for garrison duties at Mallacoota and Yanakie. It moved to Gerang, near Geelong, on 18 February, then on the 13 March Routine Orders (RO) read that all 'personnel on fruit picking leave are to be recalled by 1800 hrs, 17 March 1942'. On 23 March Major Athol Teele joined the battalion as CO, and was promoted to lieutenant colonel.

On 1 April the battalion moved to Chidlow in Western Australia. Its strength on moving to Geraldton in late April was over 900 all ranks. After three months the battalion moved to Bellevue, where it replaced the 2/11th Battalion. All battalions became Australian Infantry Battalions on 12 June 1942, so the 38th became the 38th Australian Infantry Battalion. On 13 July Major Ralph Honner was posted to the battalion from the 2/11th Battalion. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel on 1 August, arrived in Port Moresby on 5 August, and joined the 39th Battalion on the Kokoda Track at Isurava on 16 August.

In late August the 38th Battalion moved to Irwin, and with Teele ill, Major Stanley Wilson assumed command. Major William Melville assumed command in mid-November and the battalion returned to Bellevue later that month. In December battalion members fought bushfires around the camp. During its time in WA the battalion was stationed at Chidlow, Geraldton, Bushmede, Irwin, Bellevue and Midland Junction.

Melville was posted to the 6th Brigade in late December and Wilson resumed command until Lieutenant Colonel Wilford McGregor marched in on 10 January 1943. The battalion returned to Victoria between 19 and 24 January and camped at Mangalore. On 25 March it commenced a move to Woodford, arriving at D'Aguilar on 1 April. There it changed to the tropical warfare establishment. A jungle warfare course was undertaken over 7 to 10 April, and a battle assault course between 16 and 18 April.

Two days later the battalion was issued Owen guns, and over the period 25 to 28 April moved to Kuranda on the Atherton Tablelands. The battalion undertook amphibious training, and in late May Wilson and Captain George Caldwell (the long-serving adjutant) marched out to the 4th Division, being replaced respectively by Major Rex Hodge (OC D Company) and Lieutenant William Kilpatrick.

Between 17 and 30 June, the 38th Battalion moved to Adelaide River. Mid-July saw Wilson and Caldwell return, and in early August the governor general inspected the battalion. In September the battalion moved again, this time to 39 Mile camp. In early October McGregor was detached to the Land Headquarters (LHQ) Tactics School at Beenleigh in Queensland, returning in late November. Hodge assumed command in his absence. During this time the battalion, having achieved the required 75 percent of members transferring to the AIF, became the 38th Australian Infantry Battalion (AIF).

As with the 23rd/21st Battalion, the 38th Battalion did not see active service. With Captain Edington Bush in command, it was disbanded on 22 August 1944 to reinforce the 11th, 16th and 28th Battalions of the 13th Brigade. These WA battalions embarked at Darwin in November and December 1944 for Jacquinot Bay (New Britain).

The 58th/59th Battalion saw more action than any of the other country Victorian CMF battalions in the Second World War. In October 1939 the 59th Battalion moved to its mobilisation site at Nagambie Road for 30 days' training, and during this time AIF enlistments commenced. An initial batch of 300 members of the battalion, including the RSM, WO 1 John Hall, enlisted, with most going to the 2/8th Battalion. Hall ended the war as a major with the 2/8th. By the end of December over 600 members of the battalion had enlisted in the AIF.⁴⁰

In early February 1940 the battalion moved into camp, again at Nagambie Road, for a further period of intensive training. After the AIF enlistments, numbers were low, but were bolstered by the arrival of the first universal service trainees. Training progressed rapidly and the battalion performed with credit in brigade and divisional exercises. A further call for enlistment in the AIF saw another 250 members join, with many going to the 2/14th Battalion. Early in May battalion members returned to their home stations and Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Whalley, VD, assumed command when Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Hill, MM, was appointed as CO of the Shepparton Recruit Training Camp.

Prior to the Japanese attacks in December 1941, the 59th Battalion, with the Melbourne-based 58th Battalion, was at Seymour, having just completed a three month camp, and with most members on leave without pay. Following the Japanese attacks, Christmas leave was cancelled and mobilisation quickly completed. The 58th Battalion went back to camp at Seymour under Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Hale and the 59th under Whalley.

By 18 December the two battalions had started a period of intensive training, and in early 1942 they settled down to preparing for war the mainly young men (18 years) who had been called up for compulsory training and service within Australia and its territories. Many officers and NCOs were transferred to the 15th Brigade Training Battalion to train recruits. Officers and NCOs undertook tactical exercises without troops (TEWT), and the battalions undertook 'hardening' exercises and 'bull-ring' training at Seymour.

By this time manpower and equipment shortages in Australia were beginning to be felt. Enlistments from the CMF into the AIF were stopped, and QM staff found it difficult to obtain clothing and weapons.

Inter-battalion exercises gave the officers and NCOs valuable training, although to the soldiers it was much more like a game. By the end of March 1942 orders were received for the 15th Brigade to move to a new camp in Albury. The soldiers received their vaccinations and made wills in preparation for deployment.

The 58th Battalion left Seymour on 30 March and marched some 220 kilometres to Hume Camp at Bonegilla, arriving on 9 April. The 59th Battalion followed on 31 March, arriving on 10 April. On 24 May the 59th left Bonegilla, arriving at South Grafton on 27 May, while on 25 May the first party of the 58th moved to Casino, with the move completed by 27 May.

On 27 August 1942 the CO advised the 59th Battalion that a reorganisation of the 3rd Division had disbanded the 59th Battalion from midnight 26-27 August. The battalion amalgamated with the 58th to form the 58th/59th Battalion, while 403 ORs were transferred to the 57th/60th Battalion. Generally the transfers were:

- A, B and portion of HQ Companies to the 58th Battalion;
- C, D and portion of HQ Companies to the 57th/60th Battalion; and
- E (MG) Company to the 5th MG Battalion.

Melbourne's 24th Battalion was transferred into the brigade as its third battalion.

By 9 September the main body of the new 58th/59th Battalion had arrived at Caboolture, where the battalion trained until 27 November. It participated in a 3rd Division exercise, at the completion of which it moved to Cooroy. On 15 September Whalley assumed command of the composite battalion, while Hale was transferred to the 3rd Division staff.⁴¹ The battalion faced a period of rebuilding *esprit de corps*, during which it concentrated on individual musketry skill and the collective skills of company, battalion and divisional training. Personal preparations for war continued, with the issue of identity tags, and conduct of X-rays, blood counts and photographs.

After final leave was completed in January 1943, NCOs were put through a twelve-day course in night fighting, beach defence, forest and jungle warfare, unarmed combat and patrolling. The lessons were passed on to their sections. From 7 February Major Arthur Palmer administered command of the battalion.



The 58th/59th Battalion Bren Gun Carriers parade through Grafton, NSW in 1942.
(8/7 RVR depot, Shepparton)

On 1 March camp was struck and HQ and A and B Companies entrained at Cooroy station for Brisbane, and embarked on 2 March. That day C and D Companies entrained at Cooroy for Townsville, embarking there on 8 March. The first party of the 58th /59th Battalion arrived at Port Moresby on 7 March, moved to Shrapnel Valley near Port Moresby, and started erecting tents, establishing cookhouses and preparing for the arrival of the remainder of the battalion. By 16 March the second party and rear party had arrived. The battalion's strength was 31 officers and 626 ORs, two officers and some 100 ORs below establishment.

Port Moresby was a front line garrison town where spasmodic air attacks were still occurring. While the Japanese had been pushed back across the Owen Stanley Range, heavy fighting was taking place in the Wau-Mubo area. On 20 March a group of eight officers and five sergeants emplaned for Wau to gain battle experience with Kanga Force (2/5th and 2/7th Independent Companies). The next day the remainder of the battalion marched out to Taburi and Homrom Bluff on a two week exercise, which provided valuable jungle training.

At the end of the exercise, on 3 April, the acting CO, Palmer, reported that 'the improvement in morale and fighting ability were most apparent'. The battalion was then given a defensive role around Port Moresby. During the exercise, on 28 March, the battalion suffered its first casualties when two members were wounded while

operating with the 2/7th Independent Company. On 11 April a second group of officers and NCOs emplaned for Wau to gain experience.

On 2 May 1943 Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Starr assumed command. Over the period 27 to 31 May the battalion moved by air to Wau and Bulolo – 28 kilometres from Wau – from where they marched the 16 kilometres to Bulwa. The battalion was concentrated by 1 June 1943. The main body left Bulwa on 19 June carrying around 27 kilograms of equipment per man, and followed the Missim Trail across Double Mountain, a route that photographer Damien Parer described as ‘worse than the Kokoda Trail’.



58th/59th Battalion Medic, Sergeant Gordon Ayre of Shepparton, assists Wally Johnson cross a creek during the South West Pacific Campaign in 1943.
(8/7 RVR depot, Shepparton)

The 58th/59th Battalion was in position on 29 June for an attack the following day on Bobdubi Ridge. In that attack the battalion took its first casualties in the battles for Old Bobdubi and Orodubi. The fighting was fierce, but a position on the ridge was captured. From there the battalion eventually captured the Old Vickers position on 28 July, opening the way to Salamaua, which was captured on 11 September.

Major George Warfe administered command from 12 August 1943. On 25 September the battalion moved into Salamaua and on 27 September moved by three Landing Craft Infantry (LCI) to Milne Bay. On 22 October the now Lieutenant Colonel Warfe received notice that he had been awarded an MC for his 'determined leadership and inspiring example at Komiatum in July 1943'. He had already twice been MID in 1943, and received the DSO for 'outstanding leadership and sustained dash in Tarakan in May 1945'.

The battalion moved to Port Moresby over 11-12 October. With Warfe transferred to Townsville, on 29 October Major William Baker from the 57th/60th Battalion took administrative command. Starr returned on 10 November after acting as commander of the 15th Brigade. On 27 November notification was received that the MC had been awarded to temporary Captain Charles Newman and Lieutenant John Bethune, and an MM to Sergeant Alexander Anderson, all for their actions in the Salamaua campaign.

Starr left the battalion on 21 January 1944 for a posting with the 2nd Australian Army and Major William Cuddon, the 2 IC of the 57th/60th Battalion, took administrative command. Six days later Cuddon took administrative command of the 57th/60th, and Captain Hyde Sweet took administrative command of the 58th/59th Battalion. On 9 February the battalion took over the Paipé area from the 2/10th Battalion. On 11 February the now Major Newman assumed command with Sweet as 2 IC. When Warfe returned on 10 April, Newman became 2 IC.

In early 1944 the 15th Brigade moved to the Ramu Valley, under the command of the 7th Division. The brigade supported the clearing of the Ramu Valley and the advance on Madang, which was captured on 24 April.

By 17 May the battalion had moved to Siar Plantation, and by 26 July was *en route* to Townsville from Madang. Arriving on 30 July, the battalion moved to Julago. By 15 August it had moved to a new site in Mapee, and members went on leave. Those from Victoria, SA and Tasmania participated in the March of Honour by the 4th and 15th Brigades in Melbourne on 13 October.

After returning from leave, the first party left Mapee on 20 December, and the battalion embarked at Townsville for Bougainville on 24 December, arriving at Torokina on 28 December. On 3 January 1945 Warfe handed command to Lieutenant Colonel William Mayberry. The battalion's first enemy contact on Bougainville occurred on 17 March. A crossing on the Hongorai River was named Mayberry's Crossing during the advance to Buin as part of the 'battle of the rivers'.

The battalion remained on Bougainville until hostilities ceased on 15 August 1945. The final war diary entry showed that members were being marched out for occupational release and compassionate discharge in October 1945, when the battalion was located at Torokina. The 58th/59th Battalion was disbanded on 23 February 1946, having lost 136 dead and 306 wounded.

During the Second World War the defence of Australia was not entrusted only to the RAN, Army and RAAF. On 15 July 1940 the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) was inaugurated at the instigation of the RSS&AILA, and served in many cities and larger towns. It was predominantly comprised of First World War veterans, and formally became part of the Army in May 1941.

The VDC reached its maximum strength of 98,000 in June 1942. Its charter was to 'deny, delay and protect' vital facilities.⁴² The members, a few full-time, most on part-time duty, operated as plane spotters, coast watchers, and protectors of vital industries. Early in 1943 the VDC's primary role became the part-time manning of anti-aircraft and coast defence installations, including the close defence of fortress areas. This released 100,000 full-time AMF personnel for duty in forward areas.⁴³

In 1942 the VDC organisation in Victoria included 23 area battalions formed into five groups:

South-west Group:

HQ and 6th Battalion (Geelong);
7th Battalion (Lismore);
8th Battalion (Heywood);
9th Battalion (Hamilton); and
19th Battalion (Colac).

North-west Group:

HQ and 15th Battalion (Bendigo);
14th Battalion (Horsham);
20th Battalion (Ballarat); and
21st Battalion (Kerang).

North-east Group:

HQ (Wangaratta);
16th Battalion (Shepparton);
17th Battalion (Echuca); and
22nd Battalion (Corowa).

The South-east Group, with its HQ in Warragul, included the 10th to the 13th and the 23rd Battalions. The Metropolitan Group, with its HQ at Bateman Avenue in Melbourne, included the 1st to the 5th and the 18th Battalions.⁴⁴ The 24th Battalion was an industrial battalion formed by the employees of the Maribyrnong Munition Works.

The VDC was disbanded after the cessation of hostilities in August 1945.

Endnotes

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- 2 Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, p163.
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- 7 *Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Act 1943*.
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- 11 Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, pp137-139.
- 12 Pedder, *The 7th Battalion*, p2.
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- 38 23rd/21st Battalion War Diary, December 1941.
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- 40 *History of the 59th Infantry Battalion*, p19.
- 41 *History of the 59th Infantry Battalion*, p28.
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Part 1—Chapter 7
THE SECOND AIF BATTALIONS

On 3 September 1939 Mr Menzies announced that Australia had joined Britain in declaring war on Germany. Twelve days later he announced that a volunteer force, the 2nd AIF, would be raised, initially with a division of three brigades each of four battalions and auxiliary units. By the end of the Second World War, Australia had enlisted 993,000 men and women in all three services, of whom 575,799 served overseas.¹

A numbering system for the battalions, brigades and divisions that would distinguish them from the 1st AIF and the existing CMF units and formations was needed. The last division number used in the First World War was the 5th. Thus Major General Sir Thomas Blamey's 6th Division was born. The last brigade used in the earlier war was the 15th. All brigade numbers up to this were still being used in the CMF; consequently, the first AIF brigade raised in the Second World War was the NSW 16th Brigade. The battalions were given a prefix of 2/ to distinguish the 2nd AIF battalion number from the CMF number. Recruitment of the 2nd AIF began in September 1939. There were then three parts to the Australian Army, the PMF, the CMF and the AIF.

The first AIF convoy sailed from Australia in January 1940 and the force commenced training in Palestine. The original intention was that they would move to Europe, but the collapse of France caused this plan to be discarded. Part of the 6th Division was diverted to Britain, but rejoined the main body in Egypt early in 1941. With further division numbers following on from the 6th, a corps of three divisions (6th, 7th, and 9th) was eventually established in the Middle East, while the greater part of another division (the 8th) was deployed in Malaya.

Aligning with the 1st AIF, the 2nd AIF infantry battalions formed in the 6th Division were:

16th Brigade:	2/1st, 2/2nd, 2/3rd and 2/4th Battalions (NSW),
17th Brigade:	2/5th, 2/6th, 2/7th and 2/8th Battalions (Victoria), and
18th Brigade:	2/9th (Queensland), 2/10th (SA), 2/11th (WA) and 2/12th (Tasmania) Battalions. ²

The 17th Brigade was commanded by Brigadier Stanley Savage. Two of its battalions were raised in Melbourne and two in country Victoria.³ To align with the British organisation, the 2nd AIF changed to three battalions per brigade in February 1941. Consequently, the 2/4th, 2/8th and 2/11th Battalions were removed from their original brigades and formed the 19th Brigade.⁴

In the Second World War country Victoria provided only two AIF battalions: the 2/7th (Mildura) and the 2/8th (Ballarat). Of the other country battalion numbers from the 1st AIF, the 2/21st Battalion was raised in Melbourne, while the 2/23rd Battalion, made up mainly of Victorians, was trained in Albury and became known as 'Albury's Own'. As only 36 battalions were raised for the 2nd AIF, not every battalion number from the 1st AIF was used.

To meet the Japanese threat after the 8th Division was lost in Singapore and the island chain north of Australia, the 6th, 7th, and ultimately the 9th, Divisions joined CMF troops in New Guinea. Thereafter the Australian forces were engaged in the South West Pacific Area. Short summaries of the service of the 2/7th and 2/8th Battalions, prepared by the AWM, and reproduced with the Memorial's permission, are at Appendix 4. The experiences of some individuals who served in those battalions are recorded below.

Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Walker, CO of the Melbourne-based 24th/39th Battalion, was appointed CO of the 2/7th Battalion on 13 October 1939.⁵ The RSM was WO 1 Steve Barnard and among the battalion officers were Captain Gilbert Henry (Harry) Halliday and Lieutenants Allan Bamford, Joseph Hutchinson, Ian Mason and John Wicking. Halliday was awarded an MC for 'skill, courage and leadership' at Bardia on 3 January 1941. Bamford was promoted to lieutenant colonel and has the 2/17th Battalion listed as his discharge unit, while Hutchinson was promoted to lieutenant colonel and ended the war at HQ 1st Australian Corps.⁶

The 2/7th Battalion had a country feel. It was allocated recruits from Mildura-Robinvale, where the 7th Battalion was located, Sale-Maffra and some Melbourne eastern suburbs. On 6 November, at Puckapunyal, the battalion received its first draft of CMF enlistees and on 10 November its first draft of civilian enlistees. By the end of the year its strength had risen to 19 officers and 842 ORs.⁷

On 24 January 1940 the 17th Brigade marched in Melbourne, the first such march since 1919. By the end of February the battalion's strength was 32 officers and 850 ORs, almost its War Establishment. Pre-embarkation leave commenced on 20 March and on 1 April a parade was held for Jess, the honorary colonel. The battalion departed on 15 April 1940, arriving at Suez on 17 May.⁸

Walker commanded the 2/7th Battalion through the Libya, Greece and Crete campaigns. Reinforced in Palestine after its heavy losses in Greece and Crete, and under a new CO, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Guinn, the 2/7th left the Middle East on 12 March 1942.⁹ After forming part of a force defending Ceylon, it disembarked in Australia on 4 August 1942.

After serving in the 1943 New Guinea campaign, the 2/7th returned to Australia on 6 October 1943, to spend most of 1944 training in northern Queensland. In November 1944 the 2/7th disembarked at Aitape for its final campaign under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Philip Parbury, MC. Parbury was awarded his MC for actions on the Damascus/Beirut Road in June 1941.¹⁰ The battalion was fighting its last battle at Kabocbus-Kiarivu when the war's end was announced. On 11 September 1945 Lieutenant General Hatazo Adachi, commander of the Japanese 18th Army, arrived at the 2/7th Battalion position at Kiarivu, carried on a litter by Japanese soldiers and accompanied by staff officers and orderlies. He was escorted to Wewak to surrender his forces.¹¹

During the Second World War the 2/7th Battalion lost 226 men killed and 473 wounded. It returned to Australia on 18 December 1945 and disbanded at Puckapunyal in February 1946.¹²

At the end of the First World War John Mitchell was the CO of the 8th Battalion.¹³ While serving with that battalion, he was five times MID. He was awarded a DSO in 1918, and a bar to his DSO and a Belgian *Croix de Guerre* in 1919.¹⁴ On 13 October 1939 he was appointed CO of the 2/8th Battalion.

The 2/8th Battalion departed for service overseas on 14 April 1940. As specialist weapons were in short supply, physical training had a high priority on board ship. Mitchell commanded the battalion until after the Libya, Greece and Crete campaigns. On Crete, the battalion lost almost 150 killed, wounded or captured.¹⁵ Mitchell left the battalion on 28 May. In 1942 he was again MID for his services with the battalion.¹⁶

The 2/8th was re-formed and reinforced in Palestine on 3 June 1941, and a new CO, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Winning, was appointed on 4 July.¹⁷ It embarked for Australia on 12 February 1942, and arrived at Adelaide on 28 March.¹⁸ In June the 19th Brigade was deployed to defend Darwin as part of Northern Territory Force.

Winning was posted to HQ 4th Brigade on 16 February and a new CO was appointed on 6 March 1943. Walter Howden had been a member of the CMF with the 5th Battalion (Victorian Scottish Regiment), and had later served with the 2/14th Battalion and the 5th Battalion.¹⁹ The brigade rejoined the rest of the 6th Division on the Atherton Tablelands in August 1943, and landed at Aitape in New Guinea on 12 November 1944 for its only campaign against the Japanese. Howden was awarded a DSO for his 'untiring leadership' at Aitape.²⁰

Following the Japanese surrender, drafts of 2/8th men began returning to Australia for discharge. The remainder of the battalion left Wewak on 10 November. The battalion had 88 killed, 225 wounded and 203 taken prisoner during the war. It was disbanded at Puckapunyal on 14 December 1945.²¹

Endnotes

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- h Ross, *The 17th Australian Inf Bde*, p8.
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PART 2
THE BATTALION'S TOWNS

Part 2—Chapter 8
BALLARAT AND DISTRICT

The volunteer movement received an impetus from the Crimean War. As the names Sebastopol Borough, Redan Creek, Inkerman Lead and Balaclava and Raglan Streets show, Ballarat people thrilled with pride in the actions of the British Army.

The BVRR came into existence following a public meeting held on 23 October 1857 at Bath's Hotel (now Craig's Royal Hotel) in Lydiard Street South. Mr. H. Davies presided, Mr. Cooper acted as secretary and Messrs. Davies, Wilkes, Coleman, Cooper, J. Daly and Ocock and the then sheriff Major Robert Wallace (a British half-pay officer who is believed to have served in the 60th Rifles King's Royal Rifle Corps), were appointed to prepare a memorial to the government about raising a rifle corps in the district. The government, keen to revive the movement, gave its consent on 21 July 1858.

A further meeting was held in the Shakespeare Hotel, Main Street, on 26 July with Mr. W.B. Rodier in the chair. At this meeting the name Rangers was not favoured and the unit became the BVRR. It was planned to consist of four corps of infantry and two of light horse. The light horse, variously known as the Ballarat Troop, Ballarat Cavalry or Ballarat LH, and later as the PWVVLH, became a separate entity, and the four corps of infantry reduced to three:

- 1st Corps: Ballarat West detachment;
- 2nd Corps: Clunes and Creswick detachments; and
- 3rd Corps: Ballarat East detachment.

On 9 August 1858 the first meeting of enrolled members was held at the Shakespeare Hotel, presided over by Mr Richard Belford. The first roll had 65 names. Belford, who was not a military man, was elected lieutenant colonel. Officers of the regiment were Wallace, Captain C. Forster (volunteer adjutant), Captain Alley, Lieutenants J. Daly and A. Kelly and 2nd Lieutenants H. Davies and D. Sweeney. It was resolved that a call of five shillings (\$0.50) should be made on each member to meet incidental expenses. An advertisement appeared in the *Victorian Government Gazette* on 11 August for the position of full time adjutant.

A further meeting was held on 24 August and Wallace was elected adjutant, while several lieutenants were elected from the ranks. The same day the regiment's name was changed to the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers.¹ Doubtless due to Wallace's preferences, the unit adopted the regimental motto of the 60th Rifles, *Celer et Audax*, and its dark green and scarlet-faced uniform, which was worn until well into the militia period. The first orderly room (drill hall) was an iron shed in Little Bridge Street, and the first drills took place on vacant land on the flat near the site of the old gasworks in Grenville Street South.



A Ranger uniform, circa 1860.
(AWM 18399.001)

The Rangers' first public appearance was on the 40th anniversary of the birth of Queen Victoria. After a long march around the streets of central Ballarat, which was followed by many spectators, it was said that the 'Ballarat Rifle Regiment [the Rangers] is now, we are proud to say, not a myth but a reality'.²

Wallace resigned as 'having served in the Army, I do not like being under command of a civilian who knows nothing of military tactics'.³ On 11 June 1859, at a meeting at the John O'Groats Hotel in Main Road, he was elected as lieutenant colonel when Belford resigned his command at the request of the corps. Wallace may be regarded as the first commander of the regiment. He was a big man with a big black beard and a stentorian voice.

Among the officers of the Ballarat Rangers were Captain William Collard-Smith, Major Joseph Sleep, Captain Alexander Greenfield (all later COs of the regiment) Captain Philip Keatch (of Creswick), Captain Thomas Mann and Captain the Reverend William Henderson, the first pastor of St Andrews Kirk in Ballarat. He was a great preacher and a great citizen; as a combatant officer he was subjected to considerable criticism - it touched him not. The pinnacles about the spire of St Andrew's Kirk have black bands on them, marking the stage of the building when he died.

An Easter encampment was held for the Victorian forces at Werribee in 1861. The Rangers did not attend, but did attend the second encampment in 1862. In February 1863 the Ballarat men almost didn't get to the Geelong camp. Around 60 volunteers paraded at 0530 and marched to the railway station where the stationmaster told them that they were unable to depart. They returned to the barracks and were dismissed. After several messages were sent to Colonel Anderson, commandant of the Victorian forces, the situation was resolved. Late in the day bugles were heard in the streets calling the men to arms. They proceeded to Geelong on the 1900 train.



Major Wallace with his officers and NCOs in 1860.
(Old Colonists' Club)

In 1864 Wallace resigned from the regiment and was succeeded by Rede, who was the Gold Commissioner at the time of the Eureka Rebellion.

In December 1867 the band and over 200 Rangers, under Collard-Smith and Sleep, marched from the orderly room to await the arrival of Prince Alfred. They presented arms and the band played the National Anthem as the Prince approached. When he visited mines in the area, he was escorted by mounted police and members of the Ballarat LH under Captain Sherard. Collard-Smith and Sherard were among those who later dined with the Prince at Craig's Hotel.

In 1868 Collard-Smith succeeded Rede as CO. He was chairman of the Municipality of Ballarat in 1860-61 and later twice mayor of Ballarat. By 1870 the Ballarat district had the 1st, 2nd (Creswick and Clunes Detachments) and 3rd Corps of the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers. The regiment had formed a band, complete with a drum and fife section. In 1874 the 1st and 3rd Corps merged.

In 1936 Major General Williams, who commanded the regiment from 1894 to 1906, said that:

[b]esides excellence in turn out, drill and manoeuvre, the regiment specialised in rifle shooting. To shoot quickly and shoot straight was ever the motto on the range. The rifleman was told to remember that the target represented a foeman, and the longer he lay on the mound without hitting the bull's eye, the greater of being hit himself.⁴

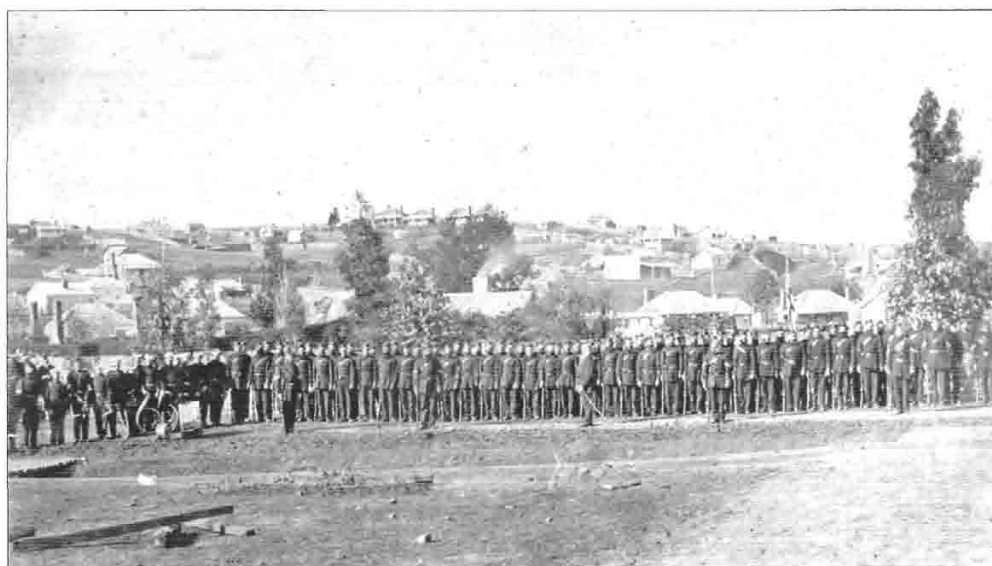


Above: Ballarat volunteer Rangers (left) at the laying of the foundation stone of the Ballarat East Town Hall in 1861.

(Ballarat Gold Museum)

Below: 2nd Corps, Ballarat Volunteer Rangers at Clunes Council yards, circa 1870.

(John Dellaca)



The rifle range in Ballarat was located in Victoria Park and used an old mine dump as the stop butts. Marksmanship badges were issued to those proficient in musketry. Sleep and Greenfield achieved international fame as two of the five members of the Victorian Rifle Team that toured England and America in 1876. They were twice in Victorian teams that competed in England at Bisley and Wimbledon.

With the reorganisation of the Victorian forces under the Discipline Act, the regiment was placed on a new footing, as militia, a partly paid system. Recruits undertook three months of recruit drill, and after passing an inspection by a staff officer, moved into the ranks. The militia was required to attend five full day parades, 15 half-day parades and 24 night parades annually, and serve for five years. Remuneration was £6/5/- (\$12.50) per annum.

The Rangers disbanded at the end of 1883 and Collard-Smith was placed on the Reserve of Officers (R of O). On 1 January 1884 Sleep was appointed to command the new Ballarat unit (which included Creswick and Clunes), to be known as the 3rd Battalion Victorian Rifles. When the battalion commenced training, its establishment was 16 officers and 310 ORs. Later in 1884 the regiment was again renamed, this time as the 3rd (Ballarat) Battalion Victorian Rifles.

On 21 January 1884 the first militia recruits were sworn in. Williams was No. 41. Greenfield, Mann and Major L.H. Kildahl were the senior officers, while Doctor R.D. Pinnock was the Regimental Surgeon-Major. Mann was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers on 1 April 1873. In the new system, as a captain, he became the first adjutant of the 3rd Battalion.⁵

Williams, John Garbutt, H.A. King, F. Holding, W. Laidlaw, John McWhae, H.D. Longden, E. Hayes, D. Madden and F.W. Claxton, recruit members of the battalion, were selected as candidates for commissions. All the prospective young officers were subjected to a competitive examination, and out of over 30 examined, Williams, Garbutt and King took the first three places. Williams considered that the:

regiment owes much of its reputation for drill and soldierliness to the splendid standard in them set up by its first RSM W.H. Brenchley (1884-86), who came from the 33rd Regiment of the British Army to instruct here. His work never died out, and up until World War One, especially good drill relates to 'Brenchley's days'. Sergeant Major C.H. Burrow (1886-88) well maintained the pitch of excellence in instruction in drill etc.⁶

The first encampment for the revamped Victorian forces was held at Frankston in 1885. That year the Sir Frederick Sargood Company Competition, in which all Victorian infantry took part, commenced. Each team competed on its own range and was judged on appearance, discipline, manual and firing exercises and rifle

shooting. D Company of the 3rd Battalion won the competition comfortably from C Company of the 4th Battalion, then B, C and A Companies of the 3rd Battalion. D Company won the competition from 1885 to 1888, and became the perpetual holders of the Sargood Challenge Trophy, which was presented by McWhae on 30 November 1888.

Disney, the first commandant of the Victorian forces under the militia system, inspected the regiment in 1885. He complimented all ranks on their work, which he considered the more remarkable as the regiment had only four officers of any experience at the time, the others having been recruited with the men. His favourable opinion was strengthened by the performance of the battalion in 1886. When he farewelled the men in 1888, he complimented all, saying he felt 'they would at all times be a credit to the defence force'.⁷ The succeeding commandant, Colonel Brownrigg, found occasion to compliment the battalion on its soldiering after every inspection.

The 1886 encampment was held at Queenscliff and in 1887 the first of five annual encampments was held at Langwarrin. It was remembered because of the dusty marches and long hours; some members were unable to remove their clothes from when they left home until they returned.

When Sleep left the regiment for the R of O on 1 January 1888, his adjutant, Greenfield, a Scottish born merchant, succeeded him as CO. Greenfield joined the battalion as a private in 1861, was a sergeant in 1863, and was commissioned as a sub-lieutenant. He served for 28 years as an officer.

Williams served in the ranks of the Rangers for two years. In 1936 his principal recollections were the soldierliness of Greenfield, the weight of the knapsack, the kick of the muzzle loading Enfield, the thrill of 'forming to receive cavalry,' and the 'bestly way the old busby (with a red plume on it) guided the rain down the back of one's neck on a wet day'.⁸ He described Greenfield as:

a gentleman, athlete, rifle shot, fine drill and bitter foe to humbug and pretence. Lieutenant Colonel Greenfield, mounted on his ill-tempered chestnut charger 'Reefer', was a picture, and 'The Colonel' could take his place in conviviality with even the youngest of his team. To have his good opinion was a warranty of personal worth. At the end of his five years HQ added another year, and would have put more but he resigned, to the grief of us all. The officers in a body waited on him to ask him to continue, but he was resolute.

When he retired in 1894, Greenfield had served in the regiment for 33 years.

In 1890 the battalion was again in camp at Langwarrin, remembered for ball (live) practices at Dummy Hill. That year the prize for the first company to complete its musketry course was won by B Company, commanded by Captain A.W. Williams,

brother of R.E. Williams. The 1891 camp was also at Langwarrin; battle firing was one of its features. A thunderstorm nearly washed the camp away. The men, after marching miles through the rain, were played to their quarters in great style by the band.⁹

However, in the early 1890s the battalion slipped badly. Among other problems the pay was late. Reporting on a question raised at a Ballarat Historical Society meeting, the *Ballarat Courier* of 13 May 1948 reported that Staff Sergeant Major Garland made himself detested by his gruff and offensive treatment of the men. He had little tact, and over-much self-conceit. Some of his indiscreet talk precipitated the trouble. On 30 April 1891 only five men turned out for parade, but there was a big crowd present in civilian clothes. They groaned and hooted at Garland, who retaliated by having the orderly room cleared. It is believed that a young officer unwisely gave the option, if 'you won't fall in, go out of the Orderly Room.'

The malcontents went in a body, and played 'ring-a-rosy' around the Galloway Monument, chanting their desire to hang 'old Garland on a sour apple tree' and made such a demonstration that the police dispersed them. Major General Alexander Tulloch, the commandant, held a court martial and recommended that the unit be disbanded. On 25 June he held a special parade which 366 uniformed men attended. He called on the delinquents to step out from the ranks and 51 men obeyed the order. Some were discharged and others suspended for six months. The unit was suspended for two months. With Garland posted to headquarters and Brenchley replacing him, the battalion soon struck form again. Thereafter, pay came promptly.

In contrast to this episode Holled-Smith, who succeeded Tulloch as commandant, observed in later years to the then CO: 'I notice there are no crimes in your regiment [all military offences were called crimes]. Don't you have any trouble at all, Colonel?' The reply was '[n]othing to speak of, Sir: we always manage to consume our own smoke.' Whereupon the General responded, 'Quite right!'¹⁰

Performance must have improved rapidly, as Tulloch described their work in 1891 as remarkably good, their volley firing exceptionally so. On 9 November 1891 the 3rd Battalion, the 2nd Battalion, VMR and the cadets were inspected together, and Tulloch freely praised the drill, carriage and marching of the battalion. At the final inspection Tulloch said that he 'was proud of the regiment which had always presented a highly creditable appearance and had done excellent work'.¹¹

At Easter 1892 Greenfield organised a flying camp, training at Burrumbeet, Learmonth and Dowling Forest successively. In a further reorganisation the unit was renamed the 1st Battalion, 3rd Victorian Regiment. The battalion continued its dominance in shooting. That year D Company won the Kola Cup, presented by Rowlands and Company. Teams of 24 men competed from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions. The battalion won the cup again in 1893.¹²

The battalion used the Canadian rifle range south of Ballarat for its shooting practices. On 23 March 1893 Greenfield signed an agreement with Robert Adam of Ballarat, the battalion range keeper, for the use of the range. A memorandum to the agreement provided for Adam to maintain the cooking range provided by the battalion. For this, Adam was paid the sum of £6/-/- (\$12) on the second Thursday of each month. The agreement remained in force until either party gave a month's notice in writing. It was witnessed by the adjutant, Captain Stanley Lowe.¹³

In 1893 and 1895 local camps were held at Burrumbeet, the latter remembered as the camp in which there was always 'something different' occurring. In 1894, 1896 and 1897 the regiment camped again at Langwarrin. By this time Greenfield had retired and Williams was the CO. In 1897 D Company won the prize given by Colonel Freeman for the best kept lines. In 1898 the encampment was on the Ballarat Common (Wendouree West), when 3299 of all ranks assembled. The competition for the Brassey Prize was won by the regiment. In that year the battalion became the 3rd Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade.

In 1899 and 1900 over 100 men were recruited to fill the places of those who were selected for active service in South Africa. The following died on service there:

Major George Eddy;
Lieutenants Alexander Gilpin and Sydney Coulter;
Sergeants James Molloy and W. Allen; and
Privates Albert Burley and Thomas Foster.¹⁴

Among others from the battalion who served in South Africa were Graham Coulter and brothers William and Albert Everall whose father, also William Everall, was a saddler in Ballarat.

Coulter joined the 3rd Battalion in 1897 and served in the 1st Victorian Contingent in South Africa. He was commissioned in 1901 and in 1914 was appointed as a captain in the 8th Battalion. Following Krithia Coulter took the battalion back to ANZAC Cove. In 1916 he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and commanded the 8th Battalion. He left France for Australia in March 1918.¹⁵

William Everall also served with the 1st Victorian Contingent as a sergeant saddler. His brother served as a sergeant saddler with the 2nd Mounted Rifles Contingent. They are both listed as having been court martialled and reduced to the rank of private in June 1900. Albert Everall served in the First World War, enlisting in the Army Service Corps (ASC) as a saddler in August 1915, and after a number of absent without leave (AWOL) offences in Australia and England, finally proceeded to France in September 1917. After several periods in hospital, he left for Australia in December 1918.¹⁶



Ballarat members of the First Contingent to South Africa. Sergeant W. Everall is standing left rear, while Sergeant Coulter (later to command the 8th Battalion AIF) is standing third from right.
(John Dellaca)

In 1899 the Victorian forces encamped at Langwarrin. In 1900 four full day drills were held locally in place of the usual Easter encampment. On Easter Saturday the regiment visited Smythesdale. On Easter Sunday a church parade was held on the Eastern Oval amid snow. At Easter 1901 training was again held locally, one event being all night at outposts on the Ballarat Common. Federation had occurred, but the battalion remained the 3rd Battalion, (Victorian) Infantry Brigade.

On 13 May 1901 Ballarat provided guards of honour at the Ballarat West Railway Station, Ballarat East Town Hall, Soldier's Statue site and the South Star Mine at Sebastopol for the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. The Duke expressed his appreciation and the Duchess accepted a copy of the parade state for the day, printed on satin, bound in morocco, and presented by Williams.¹⁷

The Easter encampment in 1902 was to have been at Langwarrin, but the weather was so inclement it was abandoned and local parades ordered instead. These included marching by compass bearings from Ballarat to the Buninyong Racecourse.

The 3rd Battalion in 1903 consisted of 455 all ranks in four companies, each about 110 strong, and in accordance with GO 169/23 was reorganised into eight companies as the 7th AIR. That year saw the regiment in camp at Sunbury; 1904 at Burrumbeet; and 1905 and 1906 at Langwarrin. In his 1912 booklet Colonel Morton said that of:

all the non-coms and instructors none were more deservedly popular than Sergeant Major J.C. Brough whose retirement under the age limitations was regretted by every officer, non-com and man in the 7th. The 7th had good stuff all through it. No regiment ever had better Sergeant Majors.¹⁸



Visitors Day at the 7 AIR Langwarrin Camp, circa 1905.
(Ballarat Gold Museum)

The battalion provided a guard for the unveiling of the Boer War Memorial in Sturt Street Ballarat on 1 November 1906 by the governor general, Sir Henry Northcote, GCMG, GCIE, CB, PC. The 1907 camp was held at Lancefield Junction under Lieutenant Colonel Bennett, who replaced Williams as CO on 1 January. Bennett had served as an officer in the 3rd Battalion and the 7th AIR since being appointed in 1885. In 1915 he took the 29th Battalion to Egypt. Like many older COs he served only for a short time before being returned to Australia to command the 18th Brigade temporarily.¹⁹

Shooting was a primary focus of the militia, and the Ballarat battalion was among the best. In the 1860s and 1870s skirmishing teams commanded by Sleep and Mann won numerous competitions. The newly raised VMR held a rifle match between its H Company and the 3rd (Ballarat) Battalion.²⁰ This ended in victory for Ballarat by 98 points.²¹ The Ballarat battalion was without Sleep as he and four other Victorian militia members were representing the colony at the National Rifle Association shoot at Wimbledon. The 3rd Battalion also won the 'Clarke' shooting competition in 1887.



The winning 7 AIR Schumacher Cup Shooting Team postcard, 1908.
(John Dellaca)

Each year from 1891 to 1896 Ballarat's 3rd Battalion won the Hopetoun shooting match, and in 1899 it won the Lady Brassey (or Hopetoun) match. In 1896 the battalion was second out of 58 teams in the Brassey Competition and it won the competition each year from 1897 to 1899.²² As the 7th AIR, the battalion competed for the Ballhausen trophy against the 1st Battalions of the Grenadier, Coldstream and Scots Guards. The 7th won the competition in 1903, 1905 and 1909.²³

The battalion's biggest shooting victory was winning the Empire Day Challenge (or Schumacher Trophy) in 1908. Teams of 40 shooters from battalions and regiments from all over the Empire competed for the trophy. There were 203 teams in total. Each competitor fired 7 rounds within 20 minutes at 200, 500 and 600 yards (approximately 185, 460 and 550 metres).²⁴ The 7th scored 3895 points, comfortably in front of the nearest placed NSW unit, the Australian Rifles, on 3491, and all other Empire teams. The team was lead by Bennett. In 1909 the 7th was in ninth place of 109 teams, eighth place of 65 teams in 1910, and fifteenth in 1911. Each time the 7th was the best placed Australian team.²⁵

The battalion was back in camp at Langwarrin in 1908 and 1909, at Seymour in 1910 (known as the Kitchener camp as it was held during the time of Kitchener's study of Australian defences), and Kilmore in 1911 and 1912.²⁶

At the end of Bennett's time as CO in 1912, the Ballarat regiment was split into two battalions. The 70th Infantry (Ballarat Regiment), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Bolton, who later led the 8th Battalion at Gallipoli, had its HQ and three companies in Ballarat and companies at Ballarat, Gordon and Buninyong; Geelong, Newton and Belmont; and at Geelong and Queenscliff. In April 1914 Bolton advised that applications for a first commission could be made by members of the 70th Infantry at the rank of sergeant and above.²⁷

The 71st (City of Ballarat) Infantry was commanded by Major Morton, who later became the Ballarat town clerk. The 71st also had its HQ and a company in Ballarat, with other companies at Ballarat, Creswick, Kingston and Learmonth; Ballarat and Clunes; Ballarat and Beaufort; Colac, Terang and Camperdown (where a new drill hall had just been completed); and at Koroit, Warrnambool, Casterton and Hamilton. In May the 71st Infantry held a weekend of instruction for officers in the Miners Rest/Learmonth area.²⁸

On 4 August 1914 the AIF was formed. The 8th Battalion was based on Ballarat. Most of the men of the 8th Battalion who were recruited from existing forces came from the country-based 17th Brigade units, the 70th, 71st and 73rd Infantry, while a few came from the 48th (Kooyong) Infantry and some from the 81st (Wakefield) Infantry (SA). Immediately after the declaration of war against Germany, the 70th was mobilised and sent to Queenscliff to defend the forts covering the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. Over the period October to December 1914 the volunteers sailed

with the 8th and the Melbourne-raised 14th Battalions. On 1 March 1916 the 39th Battalion was formed in Ballarat as one of the units of the 10th Brigade, 3rd Division.

In May 1915, after Krithia, Bolton resigned his command of the 8th Battalion. He returned to Australia and commanded the 18th Infantry Brigade, which from July 1915 included the 70th, 71st, 72nd and 73rd Infantry, from 1916 to 1918. He was the founding federal president (1916-1919) of the Returned Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSS&AILA), was elected to the Senate (1917-23), and retired in 1920 as a brigadier general.²⁹ Morton embarked for overseas service as the CO of the 23rd Battalion, but fell ill. He returned to Australia without seeing action, and in 1916 again commanded the 71st Infantry.

At the end of the First World War the battalions were again renamed. The 70th Infantry became the 2nd/8th Infantry, based in Ballarat East, and commanded by Major (temporary Lieutenant Colonel) Julius Lazarus from 1918 until his retirement in 1920. Lazarus served in 'the old third', the 7th AIR and the 70th Infantry, before the war and with the 14th Battalion at Gallipoli. Poor health saw him returned to Australia in early 1916.³⁰ He was prominent in recruiting for the AIF and the CMF during the war.

The 71st Infantry became the 2nd/39th Infantry, based in Ballarat West, still commanded by Morton. In each case the 2nd Battalion was the CMF battalion, which was allied to the 1st, or AIF, Battalion. In their civilian lives, in 1918 Williams retired as town clerk of the City of Ballarat and was replaced by Morton.

Lieutenant Colonel Brazenor, who served as the CO of the Geelong-raised 23rd Battalion, served as CO of the 2nd/8th and 2nd/39th Infantry between 1920 and 1921. He was promoted to colonel in 1923, commanded the 6th Brigade for four years, and was placed on the unattached list in 1927 and the R of O in 1932. In the Second World War, in spite of chronic bronchitis, he commanded the 3rd Garrison Brigade and the 20th Battalion, VDC.

In the 1921 reorganisation, the two battalions combined as the 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment), a name retained until the Second World War. The new CO was Lieutenant Colonel Aubrey Wiltshire, who had commanded the Melbourne-raised 22nd Battalion. In 1924 Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Tucker, a Ballarat masseur, took command. He joined the 39th Battalion at its formation in 1916 and commanded it for a number of periods, ending the war as a major.

When the Federal Parliament first opened on 9 May 1901 it sat in the Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne. Canberra was chosen as the national capital and a temporary Parliament House was built there, opening on 9 May 1927, when the 8th Battalion provided a colour party. The Queen's Colour ensign was Lieutenant Harrie Gough and the Regimental ensign Lieutenant John Slater, MM. The senior NCO was Sergeant Alex Clarke. In all, 13 battalion members attended the ceremony.



The 8th Battalion Guard for the Governor General in Melbourne, 1939.
(Ballarat Ranger Military Museum)

Gough said that the troops were impressed by the spectacle of the Duke of York inspecting them from his black charger and later addressing them. 'The Ballarat weather had hardened the local party and they were able to stand up to the rigor of extremely frosty mornings'. He recalled that during the ceremony 'twenty seven planes dived in salute, and this new experience frightened the young, raw recruits'. One of the planes crashed later in the day and the pilot was killed.³¹

Tucker's command ended in 1929 when he was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel William Ellwood, MC. Listed in his biography as an educationist, Ellwood served at Gallipoli with the 24th Battalion, and was awarded an MC at Bullecourt in 1917. In 1933 the man who led the 8th Battalion until the clouds of war again formed took command. Lieutenant Colonel Augustus Heseltine, a mining engineer, had his initial attempt to enlist in 1915 refused. He was advised that his work was considered munitions-related and he would not be accepted for service. However, in 1916 he was accepted and went to the engineer officer's school before embarking for Britain in 1917. He was wounded while serving in the 2nd Field Company Australian Engineers, and returned to Australia in September 1918.

In 1920 Heseltine was appointed principal of the Ballarat School of Mines, known locally as SMB. As a captain he raised 1 Section 6th Field Company, Australian Engineers, in Ballarat in 1927. On 1 April 1933 he became CO of the 8th Battalion, a position he held until 31 March 1939. He was the foundation president of the Ballarat Sub-branch of Legacy and was associated with Legacy for 30 years.

By December 1936 CMF strength had reached its authorised level of 35,000, and the 38th/7th Battalion was unlinked.

Ballarat man Norm Strange joined the 8th Battalion on 26 April 1937 when it was commanded by Heseltine, with Major H.C.V. (Clete) Kisler as 2 IC. AIC members were WO 1 Bob Christie, the RSM, and WO 2 George Baker, who was an instructor. Strange served in the Second World War, and was awarded an MM.

In 1939 the 8th Battalion consisted of around 1000 men formed into a HQ, HQ Company, MG Company and A Company in Ballarat and districts, B Company in Ararat, C Company in Stawell and D Company in Daylesford. The battalion was brought together for special parades at the Ballarat drill hall, with the hall being packed with men lined up in their companies. On occasions the battalion camped at the Canadian rifle range in Ballarat. The range keeper, who lived in the house on the range, was battalion member Sergeant Alex Clarke.³²

When Heseltine left the battalion on 31 March 1939, it was commanded for a short while by Kisler. However, when war was declared Alfred Reed took command. He had joined the 21st Battalion and, as a major, was awarded a DSO for his actions at Hamel in 1918. On 3 September 1939 war was declared. The 8th Battalion and engineers from Ballarat's 6th Field Company soon became part of it.

Endnotes

- 1 Defending Australia/Army website, Ballarat Rangers.
- 2 Military Historical Society of Australia, *The Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment*, p9.
- 3 Military Historical Society of Australia, *The Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment*, p6.
- 4 Williams, *The Old Third*, p11.
- 5 I.S. Wright Catalogue, Auction 621, January 2008.
- 6 Williams, *The Old Third*, p5.
- 7 Morton, *The Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment, The Ballarat Rangers, The Old 3rd, The 7th*, np.
- 8 Williams, *The Old Third*, p5.
- 9 Morton, np.
- 10 Morton, np.
- 11 Morton, np.
- 12 Morton, np.
- 13 Adam and Greenfield Agreement, 23rd March 1893.
- 14 Morton, np.
- 15 NAA Service Record, Graham Coulter.
- 16 NAA Service Record, Albert Everall.

- 17 Morton, np, *Ballarat Courier*, 14 May 1901.
- 18 Morton, np.
- 19 NAA Service Record, Alfred Bennett.
- 20 Morton, np.
- 21 *Western Agriculturalist*, 10 July 1886.
- 22 *Ballarat Courier*, 25 May 1908.
- 23 *Ballarat Courier*, 27 May 1908.
- 24 Morton, np.
- 25 *Ballarat Courier*, 3 January 1987.
- 26 Morton, np.
- 27 *Ballarat Courier*, 24 April 1914.
- 28 *Ballarat Courier*, 24 April 1914.
- 29 Ballarat Military Men, a collection of biographies, unknown authors.
- 30 Ballarat Military Men.
- 31 *Ballarat Courier*, 7 July 1951.
- 32 Strange, *The Eighth Battalion*, p1.

BENDIGO AND CASTLEMAINE DISTRICT

By 1858 the British 40th Regiment had left Bendigo, and it was necessary to raise a unit from local resources to assist in maintaining order in the goldfields. The first attempt to raise a volunteer force occurred on 16 June 1858 at a public meeting at Abbot's Hotel, Pall Mall, Bendigo. During a further meeting there on 27 August the police magistrate, Mr Lachlan McLachlan, swore in 52 recruits under the name the Bendigo Rifle Regiment (BRR). Honorary drill instructors were to be Messrs Barber and Brown, both of whom had been in British service. All incidental expenses were to be paid by the members.

The government had authorised 2000 volunteers for Victoria, but as these numbers had already been raised in Melbourne, no assistance was provided to the BRR with arms, uniforms or drill instruction. Consequently, in December 1858 the members unanimously decided to disband the unit and present any surplus cash to the Benevolent Asylum.

By July 1859 the Franco-Austrian War again made the people of Bendigo anxious about their own defence, and on 20 September 1860 a public meeting was held to raise the BVRC. On 9 October, with Dean-Pitt, the colonel of volunteers, in attendance, the BVRC was raised, with McLachlan swearing-in 173 members. The 300 recruits required were obtained within three days. The uniform was green with red facings, with a shako with a black plume. There were three companies each of 100 men with an instructor, and Camp Reserve was set apart for a drill ground. A ballot was held at the Shamrock Hotel, and mining warden Musgrave Anderson was elected CO. Drill was held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and on Wednesday and Friday evenings. About 300 members turned out for the first drill held on 16 October. Early in 1861 detachments of the BVRC were formed at Eaglehawk, Kangaroo Flat and White Hills, and the government granted the corps the use of the old military barracks at Camp Reserve as an orderly room.

The CVRC was also formed at Castlemaine in 1860. When a second Corps was raised by 1863, with detachments in Maldon and Kyneton, the Castlemaine corps became the 1st Castlemaine, while the other detachments formed the 2nd Castlemaine. An additional detachment of the 2nd was raised at Malmesbury in 1876.¹

The first public appearance of the BVRC in uniform occurred on Queen Victoria's Birthday, 24 May 1861. Some 140 Bendigo men paid their own fares (£12, or \$24, each on Cobb & Co coaches) the night before, and travelled to Castlemaine to take part in a grand review, sham fight and rifle match. Bendigo, Castlemaine and the Maryborough Rifles provided 350 men and the Kyneton Mounted Rifles 40 men. They were so keen that when the cavalry charged at the infantry there were real injuries. Fortunately bayonets had not been fixed, otherwise these might have been more severe. Subsequently, instructions were issued prohibiting cavalry from approaching at the charge within 35 metres of any infantry. A feature of the celebrations was the shooting challenge between Bendigo and Castlemaine. The prize was a silver bugle valued at 25 Guineas (\$52.50), which was won by Bendigo by two points. As Anderson was absent from the district, Captain James Skene became the CO.

Following the successful raising of the BVRC in 1860, a meeting was held in June 1861 to raise a troop of cavalry, which became a unit of the 1st or Royal Victorian Cavalry Regiment, and paraded for the first time (unmounted) on 31 July. This troop was later called the Sandhurst Troop of the Royal Victorian Volunteer Cavalry Regiment. Their first, and apparently most unimpressive, mounted appearance was reported in the *Bendigo Advertiser* on 9 August 1861. In the period 1860-61 Bendigo supported the BVRC (with contingents at Eaglehawk, Kangaroo Flat and White Hills), the Volunteer Cavalry Regiment and a drum and fife band.

In early 1862 the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers visited Bendigo for a rifle match. Bendigo, now under Captain James Brewer, formerly of the St Kilda Rifles, won the match. In April the regiment went into camp at Werribee. The camp was washed out and the unit was sent to Melbourne to dry out. Captain John Lysaght took over as CO in August when Brewer resigned. In November the uniform was changed to French grey with blue facings and the shako had a red and white ball on top of the crown. After the introduction of this uniform the BVRC became known as the Bendigo Greys. In 1863 the BVRC and the 1st and 2nd CVRC all came under command of the North-western Battalion CO Lieutenant Colonel Bull.²

When the governor came to Bendigo to open the Melbourne to Bendigo section of the Murray River Railway in 1862, the BVRC and cavalry troop participated with the CVRC, their band and the Castlemaine Light Dragoons. In 1863, with the Maori War continuing, 76 volunteers from the BVRC went to New Zealand. These included Skene and some of the best sergeants.

In March 1864 the governor, Sir Charles Darling, visited Bendigo. He was met at the railway station by the mayor and a guard of honour and escort comprising the BVRC, cavalry and police. In September the BVRC held a shooting match with the Robin Hood Company of the British Nottingham Rifles. The Bendigo team, the best in the colony, demonstrated its prowess by comfortably beating the British team. Late in the year Captain John Taylor took command of the BVRC on the death of Lysaght.

The BVRC provided an escort for the new governor, Sir H. Manners Sutton, on his first visit to Bendigo in 1866. In 1867 the Duke of Edinburgh opened the new brick orderly room. Bendigo again topped the shooting for the year.

Staff Sergeant O'Meara was a drill instructor employed by the Victorian volunteer forces and tasked with training the BVRC.³ He died of a lung condition in 1876, one month after retiring, following 15 years service with the BVRC and 13 with the British Army. Such was the esteem in which he was held that an amateur performance was held at the Royal Princess's Theatre for the benefit of his widow, and the sum of £120 (\$240) was handed to her.

The Queen's Birthday in 1872 saw 762 officers and men from the infantry, cavalry and artillery hold a grand review in Bendigo. A reorganisation that year saw the BVRC become part of the Mount Alexander Battalion Rifles, together with Castlemaine and its detachments at Maldon, Kyneton and Malmsbury.

In 1873 Taylor was replaced by Captain George Joseph as CO. Further royal escort duties occurred that year, with a double vice regal visit by the governor of Victoria, Sir George Bowen and Lady Bowen and the governor of NSW, Sir Hercules Robinson and Lady Robinson. Joseph was promoted to major in 1875. Colonel Scratchley, with Sir William Jervois (soon after appointed governor of South Australia), had been appointed to inspect the defences of Australia and New Zealand. He inspected the BVRC in 1877, complimenting them on their performance.

In 1878 Joseph resigned and was replaced by Captain William Blackham. Ballarat won the Victorian Rifles Association shoot against Bendigo and other teams, taking the Major Caleb Anderson trophy, a feat they accomplished again in 1879. Blackham was promoted to major in the rifles in 1880. The BVRC and cavalry provided escorts for Princes George and Albert during another Royal Visit in 1881.

Major changes to the Victorian forces occurred in 1883. After a number of commissions of enquiry, a recommendation was accepted to disband the volunteer force and replace it with a paid militia. The volunteers were disbanded on 31 December. The final parade of the BVRC was held on 10 December and the closing scenes took place at a grand banquet on 30 January 1884. Many of the officers and men retired, but many also transferred to the militia.

The Bendigo and Castlemaine volunteer rifles were combined into the 4th Battalion Victorian Rifles under Lieutenant Colonel Aitken. The battalion had two companies at Sandhurst and two at Castlemaine. The uniform was scarlet with blue facings and a black helmet. On 16 June 1884 D Company from Castlemaine was disbanded and re-formed as the Melbourne University Company. One recruit to that company in 1884 was Private John Monash.⁴

Under GO 147 of May 1885, militia battalions were responsible for particular defensive locations around Melbourne. The 4th Battalion was allocated a HQ at Swan Island (off Queenscliff), with detachments at Queenscliff, Point Franklin and

Geelong. In 1886 Castlemaine school principal James McCay was commissioned into the battalion. He rose to prominence in the First World War commanding the 2nd Brigade at Gallipoli and Krithia, and later became Sir James Whiteside McCay, KCMG, CB, VD.

In July 1886 the university company was disbanded and its members transferred to the North Melbourne Battery of the Metropolitan Brigade of the Garrison Artillery, whose fixed guns defended Victoria's ports. In 1888 Major Peter Robin took command of the 4th Battalion, which had been renamed the 4th (Mount Alexander) Battalion, Victorian Rifles in 1887.

In 1888 the battalion again showed its shooting prowess when it won the Sir W.J. Clarke trophy by a large margin when competing against all other Victorian battalions. Blackham retired from the Victorian forces and was farewelled at a dinner on 8 March 1889. Another renaming occurred in 1892 when the Bendigo unit became the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Victorian Regiment. Khaki uniform was introduced that year. The uniform then became khaki with green facings, white helmet and brown leather equipment. In 1893 Major Arthur Hannam took command.

The registrar of the School of Mines, Bendigo, Mr G. Alec Thompson, was appointed as a captain in the Bendigo militia in 1895, and the following year the 4th Battalion was renamed the 4th Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade, with the first parade held at the orderly room on 14 January 1896. In 1898 the unit was split into the 4th Battalion at Castlemaine under Hannam and 5th Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade at Bendigo under Major Thompson. With this redesignation came a change in uniform to khaki with white facings and brown leather equipment. The 5th Battalion became commonly known as the Dandy 5th.

In 1899 Carl Jess, the son of a German immigrant painter, joined the cadets. While training as a teacher, he reached the rank of sergeant in the senior cadets. On reaching the age of 18 he enlisted in Bendigo's 5th Battalion. Jess enlisted in the AIF and fought at Gallipoli as a staff captain in Monash's 4th Brigade. He commanded the 7th Battalion and the 10th Brigade, and in ten years reached the rank of brigadier general. Jess later became honorary colonel of the 38th Battalion.⁵

The outbreak of war in South Africa in October 1899 aroused patriotic fervour in the colonies. Thousands volunteered to serve Queen and country. Members of the 5th Battalion became part of the 1st Victorian Contingent, which disembarked at Capetown on 25 November 1899. The 2nd Victorian Contingent, comprising members of the 5th Battalion, disembarked on 13 January 1900.

Among the honours distributed at the time of federation was a knighthood to Dr John Quick of Bendigo, who had an early association with the volunteers in Melbourne.⁶ He and Mrs Quick received a great public welcome on their return to Bendigo on 12 January 1901. Queen Victoria died on 22 January and a memorial service was held in Rosalind Park. The Bendigo military units took a prominent part in the service before a crowd of 10,000 people.



Above: 5th Battalion members preparing to march off to the Boer War from the Park Road depot, 1900.

Below: The 38th Battalion AIF with the Colours presented in 1916.
(Both photographs Bendigo R&SL Museum)



Federation saw the formation of the AMF and a further unit renaming occurred in 1903. The Bendigo/Castlemaine unit became the 8th AIR, and Ballarat's unit the 7th AIR. The 1st Battalion, 8th AIR was based in Castlemaine, with three companies there and one in Kyneton, while the 2nd Battalion had its four companies in Bendigo. Major Charles Davis took command of the 2nd Battalion in 1908 and, as a lieutenant colonel, led the 38th Battalion to war. He was awarded the DSO on 5 June 1917, and returned to Australia in 1919. Training camps for the Bendigo battalion during the period 1900-14 were held at Frankston, Mornington, Lancefield, Langwarrin, Sunbury (1903) and Seymour (1910).

The Bendigo uniform was a drab khaki service dress with red facings and gorget patches of green on the collar with a thin red cord through the centre. A felt hat was introduced for the first time and the khaki puggaree worn on the hat had thin red piping. The hat was turned up on the left side and attached to it was a black rosette bearing the regimental badge of gilt with a figure 8 surrounded by wattle.

Training of boys in drill had been carried out as early as the 1860s in Bendigo schools.⁷ Training in drill and musketry was being pushed again by 1906, and the first enrolment of senior cadets in Bendigo was on 26 June 1907, although the Bill for a compulsory military training scheme, which included cadets, was not introduced into parliament until 1909. Under the universal training scheme voluntarily enlisted members were not re-enlisted when their term of service was completed.

The Defence Act, which limited the service liability of CMF units to Australia and required separate units to be created to serve overseas, was amended in 1910 following Lord Kitchener's report, and universal training commenced in 1911 for all males from 12 to 26 years of age.⁸ The scheme divided the nation into areas that were allocated to battalions. Castlemaine was allocated Area 66 and Bendigo Area 67, which comprised Golden Square (67A) and Mollison Street (67B). Eaglehawk became Area 68, with Eaglehawk (68A), Echuca (68B) and Bridge Street Bendigo (68C). However, Area 68 never eventuated because the costs involved were so severe, and was re-allocated to Area 67.

In 1912 the four companies of the 1st Battalion, 8th AIR (Castlemaine (2), Kyneton and Maldon), along with Woodend and Daylesford, joined with the infantry companies at Footscray, Bacchus Marsh and Yarraville to form the 66th Infantry under Lieutenant Colonel F.S. Newell. In 1913 the 66th Infantry was renamed the 66th (Mount Alexander) Infantry. The latter companies transferred to the 65th Infantry when it was raised in Footscray and Yarraville in 1915 under Captain Hurry, who later commanded the 38th Battalion during the First World War.

The 2nd Battalion, 8th AIR and part of the 1st Battalion, Victorian Rangers became the 67th Infantry, and covered Bendigo City, Eaglehawk, Long Gully, Golden Square, Kangaroo Flat and the towns of Echuca, Moama, Deniliquin, Kerang, Swan Hill and Koondrook.⁹ The CO was Lieutenant Colonel Davis, the HQ was at Park

Road and the offices at Bridge St, Mollison Street and Golden Square were used for recruiting purposes only. The battalion trained in the vicinity of Park Road. In 1913 the 67th Infantry was renamed the 67th (Bendigo) Infantry.

On 4 August 1914 the AIF was formed. The 7th Battalion based on Castlemaine was raised. Immediately after the declaration of war, the 67th Infantry was mobilised. Over the period October to December 1914, volunteers from the 67th sailed with the 7th (four companies were provided) and 14th Battalions. Most of the serving CMF members came from the 17th Brigade area in central and western Victoria. In November the battalion went into camp at Queenscliff for garrison duty. On 1 March 1916 the 38th Battalion was formed from Bendigo as one of the units of the 10th Brigade, 3rd Division. On this date 201 ORs were taken on strength as a nucleus. The battalion went into the trenches under Davis on 1 December 1916. He handed command to Hurry on 12 May 1918. By 1916 the 67th (Bendigo) Infantry had so many of its members with the AIF that it became ineffective.¹⁰

In 1918, while the 38th Battalion was still in France, the remnant of the 67th (Bendigo) Infantry was renamed the 2nd/38th Infantry (later the Bendigo Regiment), establishing training centres at Bendigo and Echuca, with Lieutenant Colonel John Adams in command. The senior cadets became the 3rd/38th Infantry. Adams had joined the battalion in 1892 after the cavalry was disbanded in Bendigo. In October 1914 he transferred from the 67th Infantry to the 7th Battalion, sailing as 2 IC in December 1914, was wounded at Gallipoli and returned to Australia in January 1916.

Major George Lansell, an original member of the 38th Battalion and former OC A Company, took command until the 1921 reorganisation, when Lieutenant Colonel Blezard took command of the now 38th Battalion. Blezard had served in the 67th Infantry, and enlisted in 1914 in the 7th Battalion as OC H Company. In 1921 the 2nd/38th and 5/7th Infantry combined to form the 38th Battalion.¹¹

Lieutenant Colonel Percival Roberts, DSO, MC, the former CO of the 53rd Battalion, took command in 1922. He handed command to Lansell in 1927. By 1929 training depots had been established at Golden Square, Kyabram, Deniliquin, Heathcote, Kyneton and Gunbower. Universal training was suspended in November 1929 and the 7th Battalion, which had been raised after the First World War in the Castlemaine area, was amalgamated with the 38th Battalion to form the 38th/7th Battalion. Major John Swatton, another AIF veteran, administered command from 1931 and was promoted to lieutenant colonel on 4 March 1932.

Following the suspension of universal training, a period of stagnation set in and very little interest was displayed in military matters until 1934. In February 1934 the battalion conducted its annual camp at Elcho in Geelong. On 13 November The Duke of Gloucester visited Bendigo and the battalion and the 17th LHR provided

the guard of honour. The battalion held its annual camp in 1936 at Site 17 in the Seymour Army Camp.¹²

The 38th/7th Battalion was unlinked on the 9 November 1936, forming the separate 7th Battalion, which was transferred to the Mildura area, and the 38th Battalion commanded by Swatton. Castlemaine became part of the 38th Battalion with this change. During the war Swatton commanded the 15th Battalion VDC in Bendigo.

On 2 June 1948 authority was received from the Department of Army for the re-raising of the 38th Battalion (Northern Victorian Regiment). The CO was Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Cotton, DSO, MC, former CO of the 2/33rd Battalion and commander of the 25th Brigade in December 1945. After enlistment of officers and NCOs to form the nucleus of the battalion, general recruiting for all ranks commenced on 2 July, and training depots were re-established at Kyneton, Castlemaine, Bendigo, Shepparton and Echuca.

Sub-units were allotted as:

Bendigo	HQ, HQ Company, Support Company and A Company;
Castlemaine	B Company less 4 Platoon;
Kyneton	4 Platoon, B Company;
Echuca	C Company; and
Shepparton	D Company.

During October and November recruiting continued at all depots, and on 25 November the Bendigo Municipal Band was enlisted *en masse*.

In February 1949 the former 17th LHR training depot at Allingham Street, Golden Square, was reopened and Support Company relocated there. The training centre at Cobram was established on 6 May, and this depot became 12 Platoon of Shepparton's D Company. The 38th Battalion provided a guard of honour for the visit of the governor general, Mr (later Sir) William McKell, on 14 March, and on ANZAC Day provided guards at all places where services were conducted. Recruiting for regimental cadets commenced on 29 April.

The battalion conducted its first post-war training camp at Puckapunyal between 21 May and 4 June 1949. During the camp an inter-town drill competition was won by Shepparton, with Bendigo second. A demonstration of a platoon attack supported by aircraft was conducted. Present during the demonstration were the state's lieutenant governor, Sir Edmund Herring, and Major General George Wootten, CB, CBE, DSO, ED, GOC 3rd Division. The 6th Brigade camp included the 38th Battalion, the 8th/7th Battalion, the Melbourne University Regiment (MUR) and the 6th Field Ambulance. Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Shanahan, former CO of the 55th/53rd Battalion, was CO of the 38th Battalion from 1949 to 1951.

The first post-war Regimental Ball was held at the Mollison Street training depot on 5 August, and on 1 October the Southern Command Army Tattoo was conducted. The band and a platoon of the 38th Battalion with the Colours attended.

In November, when the results of the RSS&AILA Trophy were promulgated, the 38th Battalion came third behind the Adelaide University Regiment and the 5th Battalion (Victorian Scottish Regiment). In December A Company, which had been located at Mollison Street, disbanded to provide additional personnel for HQ, Support and HQ Companies.

The 1950 camp was at Puckapunyal. Regimental cadets were also present at this camp, during which the battalion won the 6th Brigade Efficiency Shield, presented by Brigadier Selwyn Porter, the brigade commander. An alternative camp for personnel unable to attend in January was conducted at Mount Martha from 15 to 28 April. During the ANZAC Day service the King's and Regimental Colours were paraded at Memorial Hall, Bendigo, while guards were provided at other services.

Training depot inspections were carried out at Kyneton on 15 May by the new GOC 3rd Division, now Major General Porter, and at Bendigo on 10 July by the newly appointed commander of the 6th Brigade, Brigadier Thomas Scott, DSO, ED, (formerly CO of the 8th/7th Battalion) and the BM, Major William Finlayson. The battalion held its Regimental Ball at Mollison Street on 25 August, and Scott was one of the official guests. A recruiting campaign commenced in September.

Over 6-7 October 1950 Southern Command conducted its annual tattoo, with the 38th Battalion participating in the massed bands event, the parade of Colours and the retreat and tableau. The battalion was at Wellsford Rifle Range on 16 December for the annual inter-town musketry competition, won by Cobram. The centenary of Bendigo was in 1951. On 13 January the battalion, with the regimental cadets, commenced its annual camp at Seymour, and on 29 January it took part in the opening of Bendigo's Centenary Festival.

A busy 1952 included a field firing exercise at Wellsford over the weekend 17-18 March. On 14 April an alternative camp was conducted at Seymour, and that month battalion members travelled to Canberra to take part in the ceremonial opening of Parliament, on the occasion of the Commonwealth Jubilee Celebrations. The CO in 1951-52 was Lieutenant Colonel Edmond Seymour, formerly CO of the 14th Armoured Regiment.

In November numbers swelled with the first intake of approximately 120 national service trainees finishing their three months training at Puckapunyal. That month training centres at Swan Hill (A Company less 3 Platoon) and Kerang (3 Platoon) were opened. A 6th Brigade Light Aid Detachment (LAD) was established at Golden Square training depot and was placed under the administrative control of the 38th Battalion.

The battalion conducted its annual camp at Seymour in January 1952 and the alternative camp was held in April. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Snell took command on 5 March. The Colours were paraded as part of the ANZAC Day service and on 15 August the Regimental Ball was again held at Mollison Street.

The expansion of the CMF by national service saw the 59th Battalion raised on 15 February 1953. Its HQ was in Shepparton, and 38th Battalion personnel there and at Cobram were transferred to the 59th. Kerang's 3 Platoon at was redesignated D Company, 38th Battalion, and Swan Hill became A Company.

The 38th Battalion annual camp was held at Seymour in April. A further change occurred on 1 July when the Echuca depot transferred to the 59th Battalion, then on 1 September the Castlemaine depot was transferred to the newly formed 4th Medium Workshops, with the result that the sub-unit at Kyneton was redesignated B Company. The battalion was now located at Bendigo (HQ), Golden Square, Swan Hill (A Company), Kyneton (B Company) and Kerang (D Company). C Company was not re-formed.

A ceremonial parade was conducted in Canberra on 15 February 1954 for the opening of Parliament by the Queen. A detachment from the battalion participated, carrying the Colours. On 5 March the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh visited Bendigo. The battalion and elements of national service battalions from Puckapunyal lined the streets. The CO, Snell, commanded all Royal Tour activities in Bendigo.

The battalion conducted its 1954 annual camp at Scrub Hill, Puckapunyal, in April. During this camp a battalion night attack was carried out under the guidance of HQ 6th Brigade. The battalion finished the year with a TEWT for officers and potential officers over 4-5 December. On 14 March 1955 the 38th Battalion provided a guard of honour for Sir Dallas Brooks, the governor of Victoria, and a formal dinner of 38th Battalion officers was held on 19 March at Passchendaele Barracks where guests included the mayor of Bendigo, Councillor Robert Poulston, Commander Deakon, RN, Lieutenant Colonel Meyers, the press and ex-Service organisations.

On 30 April 850 officers and ORs marched into Puckapunyal for the annual camp held at Scrub Hill. During the camp an infantry/tank demonstration of a company attack was given, followed by an inspection of a Centurion tank. Night training saw a body of troops stalking over ground prepared with trip flares. The camp saw a visit by Councillor Poulston and the shire president of Kyneton.

During the brigade annual camp visitor's day, Brigadier Noel Simpson, CBE, DSO and Bar, ED, the commander, reviewed a brigade march past. Visitors were entertained during the remainder of the afternoon. On 10 May the 38th Battalion moved out to undertake Exercise Bulldog, followed by training in the occupation of defensive positions and the conduct of the withdrawal. The camp concluded on 13 May.

On 1 February 1956 Snell transferred to the R of O, and Major Douglas Scholes took command. He had finished the Second World War as a lieutenant in the North Australia Observer Unit. A farewell dinner at the Hotel Shamrock on 2 March was attended by Simpson, Major General Robert Risson, CBE, DSO, OBE, the 3rd Division GOC, Major General Bishop Charles Riley, Chaplain General to the AMF and Anglican Bishop of Bendigo, Colonel Sir George Lansell, officers and guests.¹³ Snell presented a set of drums to the 38th Battalion band.¹⁴

The annual camp for 1956 was at Scrub Hill between 28 April and 11 May. In June the battalion changed to the tropical warfare establishment. On 30 November the new depot at Swan Hill was opened. On ANZAC Day 1957 the Queen's and Regimental Colours were paraded at the Kangaroo Flat and Bendigo ceremonies, with the band performing at both functions. Herring opened the Cenotaph at Bendigo on 2 June, with the battalion providing a guard and band.

On 10 October the band paraded to welcome the governor general, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, KG, GCB, GCMG, GCVO, GBE, DSO, MC, KStJ, on his visit to Bendigo. Several battalion personnel were employed as officials during the visit. The annual camp for 1957 was again held at Scrub Hill from 12 to 25 October.

In 1958 the Bendigo Regiment (by then the Northern Victorian Regiment) celebrated its centenary, having been raised as the BRR in August 1858. Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Robinson, another Second World War veteran, was the last CO of the 38th Battalion when it was removed from the order of battle during the reorganisation of 1960 that saw the state-based 'Royal Regiments' formed under the Pentropic system. The 38th Battalion became D Company (Bendigo), 2 RVR on 1 July 1960. Since 1948 over 2000 men had passed through the battalion.

In late 1961 D Company 2 RVR and its Bendigo, Castlemaine and Kyneton depots transferred to the Royal Australian Army Service Corps (RAASC). Kyneton closed in 1962 and its members transferred to Castlemaine.¹⁵ In 1973 the transport tasks of the RAASC and the Royal Australian Engineers (RAE) were combined and the Royal Australian Corps of Transport (RACT) formed.¹⁶ Bendigo and Castlemaine transferred to the RACT. By 1988 the depot housed the HQ of the 15th Transport Squadron RACT and the 14th Transport Troop, with links to the 128th Transport Troop in Horsham. The Allingham Street depot in Golden Square was used as a store for the Army Survey Regiment at Fortuna.

In 1998 the infantry returned to Bendigo when 5 Platoon, B Company, 8/7 RVR began parading at Passchendaele Barracks. From this small beginning Bendigo had the HQ of C and Support Companies of 8/7 RVR in the new barracks opened in 2003, before Support Company was split up, leaving the HQ of C Company at Passchendaele Depot. The company's other depots were at Shepparton, Swan Hill and Mildura.

Endnotes

- 1 Marmion, *The Victorian Volunteer Force*, fig 7.4.
- 2 Thomason, *Marching On*, pp1-12.
- 3 Marmion email, 15 March 2008.
- 4 Monash, *War Letters of General Monash*, p7.
- 5 Austin, *A Soldier's Soldier*, p13.
- 6 Marmion, 15 March 2008.
- 7 Marmion, 15 March 2008.
- 8 AHU, *The Permanent Army in Australia up to WW2*.
- 9 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p3-52.
- 10 *Officers List of the AMF*, 1 July 1917, p127.
- 11 Thomason, p37.
- 12 Thomason, p73.
- 13 www.stmarys.wa.edu.au.
- 14 Thomason, p88.
- 15 Interview, Munro, 21 February 2008.
- 16 Australian Army website, History of RACT.

Part 2—Chapter 10
MILDURA AND DISTRICT

The military history of Mildura effectively begins in 1912 when the 73rd Infantry (Victorian Rangers) was formed in north-western Victoria. Mildura became part of B Company, 73rd Infantry. In 1914 Mildura raised E Company, then became the HQ of B Company by 1915, and remained so for the rest of the war.



Mildura 73rd Infantry outside the Olympia theatre in Mildura, 1913.
(Mildura & District Historical Society)

From the end of the First World War Mildura's CMF history merges with that of the 7th Battalion. In the 1918 reorganisation the 66th Infantry was renamed the 2nd/7th Infantry (later the Mount Alexander Regiment). Senior cadets from the compulsory training scheme formed the 3rd/7th Infantry. In the 1921 reorganisation the 2nd/7th and part of the 2nd/21st Infantry were amalgamated to form the 7th Battalion which, with the 8th, 21st and 38th Battalions, formed the 6th Brigade, with its HQ in Ballarat.

In 1927 the 7th Battalion was allotted the Battle Honours of its AIF counterpart and the territorial title Mount Alexander Regiment. In the 1929 reorganisation the 7th Battalion was linked with the Bendigo-based 38th Battalion as the 38th/7th Battalion. The two battalions were unlinked on 9 November 1936, when the 7th Battalion (North West Murray Borderers) was formed at Mildura. It remained in the 6th Brigade. The Colour patch of the 7th Battalion AIF, brown over red (known later as mud over blood), was adopted.¹

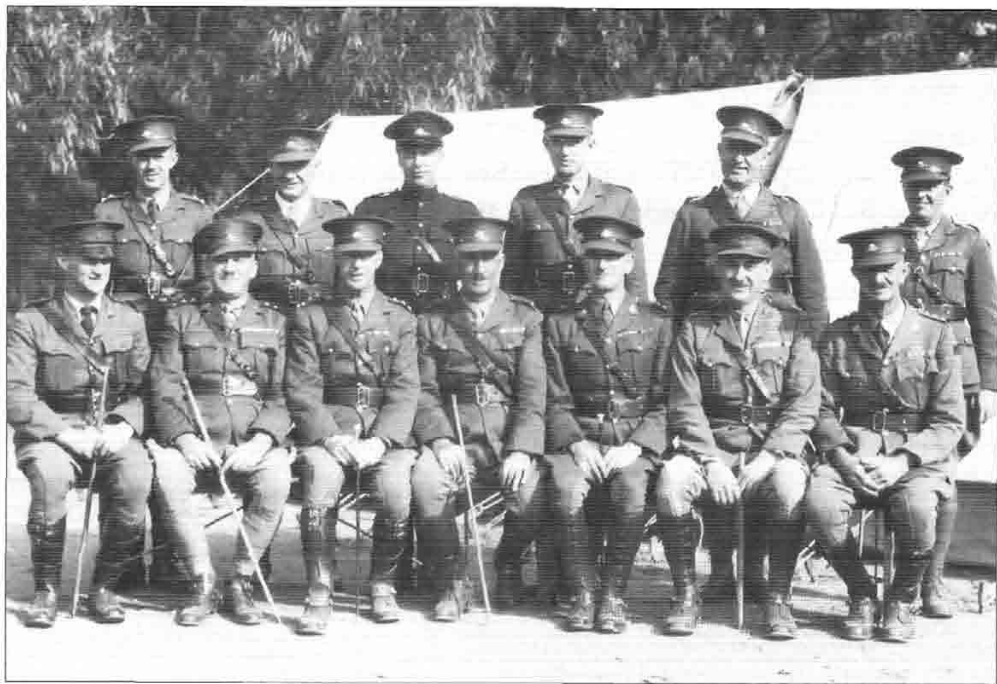
The 7th Battalion set up HQ in a grain and chaff store in 7th Street Mildura, opposite the railway station; training was held at the No. 1 Oval. The CO was Fred Goucher, a Boer War and First World War veteran and a soldier-settler at Birdwoodton. The Australian Instructional Corps (AIC) adjutant was Lieutenant Alfred Skerritt, MC, and the CMF adjutant was Captain Findley.

The area quota for the battalion was 297 men, but within a fortnight 340 had enlisted. B Company (less 7 and 8 Platoons) and D Company were at Mildura. A Company paraded at Red Cliffs, while 7 and 8 Platoons of B Company paraded at Wentworth in NSW. HQ and the band were based at Mildura.² Later the locations became A Company at Red Cliffs, B at Merbein, C at Wentworth and D at Mildura.

Training was one night per week, conducted at such sites as Appleby's Paddock and the No. 1 Oval. NCO courses and officer TEWTs and a few weekend bivouacs were carried out at such places as Gol Gol. Equipment was in short supply and was mainly First World War leftovers, but this did not diminish the enthusiasm of the soldiers. The 30 December 1936 *Sunraysia Daily* advised that:

the militia will parade in the Drill Hall at 155 Seventh Street on 11 January 1937. Wentworth will parade on 12 January and Red Cliffs on 14 January. Weekly parades will be held to complete 12 months training in 6 months. Wednesday and Saturday afternoon Range Practices will commence in May. There will be classes for officer and SNCOs on Wednesdays and Friday and the Annual Camp is planned for 17-22 May at Gol Gol. Additional clothing is now available at the Drill Hall.

During the following months the battalion also held camps at Seymour and Ballarat.



The 7th Battalion Officers, Gol Gol, 1937.

Rear: Lieutenant H. Wilson, Lieutenant E. Fargie, Captain John Blair (RMO), Lieutenant Alan Pitts, Lieutenant James (Stan) Pender, Lieutenant John Hughes MM. *Front:* Captain W. Morrison (Chaplain), Captain William Osmond MC, Captain Hector Wagstaffe, Major Fred Goucher VD (CO), Lieutenant Alfred Skeritt MC (Adjutant), Major E. Coldwell-Smith (Brigade Major) and Captain Hugh Conran.

(8/7 RVR depot, Mildura)

The year 1937 was busy for the battalion. In March, 200 men paraded to give the general salute when inspected by Brigadier John McColl, OBE, MC, the 4th Division GOC. On 19 April the entire battalion, 400 strong, paraded through Mildura for the first time. During the period 17 to 22 May, the battalion attended its first annual camp at Gol Gol. News from this camp was broadcast each evening on radio station 3MA.³

On 12 August 1937 the battalion held a military tattoo at the recreation ground, Mildura's first such event. Music was provided by the unit band and the tattoo consisted of a display by the MG platoon, a historical pageant with A Company displaying 1918 tactics and equipment, D Company displaying 1863-80 equipment, A Company returning with 1885 equipment and undertaking bayonet exercises, D Company returning with 1914 equipment and finally the current 1937 equipment.

Later a guard mounting display was given, followed by infantry drill and firing rifles by ranks. Finally there was a demonstration attack on a defended post. The tattoo

concluded with a parade of all participants, music, and a march past. It coincided with Mildura's Golden Jubilee Celebrations. Although the program showed the CO as Major Goucher, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel on 1 July.⁴ Captain Hector Wagstaffe was 2 IC, and WO 1 H.N. Watson the RSM.

The first 14 day camp for the battalion was held at Seymour in 1937. A troop train picked up B and C Companies at Merbein and HQ and the band at Mildura before A Company boarded at Red Cliffs. On arrival at Seymour the troops unloaded the stores from the train and marched the eight kilometres to their campsite.⁵ The battalion's first annual dinner was held at the Hotel Wintersun on 20 December, with nearly 100 members in attendance. The guest of honour was Major Robert Hillard, MC (RTD), president of the welfare committee and a member of the 7th Battalion AIF.⁶

The 31 December 1937 *Sunraysia Daily* advised battalion members of the details of the battalion's camp commencing 2 January 1938 at Ballarat. An extract of the report reads:

B Company (Wentworth) members will parade at the Wentworth Post Office at 7.15 pm where they will be conveyed to the Merbein Railway Station where they will entrain with the Merbein personnel. D (S) and HQ Wing, Mildura will parade at the Drill Hall, Seventh Street, at 8.30 pm and the train will leave the Mildura Station at 9.25 pm.

A Company, Red Cliffs and personnel of HQ Wing who are unable to entrain at Mildura will parade at the company parade ground, Red Cliffs at 9.15 pm. The train will leave at 10.00 pm. The time of arrival of the troop train at the detraining station, saleyards, Ballarat will be 7.15 am, January 3rd.

The following articles of personal clothing will be taken into camp by all members: towel, shaving kit, toothbrush and paste, spare shirt, spare singlet, spare socks, pyjamas (optional) The above will be carried in the haversack and pack. Swimming togs can be taken in members wish to. Slacks and greatcoat will be carried in the pack. Cape may be taken to camp if so desired.

Men will parade in full marching order, ie breeches, puttees, boots, tunic, hat, full equipment, water bottles, haversack, pack and rifle.

The Advance Party will ... leave Mildura by the usual train tonight (New Year's Eve).

This camp was attended by 300 members.

In mid-1938 a new Mildura depot was opened by Major General John Whitham, DSO, GOC 4th Division, and on 28 August the battalion trooped the Colours at the Mildura Recreation Ground, with Jess taking the salute.

In November 1938 the battalion, with the 8th, 23rd/21st, and 38th Battalions, attended the 6th Brigade, 4th Division, camp at Seymour.⁷ The 7th was the strongest unit in the brigade, with 260 members present. A Company (Red Cliffs) provided

77 officers and men, which at 87.5 percent was the highest attendance rate of any company in the brigade. One unemployed man lost his Lee-Enfield .303 rifle from the train between Mildura and Irymple, and might have had to pay the Defence Department £9 (\$18), but fortunately the rifle was found. A number of men returned from the camp to find themselves dismissed from their employment.

On 11 May 1939 the advance party left for a one week camp at Broadmeadows. This party included Goucher, Lieutenant Loughran of the Staff Corps (who commanded the 8th Battalion in 1945) and Lieutenant Victor Ellis. Attendance from Mildura was 172 men, and there were 113 from Merbein and 97 from Red Cliffs. The camp included tactical exercises and training with sections and platoons in protection on the march and in the attack, the climax being the tactical scheme.

The *Sunraysia Daily* of 25 May said that members 'who attended the camp say the work proved interesting and instructive. Although rain was experienced on two or three days and left a sea of mud, this did not dampen the ardor of the troops, but living conditions were made uncomfortable'.⁸ The camp culminated with a march through Melbourne. The 7th Battalion was described as the 'sturdiest and most powerful body' in the parade.⁹ In July 1939 eleven battalions competed in the Glasgow Shoot, which was won by the 38th Battalion with 992 points; the 7th Battalion was second with 856 and the 43rd/48th Battalion from SA was third with 824.

At the outbreak of war the 7th Battalion had the same organisation as when it was unlinked from the 38th Battalion. A week after war was declared in 1939 a full dress military ball was held in the Shire Hall, and as happened in 1914, early enlistments from Mildura were from the CMF. The 7th Battalion, like many other CMF units, tried to volunteer as a unit for overseas service, but was rejected on the grounds that it was needed for the defence of Australia.¹⁰ On 26 October the band led a draft of 21 volunteers for the AIF from the drill hall to the railway station. Several years of training, labouring and waiting for battle were ahead of the men of the 7th Battalion, before they finally saw action.

On 1 April 1948, the CMF was re-formed. The 7th Battalion was linked with the 8th Battalion to form the 8th/7th Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment) with HQ at Ballarat. The *Sunraysia* companies were C Company at Mildura and D Company at Red Cliffs.

On 4 April 1954, during the Royal visit to Mildura, C and D Companies, with the band, paraded for the Queen. The parade commander was Major Carlyle Barnden, who had been the battalion's representative in the Coronation Contingent. In 1957 D Company became the medium machine gun (MMG) platoon of Support Company.

On 1 July 1960 the Pentropic organisation was introduced into the Australian Army and the Victorian battalions were formed into the 1st Battalion, RVR (city-based battalions) and 2nd Battalion, RVR (country-based battalions). The *Sunraysia*

depots formed C Company, 2 RVR. The Red Cliffs depot was closed in 1962 and sold, and that year the Mildura drill hall was named Kiarivu Barracks.¹¹

By 1964 recruiting in Mildura was going well, 13 new members being recruited on 9 November. The Australian Army was re-equipping and in January 1965 the company received its new L1A1 self-loading rifle (SLR), the new M60 general purpose machine guns (GPMG) and new rocket launchers.¹²

The strength of the company in early January 1965 allowed 1 Platoon to be made up of the experienced soldiers, while 2 and 3 Platoons were made up of recruits. A new 4 Platoon was raised as the numbers grew. In early February a course for junior NCOs on methods of instruction was commenced, and Captain Frank (Mick) Gilshenan, a 2/6th Battalion member with Middle East and Pacific Islands experience, was attached to the company from 1 RVR. In February notice was received that the company would have a new name and more independence, while Major General His Honour Judge N.A. Vickery, GOC 3rd Division, who was in Mildura in his civilian capacity undertaking court work, visited it.

A few weeks later cabinet approved the abandonment of the Pentropic structure. Over 19-20 February the trained soldiers went on a bivouac at Psyche Bend on the Murray River, while the recruits trained in the depot. Colonel Geoff Swan, the CO of 2 RVR, attended the bivouac to farewell the company from 2 RVR. Due to the fire danger all meals were cooked at the depot and transported to those in the field. However, although the 100 men on the bivouac were keen to carry on, with the temperature at 107° Fahrenheit (41° Celsius), training was halted.¹³

On 22 February 1965 the 1st Independent Rifle Company (IRC) (North West Murray Borderers) was formed at Mildura under Captain Keith Wilson, an original member of the 8th/7th Battalion. Two other original 8th/7th Battalion members, Captain Laurie Wilkinson and Sergeant Pat Lanigan, both of Red Cliffs, served with the company until 1975. On 24 April 1965 the company had its own radio show on 3MA called On Parade and from then the company strength grew to over 300.¹⁴

The 7-9 May 1965 bivouac was Wilson's last, and was attended by 93 members. The trained soldiers undertook a zeroing practice at the Mildura Rifle Range and other training at Johnson's Bend on the Murray River, while recruits trained at the depot. Wilson, who was transferring to Melbourne, handed over to Gilshenan, also the District Telephone Manager of the Post Master General's (PMG) Department. As well as undertaking military training, the company provided support to the community. In one such support role some company members were used as patients in a civil disaster exercise based on an aircraft crash.

In July, under the control of the 3rd Division WO Caterer, Harold Wilde, seven members commenced a cooking course at the Mildura High School, a first for the CMF in Victoria. At the same time the company started training ten members as signallers and a further ten as drivers. The annual camp for 1966 was held at

No. 2 State Forest at Puckapunyal over the first two weeks in October, while that in 1968 was held over the period 5 to 18 October at Mount Hickey, near Broadford. The annual camp in 1969 was held between 11 and 26 October, again at Mount Hickey.¹⁵

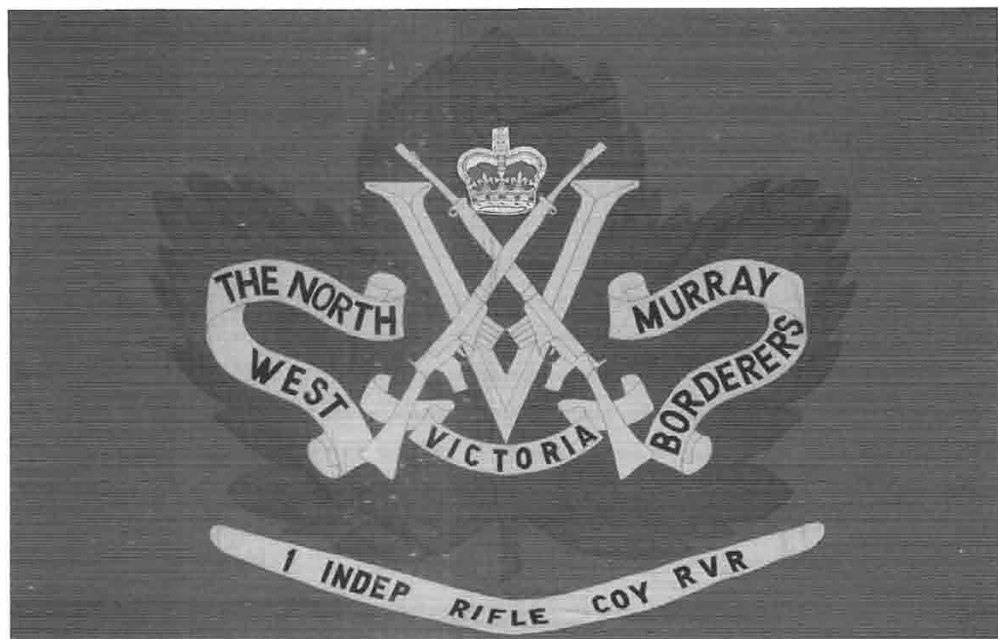
One of the reasons given for raising an independent company in Mildura was the possibility of raising a new battalion based on it. By 1967 none of the Victorian battalions had reached its establishment level, however, 1 IRC, raised on a standard rifle company establishment, had done so and a fourth platoon was raised. The company was hopeful of being able to expand to a battalion, with a restricted number of rifle companies. If it had been raised, the battalion would probably have been called 7 RVR.¹⁶



8th/7th Battalion, 2 RVR Pentropic and 1 Independent Rifle Company members
Captain Keith Wilson, Sergeant Pat Lanigan and Captain Laurie Wilkinson
at Mildura, 1967.

(8/7 RVR depot, Mildura)

On 7 July 1970 Gilshenan sent a letter to HQ 4th Task Force (TF) requesting that a unit flag be approved. The original design was by Dr J.M. Blair, a former CMF captain, depicting a grape leaf with an RVR badge and two half scrolls with the words 'The North West Murray Borderers'. Under the leaf was a boomerang with the name 1 Independent Rifle Company (1 IRC), RVR. Brigadier Robert Vial, the TF commander, recommended the design to HQ 3rd Division, which recommended it to the Commander Southern Command, Major General Ken Green. The words 'anticipate approval' were written in the file and dated 16 July 1971.¹⁷ The flag is held by a former member in Mildura.



The 1st Independent Rifle Company Flag, produced in 1971.
(Neil Leckie)

The company strength was 178 all ranks in July 1970 and by September 1970 had risen to 212. The annual camp was held from 3 to 16 October at Puckapunyal, with 160 members attending. The company exercised three rifle platoons, a support platoon and its administrative sections. While the camp critical review stated that the troops knew what to do, it also stated that they were slow in applying their knowledge and using their initiative. However, the aims of the camp were achieved.¹⁸

To ease overcrowding in the depot, attempts were made to have a 22 by 10 metres disused hut moved to Mildura from Kerang, but this did not happen. National

service was reduced to 18 months, and with the possibility of the scheme being wound up, numbers had dropped to 170 by May 1971. Camp was at Eildon from 9 to 23 October.

With the retirement of Gilshenan on 28 February 1972, Captain Edward (Ted) Crane was promoted to major and assumed command. He took the company to camp from 17 to 30 September 1972. In September 1973 members of 1 IRC flew by RAAF Hercules to Canungra in Queensland to participate in a 2 RVR exercise there. However, due to a fall in numbers after the end of national service, 1 IRC returned to 2 RVR as 5 Platoon, B Company, in 1975.

In summer 1975-76 fires raged for almost six weeks in NSW, near Mildura. A major problem was the difference in radio systems between the local Rural Fire Brigades and those from the eastern areas of the state. The CMF was asked to assist, and Mildura members set up a command post (CP) with eight signallers and some Army radio equipment, which assisted in quickly controlling the fires.

During 1976 members from the depot took part in a firepower demonstration at Puckapunyal, undertook survival and navigation training in the snow and held an engineering and bridging exercise on the Murray River. The CO of 2 RVR, Lieutenant Colonel Barry Ingram, and members from most of the battalion's depots attended. With the 2 RVR band, supported by the Mildura Technical School band, they marched from the drill hall to the river past the Civic Buildings where the mayor, Councillor Laurie Andriske, the town clerk, Mr William Downie, and Brigadier William (Mac) Grant, the honorary colonel of the RVR, took the salute. Two helicopters from No. 5 Squadron, RAAF Fairbairn, supported the exercise.

In October 1979, 2 RVR held its annual field exercise in the Big Desert south of Murrayville. The 216 battalion members attending included 38 from Captain Bill Burns' B Company depot at Mildura. For the first time two members, Privates Rhonda Beer and Marlene Smith, were women. Lieutenant Colonel Lynes was CO while Major Don Dow ran the CP. The exercise was defensive and included long distance night patrols in basically flat featureless country. Temperatures ranged from 3° to 34°. A course held during the exercise practised the drivers in bogging and un-bogging trucks in sand and muddy water. The exercise was supported by an Army Kiowa helicopter, and all battalion members who had not flown in a helicopter had a 'familiarisation' flight.

The strength at Mildura grew, and with the raising of a platoon at Robinvale, C Company was formed in the Sunraysia in 1980, and A Company then comprised Shepparton and Echuca. Swan Hill reopened in 1981, but as part of A Company.¹⁹ In 1980 the annual field exercise was held at the other end of the state, when the battalion went to HMAS *Cerberus*, near Hastings on the Mornington Peninsula. C Company provided 45 of the battalion strength of 140. Members visited the patrol boats HMAS *Buccaneer* and *Attack*.²⁰

In November 1982 a C Company team participated in a military skills competition at the Melbourne suburb of Williamstown, which included a 15-kilometre pack march, a 5-kilometre run, rope climbing, running and message relaying, stripping and assembling weapons and shooting. The competition had been held since 1973. The team of Lieutenant Jim Warn and ten men won the pack march and the pistol shooting, and came second in the rifle shooting. They won the overall competition and were presented with the Little Digger Trophy, the first time for a 2 RVR team. Altogether 35 teams participated, with five teams withdrawing during the competition. Several C Company members were treated for heat exhaustion.

Captain Kevin Watson took command of the company from Captain Fundak at the start of 1983. Watson, a former Australian Regular Army (ARA) officer, had returned to Mildura to manage his family's farm. He commanded the company for about 18 months, and towards the end of his time the Robinvale depot closed. On 28 September 1985 the Soldiers Club at Kiarivu Barracks was named the S.G. Pearse, VC, MM, Club.²¹

In July 1986 33 members of the company, with 14 members of the 27th Battalion, Royal South Australia Regiment (RSAR), undertook a 'mine blowing experience' when they travelled to Puckapunyal for mine training under the 7th Field Engineer Regiment (FER). The soldiers laid two minefields, each using 200 'jumping jack' mine simulators. During the exercise each group of battalion members attempted to 'breach' the other battalion's minefield and some live 'jumping jack' mines were detonated, along with a Claymore mine.

The Mildura depot is often used as a staging area for convoys passing through the city. In April 1988, 400 reservists in 210 vehicles stayed at the depot on their way to Cultana for Exercise Full Pack. There were 300 vehicles and 2000 soldiers involved in the exercise. In 1989 the Swan Hill depot was transferred to C Company, giving it two depots, and leaving A Company also with two depots, a HQ in Shepparton and a platoon in Echuca.

About this time the ARes was given a new task: vital asset protection (VAP) of assets in the north of Australia. The task of protecting the yet to be commissioned RAAF Tindal near Katherine, in the Northern Territory, was given to 8/7 RVR. C Company, which by now also encompassed the depots at Shepparton and Echuca, trained for this new task at Werrimull, south west of Mildura, in April 1989. Almost 100 soldiers participated in a location selected by Captain Garry Wescombe, who had been to RAAF Tindal in 1988, for its isolation and similar conditions.

The company protected critical services within Werrimull, such as the water supply and microwave communications link, and practised the ready reaction force (RRF) on its duties within the township. The weekend gave the company members excellent training for Exercise Kangaroo '89, held later in the year. Over the weekend 29-30 July company members attending Kangaroo '89 had their final briefings at

Ranger Barracks in Ballarat. On 12 August they flew from Tullamarine to RAAF Tindal to commence the exercise.

Also in April the company provided a guard of honour for 98-year-old First World War veteran Mr William Carroll on his first-ever flight to Melbourne for ANZAC Day and to meet the governor, the Reverend Doctor Davis McCaughey. Guard member Private Michael Reyne later joined the ARA, rose to the rank of WO 2 and was the CSM of C Company, based in Bendigo but in charge of the Mildura depot. Private Michael Laity served for a further 15 years, rising to the rank of sergeant.

The ARes in country Victoria has a huge commitment on ANZAC Day. In 1990 Mildura provided a catafalque party for Merbein. The guard commander was Corporal Malcolm Logue, who had transferred to the ARes after six years with the ARA. It was a family affair, as his father Private Herbert Logue served in the Second World War, while his grandfather Private David Eastwood served with the 7th Battalion in France during the First World War and was gassed.²²

In May a group of 8/7 RVR members, including Reyne and Private Rohan Morgan from Mildura, flew to Malaysia with a company from the 5th/7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (RAR). Nine soldiers deployed with the company, while a further three stayed at the 5/7 RAR barracks at Holsworthy in NSW as reserves for the deployment.

Through the 1990s numbers once again fell, and with the strength of the northern depots being at Swan Hill, C Company moved its HQ there in the late 1990s, and Mildura became 7 Platoon, C Company. In 2000 the company HQ moved to Shepparton and in 2005 to Bendigo. In 2006 Support Company was closed and its elements dispersed among the rifle companies. C Company in 2007 had four depots: Bendigo (HQ), Mildura, Swan Hill and Shepparton.

Endnotes

- 1 Unit brief.
- 2 Mildura RSL history and Parade Card 1938.
- 3 Unit brief.
- 4 Mildura RSL history and Tattoo Program.
- 5 Pedder, *The 7th Battalion*, p3.
- 6 *Sunraysia Daily*, 31 December 1937.
- 7 *Sunraysia Daily*, 18 November 1938.
- 8 *Sunraysia Daily*, 25 May 1939.
- 9 *Sunraysia Daily*, 25 May 1939.
- 10 Pedder, p4.
- 11 Unit brief.
- 12 *Sunraysia Daily*, 26 January 1965.
- 13 Unit brief.

MILDURA AND DISTRICT

- 14 Unit brief.
- 15 Mildura RSL history.
- 16 Vazenry, *The History of the RVR*, p56.
- 17 1 IRC R110-1-1, 7 July 1970, 4 TF R373-2-4 9, September 1970, 3rd Division R373-2-4, 16
September 1970, 4 TF R373-2-4, 16 July 1971.
- 18 Camp Critical Review 1970.
- 19 Unit Brief and Parade Card.
- 20 *Sunraysia Daily*, nd, 1981.
- 21 *Sunraysia Daily*, 30 September 1985.
- 22 *Sunraysia Daily*, nd, 1990.

Part 2—Chapter 11
SHEPPARTON AND DISTRICT

The first military unit raised in Shepparton was F Company of the VMR, which commenced training in 1889, and became B Company in 1891. However, the Shepparton military experience goes back further, for the town did not agree with the unorthodox measures used by the bushranger Ned Kelly to raise funds, and it had a detachment of the Victorian Permanent Artillery guarding the three banks from 1879 until the railway arrived in 1880, providing a means of getting outside assistance.¹ The light horse (the later name for the VMR) remained part of Shepparton's military heritage until the Second World War. An infantry detachment of the Melbourne-based 60th Infantry was raised in Shepparton in 1912, after the reorganisation that year.²

During the raising of the AIF in 1914, C Company of the 7th Battalion was recruited from north-eastern Victoria and the Goulburn Valley, and the 59th Battalion, which was raised in Egypt during the 'doubling' of the AIF following the evacuation from Gallipoli, was based on the 7th Battalion.

By 1915 the Shepparton detachment of the 60th Infantry had transferred to the newly raised Melbourne-based 57th Infantry.³ Under the 1918 reorganisation the CMF unit in Shepparton and its surrounding towns became B Company, 2nd/57th Infantry. In the 1921 reorganisation Seymour (HQ), Shepparton, Benalla and Wangaratta formed a company of the Melbourne-based 57th Battalion. In 1927 Shepparton, Wangaratta and Benalla transferred to another Melbourne-based battalion, the 58th. They remained with the 58th until the 59th became a country-based battalion on 1 October 1938.⁴

From 1921 the Shepparton area was serviced by the 20th LH (VMR), with its HQ at Seymour. In 1934 this became the 20th Motor Regiment and in 1944 the 20th Australian Pioneer Battalion. Following a decision to extend CMF recruiting in country areas, the 15th Brigade of the 3rd Division was reorganised. The battalions took the same numbers of those of the 15th Brigade AIF: 58th, 59th and 57th/60th.⁵

During the 1939 camp the battalion band was formed and based at Shepparton. The popular tune of the time, 'My Mabel Waits for Me', was selected as the battalion march. In October a new bandmaster, WO J.B. Denovan, was enlisted. Under him the band won the divisional band competition. The battalion march was changed to

'Moray Firth', while the band also trained as stretcher bearers under the regimental medical officer (RMO), Captain D.G.L. Thomas.

In July a Regimental Ball was held in Wangaratta and this, combined with social activities in the other centres, contributed greatly to the financial support of unit welfare committees and bound the members of the battalion into a very happy family.

After the October camp home training recommenced, along with additional officer and NCO training. Recruiting in country areas had proved so good that the 3rd Division investigated a reorganisation of the 15th Brigade, and the 59th Battalion, with a strength of 1300 CMF soldiers and 500 cadets, was reorganised. The transport section, A and D Company HQ were in Shepparton. Training was accelerated, with special exercises and well-attended TEWTs conducted.

With the declaration of war in September 1939, the 59th Battalion was tasked to supply security guards at a number of vulnerable points. The CO and all officers of the battalion volunteered for overseas service, and the battalion as a whole was prepared to serve overseas, but the raising of the 2nd AIF prevented this happening.

When the CMF was re-formed in July 1948, D Company, 38th Battalion, was based at Shepparton. Its OC was a pre-war 59th Battalion member, Captain William (Bill) Arthur, who ended the Second World War as a captain with the 2/14th Battalion. The 2 IC and OC of 13 Platoon at Cobram was Captain Kenneth Evans, also a former member of the 2/14th Battalion. D Company was a healthy sub-unit, and it was no surprise that Shepparton became the location of the HQ of a new 59th Battalion following the introduction of national service in 1951.

With the massive influx of numbers the CMF needed extra officers and NCOs. Shepparton's Les Earl was one soldier selected for NCO training. Along with 200 or so others he was taken from Puckapunyal about four days after commencing his training with the 15th National Service Training Battalion (NSTB). At the time 14 NSTB was allocated to artillery, 15 NSTB to infantry and 20 NSTB to armour. In six weeks the men were trained as corporals. Earl returned to Puckapunyal to become a corporal in a 52-man platoon.

The 59th Battalion was raised on 16 February 1953 under Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Crowle, who had served in the CMF prior to the Second World War, then joined the 2nd AIF and served in the Middle East as a member of the 2/3rd Army Workshops. He served as a major with LHQ, and as a lieutenant colonel was Command Engineer at Morotai.

The RSM was WO 1 Maurice Armstrong, who in 1949-50 was RSM of the 8th/7th Battalion. He had served in the Second World War and been commissioned as a lieutenant. Like many others, he took a reduction in rank to continue serving in the post-war Army, and became a WO 1. In the late 1960s, during the Vietnam War, Armstrong served as RSM of the 1st Recruit Training Battalion (RTB) at Kapooka, near

Wagga in NSW.⁶ Training depots for the new battalion were located at Shepparton, Deniliquin, Echuca, Cobram and the Melbourne suburb of Camberwell.

The first RO in 1953 showed that 168 members were transferred in from the 38th Battalion, and the new battalion went into camp on 9 May 1953 at Seymour. The main activity in this camp was Exercise Sheepwash, designed to give officers from the 6th Brigade practice in handling troops under desert conditions. The exercise was considered a success. The 59th Battalion strength at the time was 5 officers and 267 ORs, and the camp allowed adjustments to be made following the transfers from the 38th Battalion. By June 1953 the OR strength had increased to 340. The battalion's first adjutant, Captain Maurie Pears, MC, was posted in on 6 August 1953. He had been awarded his MC in Korea.

On 18 October 1953 the battalion's A Company (Cobram) and C Company (Echuca) began 60 hours of junior NCO training at Cobram, to prepare corporals for promotion to sergeant. These companies had been transferred from the 38th Battalion on 1 July 1953, with both companies retaining their identity. A further NCO course commenced at Shepparton on 26 July.

The battalion conducted specialist courses over the period 13 to 29 September for cooks, mortar fire controllers (MFC), mortar numbers and NCOs and medium machine gun fire controllers (MMGFC) and gun numbers. The cooking students performed so well that the CO invited the mayor and the city councillors for supper. On 17 December 1953 the band was raised under the leadership of WO 1 Stewart Rose. The Mooroopna Band was enlisted and commenced training there. Armstrong was posted to 3 RAR in Korea on 15 December 1953 and was replaced by WO 2 F.J. (Rex) Bolitho.

After many weeks of preparation, the 59th Battalion lined the streets of Shepparton for the Royal visit on 4 March 1954. The CO also had under his control a detachment from the RAAF station at Tocumwal and school cadets from Shepparton, Kyabram and Echuca.

On 13-14 March 1954 battalion officers took part in the 6th Brigade Exercise Pushbutton, aimed at practising officers and HQ staff in staff duties and procedures under battle conditions in the field. The battalion provided troops for the ANZAC Day services at Shepparton, Cobram and Echuca, where Crowle gave the address.

On 22 May the battalion moved into the 6th Brigade camp at Scrub Hill, Puckapunyal, the first camp it attended as a unit. On 24 May, during the camp, the president of the Shepparton sub-branch of the Returned Services League (RSL) presented the CO with a battalion flag following the changing of the guard. Later in the camp the battalion staged a demonstration attack supported by Vampire fighters. The 59th Battalion tasted success when it won the Snell Trophy for the brigade guard mounting competition. By June 1954 strength had risen to 17 officers and 761 ORs. Captain Eric Rule was the company commander at Deniliquin. He was accepted for

full-time service and spent a year with the United Nations (UN) in Kashmir. On his return in 1961 he became the second adjutant of 2 RVR.⁷

On 14 January 1955 the first post-war officers of the battalion, three national servicemen, received their commissions. At that time the battalion received permission to commence NCO training at centres such as Numurkah, Kyabram and Tatura. The battalion moved into camp at Scrub Hill on 30 April 1955. Two days later two sergeants were commissioned and three lieutenants promoted to captain. The battalion had a successful camp and won the 6th Brigade efficiency shield and the Snell Trophy for the second year in a row. Strength in camp was 13 officers and 578 ORs, with a further officer and 27 ORs attached. In June 1955 unit strength stood at 18 officers and 533 ORs.

Over 3-4 December A, C and D Companies undertook Exercise Break Thru on the Echuca-Deniliquin road, some 23 kilometres north of Moama. This activity tested administration in the field, battle craft, orders and routine in close contact. Two days later Pears transferred to the School of Infantry and was replaced by another Korean War veteran, Captain David Miller. At this time B Company was co-located with HQ 6th Brigade at Camberwell.

The old band had been defunct for some time due to the Mooroopna Band refusing their players permission to play in the 59th Battalion band during the Royal visit. On 20 July 1955 the first enlistments for the new band were sworn in. The services of WO 1 R. Meade were obtained, and with him came 14 members of the Euroa Band. The band provided the music at the send-off for Crowle on 28 September 1955. On 11 December the band provided the music at a public function to raise funds for a polio victim, and on 17 December at the officers' Christmas party, nine drums were presented to the band by various organisations. On 12 December six of the battalion's sergeants were commissioned as probationary lieutenants.

After Crowle's departure Major Frank Trainor, who ended the Second World War as a captain at HQ Southern Command, administered command. He took his company commanders to the 6th Brigade TEWT, Exercise Merridale, which dealt with an attack by an infantry battalion with supporting arms under conditions of nuclear war. Trainor was promoted to lieutenant colonel on 1 January 1956 and assumed command of the battalion.

Camp in 1956 was held at the end of April at Scrub Hill. The strength on the fourth day was 17 officers and 456 ORs, with 17 ORs attached. The 38th Battalion band assisted with training the new 59th Battalion band. The strength of the battalion in June 1956 was 20 officers and 604 ORs. Over the weekend 20-21 October A, C and D Companies and the intelligence section carried out tropical warfare training at a bivouac site in the Moira State Forest.

In 1956 the battalion changed to a tropical warfare establishment following an Army reorganisation. A tank threat was considered unlikely and the anti-tank

platoon was dropped. After his 98 days of national service training as a corporal, Les Earl took a mortar course, and in October found himself as a sergeant mortar platoon commander.

In mid-1957 Support Company provided a firepower demonstration. The company assembled six mortars, four Vickers machine guns, four six-pounder anti-tank guns and two seventeen-pounder anti-tank guns. The officer commanding the demonstration, Lieutenant Dave Bullard, controlled the whole action by silent signal. At the exact same moment every mortar bomb was dropped and every trigger mechanism was depressed simultaneously, causing the 100 or so spectators to involuntarily step backwards, almost as a drill movement. The demonstration was further enhanced when the fuel containers in the target area exploded when hit.⁸



3" mortar training in the Shepparton Barracks yard, 1956.
(8/7 RVR depot, Shepparton)

Camp in 1957 saw the battalion's mortar platoon live firing from Lyon Hill. The rule of the day was that no ammunition was to be returned, so at the end of the day the six mortars fired all the remaining ammunition. The platoon returned to Scrub Hill 'after laying the most magnificent smoke screen that has ever graced the north end of the Pucka Range'. Acting platoon commander WO 2 Ed Hawkes attended the CO's orders group for the brief on the next day's activities. These included a rifle company advance and attack with live firing support, which included smoke. Luckily the 38th Battalion, also in camp, helped with some smoke rounds. Hawkes' nickname of 'smokey' stayed with him for some time.⁹

With the rapidly expanding numbers in the CMF, promotions were rapid. Hawkes joined the 59th Battalion on 3 August 1954 after completing his 98 days of basic national service training. He was promoted to sergeant in 1955 and WO in 1956. While the RSM was away on course, he was acting RSM. He received his commission as a 2nd lieutenant in December 1957.¹⁰

The 3rd Division camp in 1959 was called Operation Firepower. Lieutenant Earl, who in civilian life was a mechanic and garage owner, was the transport officer for the exercise. He had many battles with higher headquarters over such matters as refuelling vehicles and timings of movements, but finally had his way, and the transport plans worked well.

Exercise Foundation was the last major training activity by the 6th Brigade, and involved the 8th/7th, 38th and 59th Battalions. The plan was to dig in to Stage 3 (overhead cover) in the area of Hassett Hill, on Puckapunyal Range, within two to three days. Twelve days later the objective had not been completed, as the ground was impossibly hard! However, lessons were learned on revetting, wire obstacles, patrolling and defensive routine. Other problems encountered were the foul weather and the presence of hordes of blowflies, which laid their eggs in anything woollen, such as blankets, greatcoats and socks. The exercise culminated in a withdrawal and cross country move during which the soldiers, who had averaged about four and a half hours sleep a night, finally saw the sun after twelve days.¹¹

On 1 July 1960 the 59th Battalion became E Company (Goulburn Valley) of 2 RVR. ARA member Captain Alexander Weaver was posted to the company in early July. He was an ex-sergeant who had been commissioned into the Intelligence Corps in 1948 and transferred to infantry in 1952. His task was to ensure that the company was capable of operating after a nuclear strike, the scenario under which the Army was training at the time. He was posted to the Northern Territory in late 1962.¹²

On 18 August 1963 the company provided a Cenotaph guard at the Shepparton sub-branch of the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women commemoration service. The introduction was by the mayor of Shepparton, Councillor John Stuart, and the address by Lieutenant Commander Dean Bennett, RAN. Among the members of the guard was Private Kevin Rees, who served for over 20 years with the

CMF and ARes. The company was eventually renamed C Company (Hume), with 7 Platoon at Shepparton, 8 Platoon at Echuca and 9 Platoon at Cobram.

In 1973, after national service ended, C Company was attached to 22 RVR. In 1975, it recruited from the area around Puckapunyal. The company collected around 60 names of potential recruits, and gave them to 22 RVR for processing. The area commander at Puckapunyal told 22 RVR not to recruit anyone. In June 1975 22 RVR was disbanded, S Block, its home at Puckapunyal, was closed and demolished, and the recruiting effort was wasted. The company returned to 2 RVR as A Company.

On 14 November 1987, when 2 RVR was renamed 8/7 RVR, A Company, along with 1 Platoon and the training platoon were based at Shepparton, 2 Platoon at Swan Hill and 3 Platoon at Echuca. Members participated in the battalion's Freedom of Entry presentation at Swan Hill in 1988 and Echuca in 1989. In 2000 the Shepparton company was again renamed C Company.

Endnotes

- 1 Ford, *Shepparton Military History*.
- 2 *Officers List of the AMF*, 1913.
- 3 *Officers List of the AMF*, 1916.
- 4 *Officers List of the AMF*, 1922 and 1926.
- 5 Interview, Earl, 22 October 2007.
- 6 Leckie, personal recollection.
- 7 Earl.
- 8 Hawkes, letter of 1 August 2007 and telephone calls.
- 9 Hawkes.
- 10 Hawkes.
- 11 Hawkes.
- 12 Earl.

GEELONG AND DISTRICT AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COMPANY

The GVRC was the first volunteer unit raised in Victoria. After a meeting on 8 May 1854 the volunteers held their first drill on 13 May. The corps was established by combining a company of retired British soldiers who had settled in the Drysdale area with a company of retired German members of the British Army who had settled in the Germantown (now Marshall) area. Since then Geelong has had a continuous military presence.

Rede, the Gold Commissioner during the Eureka Rebellion, was appointed to the GVRC as a major in November 1855. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel and command of the unit on 14 June 1858.¹ In 1855 the GVRC used Southey's Hotel in Yarra Street as its place of assembly.² At the time the British barracks were on the site of the current barracks in Myers Street. Some training was also conducted there.³

In 1859 the governor called for the GVRC to be increased to three companies, but in 1860, the Geelong and Western District Volunteer Mounted Rifles (which became the PWVVLH) was formed. In 1862 the ladies of Geelong presented the GVRC with a silver bugle, however, in the same year its role changed to artillery and the GVRC became part of the 2nd Brigade RVVAR. The same men now served in a different uniform. From 1862 there has been a continuous artillery presence in Geelong.

A detachment of A Company VMR was formed in Geelong in 1885, transferring to B Company in 1887, before disbanding in 1889.⁴ In 1879 the Congregational Church in McKillop Street was the location of the orderly room. This became too small and in 1900 Geelong Barracks was completed.

In 1903 detachments of the 29th LH (Port Phillip Horse), based in Melbourne, were raised in the area. The 1912 reorganisation saw Geelong raise E and F Companies of the 70th Infantry, and in 1915 these companies, with another company at Williamstown and Werribee, formed the 69th Infantry (locally known as the Corio Regiment). Also in 1915, the 72nd Infantry was raised with its HQ in Colac, drawing its companies from the 71st Infantry. In 1918 the 69th Infantry was re-formed into the 2nd/23rd Infantry and the 72nd into the 5th/23rd Infantry. In 1921 they became part of the 23rd Battalion, with the territorial title City of Geelong Regiment and the motto *Nulli Secundus* both conferred in 1927. In 1929 the 21st and 23rd Battalions were linked as the 23rd/21st Battalion (City of Geelong Regiment).

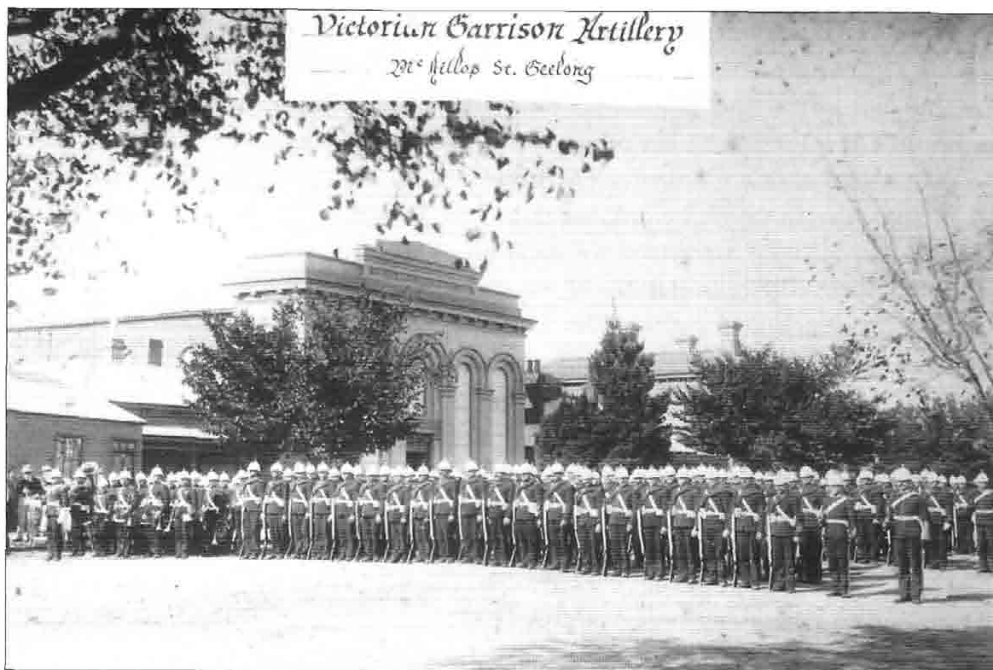


Above: CO Geelong Volunteer Rifle Corps Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rede (in front of tent) with members of the Corps, circa 1861.

(La Trobe Library)

Below: Geelong Volunteer Artillery outside the McKillop Street Orderly Room, 1900.

(Newland Barracks)



In 1938 the artillery became the 4th Anti-Aircraft Battery and a large red brick hall was constructed at the rear of Geelong Barracks to accommodate this unit. A unique feature of this building was a miniature anti-aircraft range on a steel gantry. During the Second World War the 6th Battalion VDC occupied the site. In 1939 the 23rd/21st Battalion had its HQ in Geelong with companies at Colac, Camperdown and Terang. Before being disbanded in August 1943, the 23rd/21st Battalion had served in both world wars and been granted more than 20 Battle Honours.

When the CMF was re-formed in 1948, the Geelong unit became part of the Royal Australian Artillery (RAA). The Pentropic change saw A Company 2 RVR established there, but by 1964 it had become a part of the 19th Medium Battery (City of Geelong). In the 1970s the title became the 10th Medium Regiment. Unusually, the territorial title City of Geelong Regiment was conferred on the artillery unit, and the depot is the custodian of much of the silver that has been presented to the successive Geelong units, including the bugle presented in 1861. These items are held in trust and several are displayed in the mess.

In December 1979 the GOC Training Command granted approval in principle for the 3rd Training Group to raise a new unit at Deakin University in Geelong, to be titled the Deakin University Regiment (later the Deakin University Company, DUC). On 19 January 1981 Lieutenant Colonel Alistair Lloyd was appointed to raise this unit. It commenced operations with him selecting a small team of officers and NCOs on detachment from their postings. Recruiting began in January 1981, with members being held on the strength of 2 RVR pending formal establishment of the DUC.

The DUC first paraded on 2 March 1981 at the 10th Medium Regiment depot, and was fostered by 2 RVR. Sergeant Dick Wilkie, a 2 RVR member who lived in Geelong but travelled to Ballarat to parade, was ordered by the CO of 2 RVR, Lieutenant Colonel Lynes, to parade with the DUC. Wilkie called the roll at the first assembly in a small room used as the project office. Present at that initial roll call on 2 February 1981 were the CO, Wilkie, one male and one female soldier. By 24 April the strength was 18 staff and 34 recruits, and it had grown to 97 members by 16 July.

On 29 April 1981 Lloyd was appointed CO, Deakin Unit, 2 RVR. The DUC brief states that an inaugural parade was held on Monday 20 July 1981.⁵ In March 1983 the company moved to 'Glastonbury', off Colac Road, Belmont, a Geelong suburb. Approval to raise a unit of company strength was given by the minister for Defence on 27 September 1983, the date the Army Office (Ceremonial) Manual confirms as the 'most correct' date to celebrate the unit's birthday. The official first parade was held on Sunday 4 December 1983 at 'Glastonbury', and reviewed by the 3rd Training Group commander, Brigadier A.J. McGalliard, ED.

On 29 May 1990 the DUC requested a 'unit friend', as honorary colonels support regiments. The Chancellor of Deakin University, Mr James Leslie, AO, MC, was informally approached and a formal request sought. On 27 June it was found that such an appointment not meet the criteria of the Manual of Personnel Administration. Consequently, on 4 September it was suggested that Mr Leslie be appointed as 'unit patron'. On 5 June 1991 a suggestion was made that Brigadier Graham Standish, AM, RFD, ED, be formally approached with the view of becoming honorary colonel or patron. This was supported by the GOC Training Command.

When he was OC of the DUC, Major Don Hughes, Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME), ensured that a unit badge was produced. On 30 September 1992 the CGS, Lieutenant General John Grey, informally approved a unit badge. The background is the design on the obverse of the Victorian Volunteer Long and Efficient Service Medal 1881-1901 (the motto *Aut Pace Aut Bello - Victoria* is from the original medal and translates as 'Either in peace or war - Victoria'). Superimposed on the medal design is the crest of the family of Alfred Deakin, after whom the university and the company are named. Under the badge is a scroll with the name of the company. The new badge was unveiled at the 10th birthday of the DUC on 4 December 1993. It was issued in March 1997, three months before the DUC transferred to 8/7 RVR as A Company. It was the most short-lived in-service badge in the Army, and was much sought after.

In January 1995 Major Robert Marsh succeeded Major Hughes as OC. In November/December 1995, following the sale of Glastonbury to the Catholic Church for a school, the company moved into a converted factory at Boswell Avenue, Newtown, another Geelong suburb. On 13 November 1996 Brigadier Douglas Ball, the 3rd Training Group commander, announced during a visit to the DUC that in 1997 the DUC would become a rifle company under 8/7 RVR.

At this time a 4th Brigade defence and employment platoon, such as was attached to the 1st Australian Task Force (ATF) during the Vietnam War, was based at Geelong Barracks. The platoon was from 5/6 RVR but was fostered by 8/7 RVR. It transferred as a whole to 8/7 RVR as the assault pioneer platoon, based at Boswell Avenue, on 1 January 1997. Since then the infantry in Geelong has been A Company, 8/7 RVR, which also controlled the Warrnambool depot and in 1999 opened a new depot at RAAF Williams, Laverton.

After refurbishment of Geelong Barracks in 2006, A Company 8/7 RVR moved in. The depot was re-named Newland Barracks and the Soldier's Club named the Jock McNeill Club on 9 December 2006. Geelong now has both of its ARes units collocated. They work closely with each other, with the guns of the 38th Field Battery providing support primarily for the infantry of 8/7 RVR. These are two of the oldest units in Victoria, now joined with the young cadets from 32 Army Cadet Unit who provide many of their potential recruits.

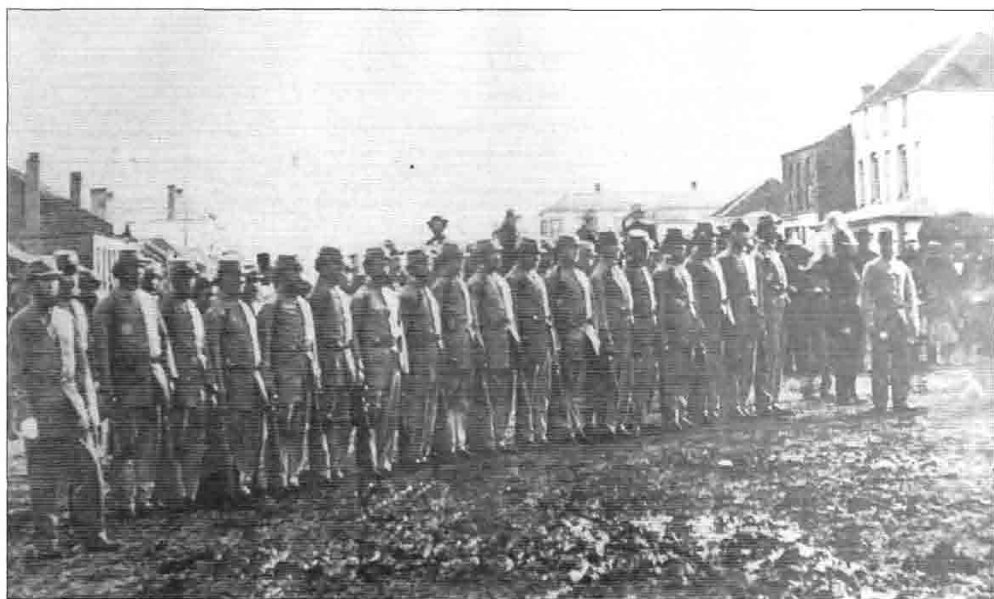
Endnotes

- 1 Baker, personal papers.
- 2 Ward, *Victorian Land Forces 1853-1883*, p108.
- 3 Interview, Barnes, 26 February 2008.
- 4 Calder, *Heroes and Gentlemen*, p146.
- 5 DUC Brief.

Part 2—Chapter 13

WARRNAMBOOL, HAMILTON, PORTLAND AND THE WESTERN DISTRICT

In August 1855 Warrnambool people met at Turnbull's Royal Exchange Hotel to form a volunteer force, to be called the Warrnambool Volunteer Rifles.¹ With the end of the Crimean War interest waned, but in July 1859 300 people voted in support of the formation of the corps. Governor Barkly had signed a proclamation inviting the formation of additional rifle companies, and Warrnambool raised the WVRC. By September, when sufficient numbers had enrolled, a local solicitor, Mr Robert Bushe, was elected lieutenant (later captain). A band was formed and played when Warrnambool hosted volunteer camps.



Warrnambool Volunteers, circa 1860.
(Lyndon King)

Members of the WVRC appeared in uniform for the first time on Friday 27 January 1860. 'There were forty members present, and as they marched from the drill ground through the town, they presented a fine appearance.'² Ten Enfield rifles had been received, and ten members were instructed in their use. Drill lasted for a fortnight, two hours a day.³ By 1863 it became apparent that the Volunteer Act had shortcomings, and a reorganisation took place. Most units in the colony raised to that date, except cavalry, were dispensed with, and the WVRC was disbanded.

An artillery unit, the Warrnambool Battery, Western Artillery, was raised in September 1866 with detachments at Warrnambool, Belfast (Port Fairy) and Portland, and HQ at the orderly room in Bentick Street, Portland.⁴ New Year's Eve 1868 saw the opening of the unit HQ. The orderly room was in Kepler Street and its walls still remain, forming part of the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) College located there now. The impressive building soon became the cultural, entertainment and military HQ for Warrnambool and district. The Warrnambool unit became the Western Battery, Garrison Artillery in 1870 and the 2nd Brigade, Garrison Artillery in 1884, after formation of the militia.⁵

When the VMR was formed in 1885, a detachment of G Company of the 2nd Battalion (HQ in Ballarat) was formed in Warrnambool. Sir William Clarke, a wealthy landowner from Rupertswood (Sunbury), maintained a private militia in the late 1870s and early 1880s. This force later became part of the army. Sir William presented a trophy for garrison artillery proficiency first awarded in 1886. The Warrnambool unit won the trophy in 1887, 1889 and the last time it was contested in 1892. The trophy remains in the custody of the Warrnambool depot.

Little change occurred over the next few years, with the VMR and the artillery, which had changed to the Western Brigade, Garrison Artillery in 1897, dominating the area.⁶ Many members of the Warrnambool units served in South Africa, with the VMR serving with great distinction as a unit. In 1901 sweeping changes took place within the Australian forces in the area. The garrison artillery was renamed No. 4 Field Battery, while the VMR elements were reorganised into the 9th LHR in Ballarat and the 11th LHR in Warrnambool.

In 1912 the Warrnambool infantry formed a company of the 71st Infantry with the towns of Koroit, Casterton and Hamilton. They transferred to the 72nd Infantry when it was formed in 1915. During the First World War the 11th LHR provided men for the Victorian 4th, 8th, 9th (with SA) and 13th LHR Regiments. The 4th LHR is remembered for its part in the charge at Beersheba, which opened up the allied advance in Palestine. This was depicted in the film *The Lighthorsemen*.⁷ Other units were raised with men from the area during the First World War, with many serving in the 8th Battalion (Blood and Bandages for its Colour patch) and the 7th Battalion (Mud over Blood).

From 1921 military units raised in the Warrnambool area included B Company of the 21st Battalion (Victorian Rangers). On ANZAC Day 1926 the Warrnambool and District War Memorial at Cannon Hill was opened. The minister for Defence, Major General Sir Neville Howse, VC, KCB, KCMG, FRCS, represented the prime minister at the opening. His car was escorted by a troop of the 4th LHR under Lieutenant Hughan and received by a guard from the 21st Battalion under Lieutenant Simms. Guests included the CO of the 4th LHR, Lieutenant Colonel George Langley, DSO, who commanded the 38th Battalion early in the Second World War. The memorial cost £3500 (\$7000), stands 11 metres high and has a 1.8 metre high white marble soldier with arms reversed. The names of 1450 people who enlisted in the Warrnambool district, including 240 fallen, are inscribed on the polished Balmoral red granite panels and marble centre strips.



21st Battalion Colour Party at Warrnambool Cenotaph, possibly the unveiling of the War Memorial on ANZAC Day, 1926.

(Lyndon King)

B Company of the 21st Battalion became the HQ of the 21st in 1929, and was based at the orderly room with the HQ of the 4th LHR. The depression saw the 21st Battalion linked with the 23rd, but the light horse remained. Faced with the mechanisation of warfare and the advance of aerial weapons, a decision was made to remove the horse-mounted soldier from the order of battle. Because of the similarity of tasks and tactics, light horse units formed the nucleus of armoured and mechanised cavalry units.

The Second World War saw the men of Australia once more take to the battlefield. Old boundaries persisted, and many of the Warrnambool and district men found themselves in the CMF 7th and 8th Battalions and the AIF 2/7th and 2/8th Battalions. Their Colour patches once more became a common sight in the area.

The CMF was re-formed in 1948. B Squadron of the 4th/19th Prince of Wales LH (Armoured) Regiment (PWLH) was raised in Warrnambool.⁸ The numbers perpetuated two Western District light horse units. The squadron was commanded by Major Frank Helsham and equipped with General Grant tanks. Jim Mack, who later became the CO of 2 RVR, was present when the tanks fired from near 'Granny's Grave', west of the Hopkins River in Warrnambool.

The armoured unit was replaced in 1952 by the 38th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, then in 1957 by a battery of the 8th (later R Battery, 10th) Medium Regiment, which in 1960 moved into the Pertobe Road depot under Captain Jock MacDonald and Lieutenant John Brunt. Before this, the CMF had used the 'Old Drill Hall', which is now part of the TAFE College.⁹

On 22 February 1965 the post-Pentropic reorganisation saw the return of an infantry unit to Warrnambool after a gap of 36 years since the 21st Battalion was linked with the 23rd as the 23rd/21st Battalion (City of Geelong Regiment). When 2 RVR became a country battalion its HQ, previously at Fitzroy in Melbourne, moved to Ballarat, with companies at Shepparton and Warrnambool, and a further company to be raised at Hamilton. The Mildura company became 1 IRC, RVR. The artillery unit at Warrnambool was transferred to Geelong, and every member of the Warrnambool depot faced a Corps change.

Support Company HQ, under the former artillery officer Brunt, was now based at Warrnambool. The company was proud to take to camp almost full strength signals, assault pioneer and mortar platoons and HQ. There was also an anti-tank detachment, which held a 106mm recoilless rifle (RCL), but was never given ammunition to fire from it, and the automatic rifle (AR) version of the SLR, but these were taken back after a short time.

In 1968 Lieutenant Bruce Hill, a teacher, took over as OC Support Company, a position he held until he retired in 1983 as a major. He was awarded an MBE for his services to the community, and died in 2004. During his command Portland first

became the assault pioneer platoon, then a rifle platoon, and later the sustained fire machine gun (SFMG) platoon. In 1981 a mortar detachment moved to Hamilton under then Corporal Philip Baulch, before becoming the assault pioneers. Captain Bob Peterson took over from Hill, and in the mid-1980s the signals platoon moved to Maryborough under 2nd Lieutenant Eddie Boucher and former ARA Signals Corps member and Vietnam veteran WO 2 Rick Williams. By 1973 Peterson had moved to WA and the mortar platoon commander, Captain Peter Keen, took command of the company. The depot was named Tel el Eisa barracks in the 1990s.

By the year 2000 the Warrnambool depot had a platoon of A Company, the HQ of which was in Geelong. Many of Warrnambool's soldiers in the world wars served in the 7th and 8th Battalions. Regardless of unit, corps or name, the citizen soldiers of the Warrnambool District have served Australia in peace and war. When 2 RVR was renamed 8/7 RVR in 1987, the traditional links with the two battalions returned.

In early 1885 Mr T. Skene of Hamilton proposed that a troop of cavalry be raised there. The *Western Agriculturist* included a report of Lieutenant Colonel Price being in Warrnambool, explaining the steps involved in setting up rifle and mounted infantry corps.¹⁰ A separate article included rules for such a corps at Warrnambool, in which members would serve for three years, with 14 days notice to quit. Price returned the following week and visited Mortlake and Hexham. Hamilton's military involvement began with the raising of H Company of the 2nd Battalion VMR.¹¹ The company had its HQ in Ballarat and detachments in Coleraine and Casterton. Its area spread to include Digby, Branhholme, Merino, Dunkeld, Penshurst and Heywood.

A meeting of the Hamilton Rifle Club (HRC) was held on 30 July 1885 to consider affiliating with the militia. The meeting resolved that the HRC enrol in the Victorian forces. Some members enrolled in the infantry, others in the mounted rifles. Men paid 5/6d (\$0.55) for accoutrements, and purchased rifles, belts and uniforms. Infantry were provided with free rail travel to drills (when in uniform or carrying rifles). Mounted infantry provided their own horse and saddle. They attended twelve drills per year to be effective. Karabeal and Byaduk were expected to have recruits. Colac, Penshurst and other western towns each raised 50 to 100 recruits.¹² Mr Walter Farroll, captain of the HRC, volunteered in October 1885 to hold a drill every Tuesday night to help club members become efficient members of the militia.

In early January 1888 it was announced that rifle clubs were to be disbanded and incorporated into the VRV, the regulations for which were printed in the local paper. The maximum age of enlistment was 35.¹³ In 1903 the 11th LHR was raised, and included Hamilton in its recruiting area.

Universal military training was introduced in 1911, expanding the military forces. In 1912 the infantry in Koroit, Hamilton, Warrnambool and Casterton became part

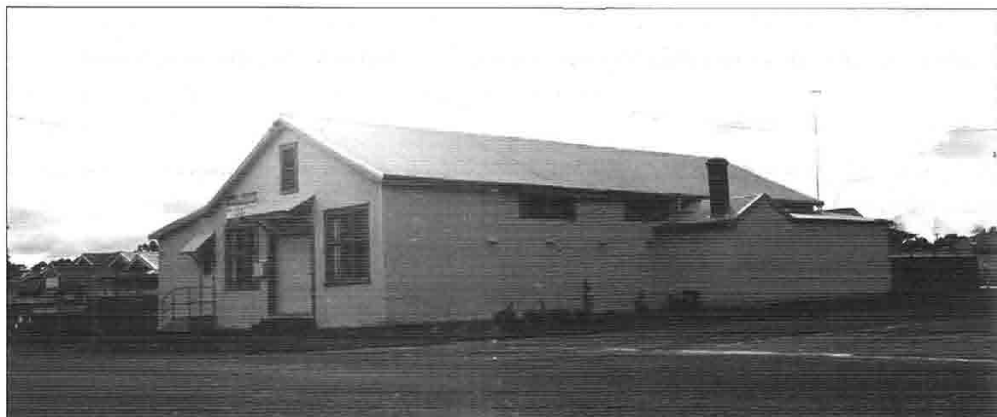
of the 71st Infantry, with its HQ in Ballarat. In 1915 Hamilton (Area 72A), with Casterton and Coleraine, became C Company, 72nd Infantry, with Warrnambool as B Company (Area 72B) and Colac as A Company (Area 72C). The light horse became a squadron of 20th LHR (Corangamite LH).¹⁴ During the First World War many men from the area joined the 8th Battalion, which had a recruiting centre at Ballarat, and the 4th LHR.

At the end of the war Hamilton, Camperdown and Colac were part of Area 23B, with HQ at Warrnambool. The area from Williamstown to Geelong was Area 23A, with HQ in Geelong. Area 23A became the 2nd/23rd Infantry and Area 23B the 5th/23rd. A further change in 1921 saw the once 72nd Infantry, (then the 5th/23rd Infantry) become the 21st Battalion (Victorian Rangers), with HQ at Warrnambool and C Company at Hamilton,¹⁵ and the 2nd/23rd become the 23rd Battalion with HQ at Geelong.

By 1929 the 21st Battalion area moved northwest and the 23rd Battalion west as far as Camperdown. Warrnambool became HQ for the now 4th (Corangamite) LHR.¹⁶ The depression years deprived the area of infantry, as the 21st Battalion was not maintained but linked in 1929 with the 23rd Battalion. Geelong became HQ of the 23rd/21st Battalion, the unit to which Hamilton's VC winner, Ted Kenna, belonged before the Second World War.

At the start of the Second World War the 2/8th Battalion was raised in the district, while the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion trained at the Hamilton showgrounds. During the war the 9th Battalion VDC trained at the drill hall and a training camp was established at the showgrounds near the drill hall.¹⁷ The battalion was commanded by Major Randolph Dunkley, who commenced his First World War service as a private in the Geelong raised 23rd Battalion, and ended the war as a captain in the 59th Battalion.¹⁸ Also during the Second World War, and for some years after, the drill hall was used by the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC) under the supervision of Doctor Sam Fitzpatrick. The paddocks around it were used to grow vegetables for the hospital. After the war Hamilton and the surrounding district maintained a detachment of the 4th LH.

When national service was introduced in 1951, the CMF expanded. On 10 July 1953 the Hamilton unit became the 38th Light Anti-Aircraft/Searchlight Regiment, with detachments at Kerang, Colac and Warrnambool.¹⁹ In 1957 it had a rare honour for an artillery unit when it became the City of Hamilton Regiment. The artillery closed down in Hamilton in 1965, and the depot was used as Tommy Moore's gymnasium until 1981, when an infantry element was raised as 12 Platoon, Support Company, 2 RVR, trained as an assault pioneer platoon. By the mid-1980s the Hamilton depot maintained a healthy presence, which peaked around 25 members in 1991.



Former Drill Hall at Hamilton, 2003.
(Neil Leckie)

Prior to 1985 the following were some of those promoted before leaving 2 RVR: Max Phillips to sergeant, Greg Riley, Tony Thurgood, Barry Lewis and Lance Corporal Les Batchelor to corporal. New members at the depot included WO 2 Max Humphrys, Sergeant Baulch, Corporals Susan Clegg, Peter Kenny, Colin Sinclair, Terry Pascoe, Ian Zschech, Garry Hockley and Lance Corporal Tony Schultze. In 1989 the government sold part of the land at the Hamilton depot, but this did not restrict training.²⁰

In 1991 a fulltime member, Sergeant Alan Sullivan, was posted to Hamilton to increase public awareness of the Defence presence. He was posted to Canberra in 1994, before discharge. During this time the mess was renamed the Walter (Wally) Button, MM, Club at a function attended by over 80 members and guests, including Kenna, VC, the mayor, the Returned and Services League (R&SL) president, members and partners.

In April 1991 the Hamilton-based assault pioneers, guided by Captain Denis Scott, a builder from Shepparton, completed a lookout tower at Green Hill Lake near Ararat. The structure was started in December the previous year by the platoon in conjunction with the local Rotary Club. This task gave the pioneers a chance to hone their engineering skills in preparation for future tasks.²¹

The drill hall was upgraded in 1991. Improvements were made to the roof, lighting and floor. In May two members of the platoon, Baulch and Zschech, joined a four member patrol on a two-week exercise. They were briefed in Sydney before being flown to Katherine to conduct the patrol in the Edith River area between Katherine and Darwin. The temperature ranged from 20° to 35°, and consequently water was the main item carried in their 50 kilogram packs. The patrol members also went to Kakadu National Park and the Mount Bundy Training Area and inspected areas of defence interest in Darwin before returning home.

In the 1990s many members left because they had been transferred with work, joined the ARA or were medically discharged. Hamilton struggled with numbers for several years until 1997, when consolidation and rationalisation forced the depot's closure, even though 14 members were still listed, with average numbers of nine to ten parading each week. Expectations were that most of the members would travel each week to Warrnambool, 110 kilometres away.

This did not happen, as Baulch and Private Phillip Hartwich were the only ones to accept the rigours of travel to parade for the next few years. Baulch later travelled alone for 18 months until Private David Brumley joined, then Corporal Rod Charman, Captain Michael Bowman and Private Ben Harpley made travelling a little less lonely, and much more enjoyable.²² After 112 years, the last links between Hamilton and the army were severed with the closure of the depot in 1997.

The military presence commenced in Portland in the 1880s, when a volunteer artillery unit was formed to relieve the British garrison. The coastal artillery pieces were located at Battery Point.²³ Little is known about the military presence in the area over the next 90 years, but in the 1970s up to ten Portland soldiers travelled to parade at Warrnambool. Later, a bus was hired by the Army for them. Lieutenant Ian Lewis worked in Portland, and with Sergeant Peter Polwarth he met Lieutenant Colonel Lynes, Bruce Hill, now OC Support Company, and others to discuss establishing a Portland platoon.²⁴

In 1976 WO 2 Hugh Forrest moved to Portland, having just completed two years in the United Kingdom, serving his reserve obligation during that time with the 4th Battalion, Royal Green Jackets (RGJ). After extensive negotiations and inspections in 1980, Forrest and Polwarth set up the 2 RVR assault pioneer platoon in the offices of the former Dennys Lascelles Wool Stores in North Portland. The platoon quickly grew to boast a platoon commander, platoon sergeant and 20 soldiers.

For 1980 night parades were conducted at Legacy Lodge in Wellington Road. In 1981 parades commenced at the offices of a warehouse in Darts Road.²⁵ Training consisted of basic skills and later pioneer training using stores scrounged from local firms like Borthwicks Meats and the Harbour Trust. Close training areas near the old airport were used. Polwarth remembers that some method of raising funds to pay for the power usage was devised, and suggested that it may have been raffles.²⁶

There was no storage facility for the platoon, so Polwarth kept the scrounged platoon stores in a lockable garage at his home. They consisted of such items as wooden slabs representing explosive, cotton reels for primers and rope for fuse. Shovels and pliers were provided by Borthwicks. When Army stores were required, they were transported from Warrnambool and returned the same night. Transporting weapons was a problem, as for security reasons this required two vehicles and four personnel. Eventually Borthwicks made the platoon two storage boxes.²⁷

There was much enthusiasm in the platoon when they were converted from infantry to assault pioneers. After a bus trip to the Central Clothing Store in St Kilda

to draw kit, one digger said he would sit at the front of the bus and keep an eye out for any young ladies. Then he amazed everyone by taking his artificial eye out and putting it on the dashboard! He had passed the enlistment medical by using his good eye twice! He didn't stay long.²⁸

Polwarth stated that the camaraderie among the members of Support Company was nothing short of amazing, the ingenuity of some of the pioneers astounded everyone in the battalion, as there wasn't much the platoon couldn't construct, build or procure, given sufficient time.

The battalion needed officers in its depots, so Forrest and Corporal Gordon Ainslie took a two-week officer training course with the MUR, and were commissioned. During the mid-1980s platoon numbers dropped off and the Portland depot became a detachment of Support Company.²⁹ In an attempt to raise the profile of the depot, it was re-tasked as a section of the SFMG platoon in 1989.³⁰ At that time Lance Corporal Stuart Batten had moved from Ballarat to Portland with his civilian work, and commanded the depot. He later became acting platoon sergeant as a corporal. While numbers increased from six to twelve over the years, the depot finally closed in 1994.³¹

Endnotes

- 1 *A Soldier's History of Warrnambool*, p1.
- 2 *Warrnambool Examiner*, January 1860.
- 3 *Warrnambool Standard*, 7 July 1887.
- 4 Ward, *Victorian Land Forces*, p75.
- 5 *A Soldier's History of Warrnambool*, Appendix, p1.
- 6 *A Soldier's History of Warrnambool*, Appendix, p1.
- 7 Australian Film Commission, 1987.
- 8 *Warrnambool Standard*, 5 September 1998.
- 9 *A Soldier's History of Warrnambool*, p3.
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Part 2—Chapter 14
THE SMALLER TOWNS

In 1885, when the VMR was formed, I Company was raised with its HQ at Kerang, near Swan Hill. The infantry was also active in the area, and the heyday of the Victorian Rangers was reached in the early 1890s. In January 1891 the Rangers comprised three battalions. K Company, 2nd Battalion, had its HQ in Kerang and detachments in Swan Hill and Pyramid Hill. In 1891 the Kerang company of the VMR became I Company of the 2nd Battalion.¹

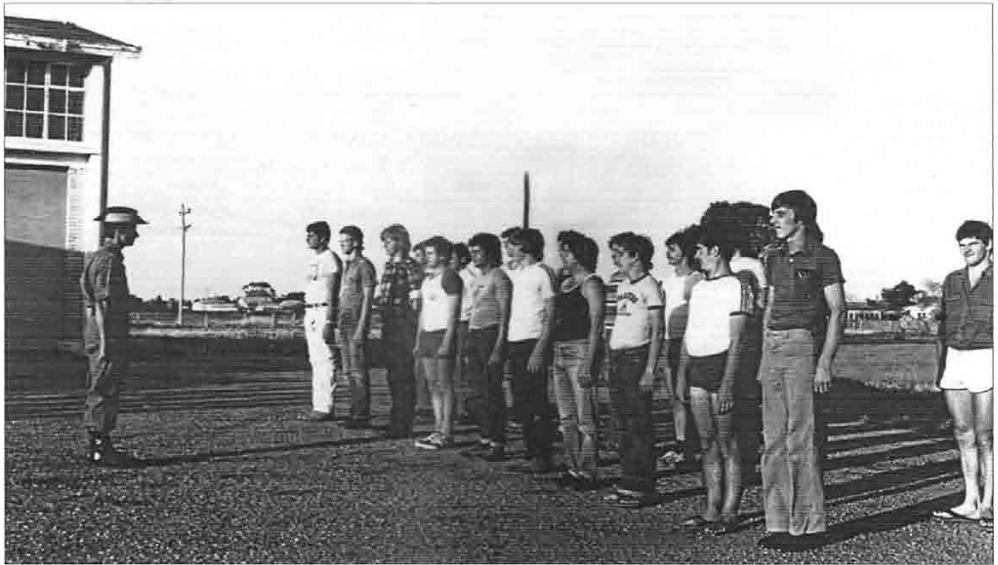
Members of the Rangers enlisted for a three year period, paying 45 shillings (\$4.50) for their uniform, while the government supplied greatcoats, rifles and ammunition. Volunteers travelled to and from drills at their own expense.² A local recalled in 1928 that 'we had the Victorian Rangers. Young fellows used to travel miles to Swan Hill to drill and for rifle shooting'.³

In the 1903 reorganisation the Victorian Rangers formed squadrons of the 9th and 10th LHR, successors to the VMR. Detachments from Stawell, St Arnaud, Murtoa, Ararat, Inglewood, Cheltenham, and part of the Swan Hill and Lake Boga sections, however, were organised into an infantry unit, retaining the name Victorian Rangers. In the 1912 reorganisation these became the 73rd Infantry. With the commencement of universal training in 1911 and the Kitchener scheme in operation, the 67th Infantry had its HQ and two companies in Bendigo and companies in Eaglehawk and Long Gully; Golden Square and Kangaroo Flat; Echuca, Moama and Deniliquin; and Kerang, Swan Hill and Koondrook.⁴ At the same time the 19th LHR (VMR) was formed, with a detachment in Kerang.⁵

By 1914 the 67th had added a further company in each of Bendigo, Eaglehawk and Long Gully. After the enlistment of many men for the war, by 1915 the 67th reduced its companies to Bendigo, Golden Square, Eaglehawk and Kerang, Echuca, Swan Hill, Rochester and Deniliquin. In 1916 the 19th became the 17th (Campaspe) LHR, and in 1929 the 17th/19th LH. In 1933 the units unlinked to become the 17th LHR (Machine Gun) Regiment, (PWLH) and the 19th LHR, an armoured car regiment. Detachments of the 17th were located at Bendigo, Swan Hill, Cohuna, Rochester, Lockington, Echuca and Kyneton. In 1941 the regiment was renamed the 17th MG Regiment, and in 1942 the 17th Motor Regiment. It disbanded on 19 February 1943.⁶

The CMF was re-formed in 1948, and in November 1951 the numbers were swollen by the return of the first national servicemen from their 98 days training at Puckapunyal. A 38th Battalion depot was opened at Swan Hill and A Company less 3 Platoon formed there, 3 Platoon being in Kerang. On 15 February 1953 the 59th Battalion was raised with HQ in Shepparton, and 38th Battalion personnel at Shepparton and Cobram were transferred to that battalion. Swan Hill remained as A Company of the 38th Battalion, and 3 Platoon at Kerang was redesignated D Company. The 38th Battalion annual camp in April 1953 was held at Seymour. On 30 November 1956 a new depot in Grey Street, Swan Hill, was opened, and later named Messines Barracks. With the end of national service, numbers declined at Swan Hill and the depot closed in 1959.

Over the weekend 7-8 February 1981 a recruiting campaign was held in the disused Messines Barracks, with the aim of forming an infantry platoon in Swan Hill. The depot became 3 Platoon A Company, 2 RVR, and the first member enlisted was Laurie Toppinen, a Vietnam veteran from the RAE.⁷ The initial depot staff members were Lieutenant Alan Eade (formerly 38th Battalion Swan Hill), Corporal Tony Melis (2 RVR and formerly a 22 RVR member), Corporal Gary Smith (from 2 RVR Melbourne) and Lance Corporals Bruce Clare (formerly of the 17th Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment – RNSWR, Dubbo) and Harold Heslop (another Vietnam veteran, with 6 RAR). The depot was in a poor state, and took some time to be repaired.



New recruits to the reopened Swan Hill 2 RVR depot, 1981.
(8/7 RVR depot, Swan Hill)

The members were very lucky to have a great support from the RSL. During the winter months the Club provided hot soup and drinks on parade nights.⁸ By ANZAC Day 1981 the platoon had grown to the point that 15 soldiers marched, although most had received their uniforms only days before.⁹ By September they were preparing to undertake a gruelling two-week exercise at Canungra, in Queensland.

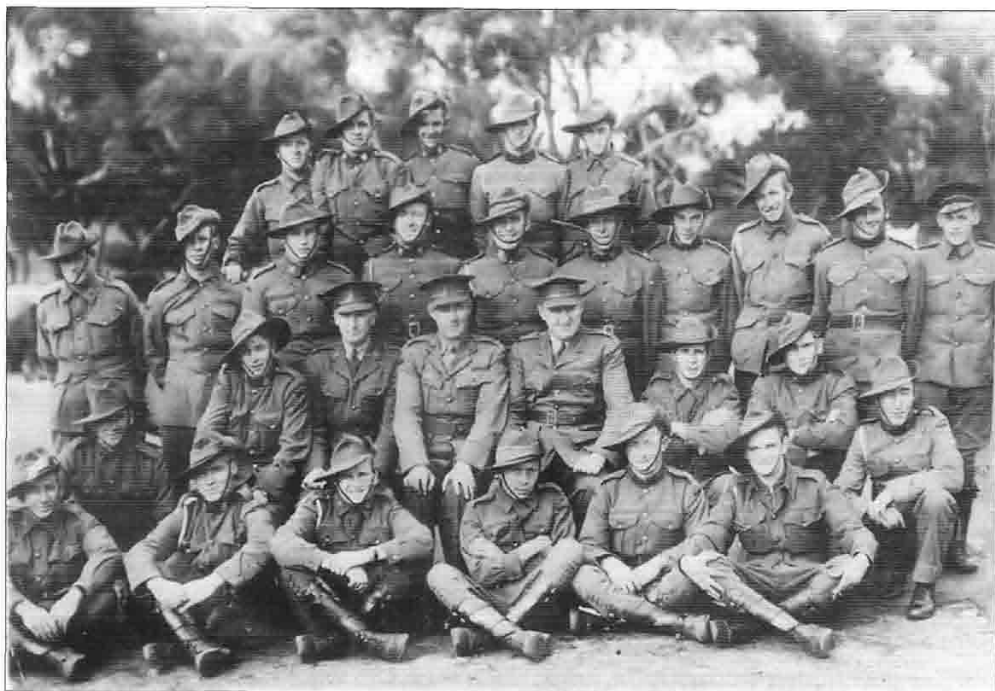
The depot was a valuable resource to the battalion, and in February 1987 members of the company undertook familiarisation and safety training with inflatable boats. The activity was supervised by Lieutenant John Skinner of Lake Boga, and was carried out on the lake. Safety covered the drill for an overturned boat, which included overturning the boat first and then turning it back the right way up. Company members, with family and friends, watched.¹⁰ In December the company put this training to good use during a five-day activity, Exercise Murray Endurance. The first overseas training for the Swan Hill members was in 1988, when they participated in Exercise Tasman Reserve, an exchange with the NZ Territorial Force, equivalent to the ARes.

After refurbishment in 1998 the Swan Hill depot came under command of C Company in Mildura as 9 Platoon, and around this time the members began calling themselves the Mallee Rats. The new staff of company quartermaster sergeant (CQMS) and platoon sergeant moved in, and by 2000, with numbers at Swan Hill high, and with the OC, Captain Tony Watson, living in the town, HQ C Company moved to Swan Hill, with platoon depots at Shepparton and Mildura.¹¹ With Watson's transfer to the ARA in 2001, and a strong ARes presence in Shepparton, HQ C Company moved there. Swan Hill remains as a small depot forming part of 8 Platoon, C Company.

Kerang had a military association with Swan Hill from 1885 through the VMR, cavalry, Victorian Rangers, the 67th Infantry, the 38th Battalion and 2 RVR. By early 1962 D Company, 2 RVR transferred to the 6th Company RAASC and the depot closed.

With the commencement of universal training in 1911, the 67th Infantry area included Deniliquin and Moama. However, Deniliquin, like Swan Hill, principally hosted light horse elements until the 1950s, although the 38th Battalion had a detachment there by 1929. During the 1950s national service scheme, the 59th Battalion had a depot in Deniliquin, but it closed after the scheme ended. Some members served for a while with 2 RVR, but this did not last.¹²

Between 1975 and 1981 2 RVR experienced a period of expansion, and in 1981 the Shepparton-based A Company again opened depots at Swan Hill, Deniliquin and Numurkah. With the introduction of tax on ARes pay, many of the Deniliquin members decided that they were not being properly recompensed for their efforts, and the Deniliquin and Numurkah depots both closed in 1983.¹³ Parades had been held at the aerodrome, and later at the town hall, where the ARes had an office under the stage.¹⁴



Above: Horsemen of the 38th Battalion (including members from Deniliquin), 1938.
(Deniliquin RSL)

Below: Deniliquin Town Hall, 2007. Former place of parade for
Deniliquin-based 8/7 RVR soldiers.
(Neil Leckie)



While Deniliquin people are proud of their military heritage, there is now little of military interest in the town. However, one interesting item is the Rupertswood Gun, displayed outside the RSL in an air-conditioned enclosure to prevent deterioration. It is one of two guns used by the Victorian Horse Artillery, better known as the Rupertswood Battery, which existed in Victoria from 1885 to 1897. The gun was made available by the Landale family of Dahwilly, Deniliquin, and was restored by the staff and apprentices of the Army Apprentices School at Latchford Barracks, Bonegilla, in 1989.¹⁵

The battery was formed by Sir William Clarke to protect the young Victorian colony from foreign invasion, particularly from Russia, and was funded partly by him and partly by the government. The gun is one of a pair, which replaced the battery's original guns in 1889, although already 30 years old. The government's refusal to provide new guns led to the disbandment of the battery soon after Clarke's death. Its final duty was performed at a parade in Melbourne to mark Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee.

The Kyneton detachment of the 2nd CVRC was formed in 1860, along with the Kyneton MR. While the mounted rifles received financial assistance, the infantry did not get government recognition until 1864.¹⁶ In 1863 the mounted rifles became the Kyneton Troop, PWVVLH. Both the troop and the CVRC detachment survived until the militia period began in 1884. Kyneton became HQ B Company, VMR in 1886, but the troop stopped parading in 1888.¹⁷

In the 1903 reorganisation the infantry in Kyneton became part of the 1st Battalion, 7th AIR, with its HQ at Castlemaine. The drill hall was built in that year. After the 1912 reorganisation a company of the 66th Infantry was formed in Kyneton, with a mounted unit, the 19th LH (VMR). The light horse covered the area through to Swan Hill and served under many names until disbanding in 1943.¹⁸

After the Second World War the Kyneton depot was home to 4 Platoon, B Company, 38th Battalion. The platoon became part of D Company 2 RVR in 1960, but in 1962, after transferring to the RAASC, the depot closed and its members transferred to Castlemaine. The depot reopened in 1976 under the 4th/19th PWLH, which was presented with the Freedom of Entry to Kyneton. The depot finally closed in the mid-1990s, and its members transferred to Watsonia in Melbourne's northeast.

One of Kyneton's famous sons, born and educated there, was Lieutenant General Sir Henry Wells, KBE, CB, who rose through the ranks, commanded the British Commonwealth Forces, Korea, and became CGS in 1954. After retiring he was appointed the first honorary colonel of the RVR in April 1961. Another of Kyneton's famous sons was Corporal Alexander Burton, who was posthumously awarded a VC after Lone Pine.

The Cobram catchment area includes Tocumwal, Finley, Jerilderie and Yarrawonga. Between the wars Cobram was part of the 57th/60th Battalion recruiting area. With the build up to war and the introduction of compulsory training, a new depot was opened in October 1939. When the CMF was re-formed in 1948, the Cobram depot became home to 13 Platoon of the 38th Battalion, commanded by Captain Ken Evans, who was also the company 2 IC. On 6 May 1949 it was renumbered 12 Platoon, D Company, 38th Battalion, but with the raising of the 59th Battalion on 12 February 1953, the depot transferred to that battalion on 1 July 1953.¹⁹

A new depot, Salamaua Barracks, was opened on 18 November 1955 by Brigadier Simpson, commanding the 6th Brigade. During the Pentropic era Cobram was the home of 20 Platoon, E Company, 2 RVR, with the company HQ at Shepparton. In 1965, after the Pentropic system was abandoned, E Company 2 RVR became C Company (Hume), 2 RVR, with its HQ and 7 Platoon at Shepparton, 8 Platoon at Cobram and 9 Platoon at Echuca. The depot remained a part of C Company until 1972, when it was taken over by the 8th/13th VMR, and its members transferred to the Royal Australian Armoured Corps (RAAC).²⁰



Salamaua Barracks, 2007. Former Cobram depot.
(Neil Leckie)

Although there was some combined infantry/armour training in the mid-1980s, the depot had little use in the previous ten years. With changes to recruiting regions, Cobram in the 1990s came under 8/7 RVR, and at that time six Cobram members travelled to Shepparton for training.²¹ In December 1990 8/7 RVR sent a signal to the 4th Brigade, advising it would attempt to raise a sub-unit at Cobram. In April 1991 officers of 8/7 RVR inspected the depot with a view to reopening it as an infantry depot.²² In October the battalion advised that due to financial restrictions a sub-unit at Cobram was not feasible. However, in May 1992, HQ 8/7 RVR tasked A Company with raising a platoon at the depot. The company OC at the time was Major Jim Hamilton, and the CSM WO 2 Dave Piggott.

With the help of local RAAC member Lieutenant John Burke, the basis of 2 Platoon was raised, but when he left, the strength again dwindled.²³ Burke had a family connection with 8/7 RVR, as his grandfather, who served in the First World War, came from Ballarat, while his father served with the Bendigo 38th and Ballarat 2/8th Battalions in the Second World War.²⁴

While it was useful to have a depot in Cobram as a transit facility and to support military teams in the Murray River Marathon, the battalion could not justify maintaining it. Lieutenant Colonel Wayne Dunbar, who lived in nearby Deniliquin, regretted the decision but on 14 June 1996 wrote to the soldiers advising them of the depot's closure, and that they would be transferred to Shepparton. The depot closed on 30 June.²⁵

The Russian invasion scare of the 1850s, which led to the fortification of Port Phillip Bay, the provision of a Victorian naval force and raising of infantry and artillery units, was of little concern to the citizens of Echuca, whose population at the 1854 census was only 26. But at the peak of the river trade three decades later, there was much interest in local military training.

A rifle corps and a school cadet corps were formed in 1885, when there were fears of the aspirations of France and Germany, then actively colonising New Caledonia, New Guinea and the Pacific Islands. The cadets were organised as a battalion based at Bendigo, with companies at Castlemaine, Eaglehawk and Echuca. The Echuca cadet unit was formed from the older pupils of State School 208.

A militia unit was formed in 1889 as E Company of the Victorian Rangers, Echuca being the only country town to support a full company. The first parade, under Sergeant Major McManus, was held in the Temperance Hall on 21 March 1889. On 29 April the location transferred to the State School, as the Victorian Department of Defence refused to pay for the hire of the Temperance Hall. On 15 May the *Riverine Herald* stated that the company was over strength, and that the OC of the Rangers, Major Otter, had attended and drilled the men the previous evening.²⁶

A survey of the town showed that there were no suitable buildings available, so in 1890 an orderly room was built in High Street, on the site of the present car park.²⁷ The rifle club range was on private land, so a new rifle range was built in High Street

South, between the railway line and the showgrounds.²⁸ Rifle practice was conducted each morning and on Wednesday afternoon, the early closing day.

In September 1890 two platoons of the Rangers were sent to Melbourne for guard duties during the dock strike. In February 1892 a young private was accidentally shot while marking on the range. His funeral two days later was conducted with full military honours, escorted by 80 members of the Rangers and their band.

In July that year the Rangers made Australian military history when they were invited to conduct manoeuvres near Moama. Victorian troops were not allowed over the border, and it took negotiation between the premiers before permission was granted. The Rangers conducted a grand parade and march over the bridge into NSW, with men from Stawell, Ararat, Hastings, Murtoa, Inglewood, St Arnaud, Eaglehawk, Cheltenham, Melbourne, Dandenong and Kyabram, along with the Cheltenham and Echuca bands. After the march and manoeuvres, the troops were entertained by the mayor and citizens of Moama.

When the Australian colonies sent volunteers to fight in South Africa, 28 Echuca men enlisted. Moama-born Sergeant James Rogers, was awarded the VC for action there.

After federation, new units were formed, and in 1914 Echuca provided a detachment of the 67th Infantry and a troop of the 9th LHR. On 5 August the annual military tournament was held at Echuca. In the morning the Echuca and Rochester light horse troops, followed by the Rangers and the cadets, marched from the orderly room to the Friendly Societies ground in Echuca East to the beat of the Rangers' band. During the afternoon a boy on a bicycle brought a telegram to the editor of the *Riverine Herald*, who as the adjutant was conducting the event. After calling for silence he announced that Britain had declared war on Germany. The bands immediately played the national anthem, which was sung by the large and now very emotional crowd.

Twenty men of the Echuca company were called up for duty, and assisted in the arrest of a number of German nationals working in the area. They also guarded the Murray River bridge. A veteran of South Africa, Captain Blezard, recruited half a rifle company from Echuca, Moama, Deniliquin, Rochester and Elmore. They came under his command as H Company, 7th Battalion. By the end of the First World War, 738 men and women from Echuca had enlisted.

Between the wars a company of the 38th Battalion and a light horse element were based at Echuca. During the Second World War Echuca had a VDC detachment and later an active Dad's Association kept in touch with those who served in that war. The association's lists were used in the compilation of new Honour Rolls, which record the names of 989 men and women from Echuca who served from 1939 until the end of the Vietnam War.

When the CMF was re-formed in 1948, Echuca became home to C Company, 38th Battalion. With the expansion of the CMF by national service, in February 1953 the depot transferred to the 59th Battalion, with HQ at Shepparton and C Company at the old drill hall in High Street, Echuca. This building was replaced by a more modern facility in Ogilvie Avenue. In 1958 C Company took part in the 59th Battalion's parade in Shepparton to receive the Freedom of Entry to that city.

The reorganisation of the CMF in 1960 saw the Echuca depot become the HQ for 19 Platoon, E Company (Goulburn Valley), 2 RVR. At the end of the Pentropic era in 1965, Echuca changed to 9 Platoon, C Company (Hume), 2 RVR. With the 1975 reorganisation, C Company was renamed A Company and the Echuca depot became 3 Platoon, A Company. In 1987, when 2 RVR was renumbered, the depot became 3 Platoon, A Company, 8/7 RVR, giving Echuca's military force a continuous history of 101 years.²⁹ The Echuca depot gradually lost numbers and was closed in November 1999.

Red Cliffs contributed to Mildura's military units for many years, and was particularly strong in the 7th Battalion era. After the end of national service in 1959, however, numbers dropped, and in 1962 the depot was closed and the building sold.³⁰

At a meeting in July 1860 in Maryborough, a decision was made to form a volunteer rifle company, despite the town not being included in the proclamation allowing the formation of volunteer forces. Drill was held on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, morning and afternoon. The initial strength of the company was 100 men, and the Victorian forces monthly drill return for 1861 reported that the company 'defrays its own expenses'. It was a part of the 1st CVRC, and formed its own band, which gave recitals in the local gardens.

In May 1861 the company attended the Grand Review celebrating Queen Victoria's birthday at Barkers Creek, near Castlemaine. This included a 'sham' battle. The Maryborough men formed a square to resist the Kyneton MR. Several serious wounds later required medical attention. The newspaper report the next day christened the Maryborough volunteers 'the iron square'.

In 1865 the *Victorian Government Gazette* recorded that Captain R.H. Dunn was the CO of the Maryborough Rifles. As the company was self-funding, it did not appear in the *Gazette* again. In 1873 the company received a letter recalling its arms with a view to disbanding it. A public meeting ensured that it continued, although it appears to have disbanded by around 1875. Another company was formed in October 1860 at Mariner's Reef, near Maryborough, with 60 men listed. Parades were Tuesday and Friday, morning and afternoon, which suggests that some men may have also paraded at Maryborough. This unit was absorbed into the Maryborough company in 1861.³¹

The formation of the VMR in 1885 saw a surge in enthusiasm, and a detachment was raised in Maryborough in 1887. By 1895 this was part of the detachment at Daisy Hill, just south of Maryborough. In the 1912 reorganisation, Maryborough and Dunolly formed D Company of the 73rd Infantry. In 1918 this became a detachment of D Company 2nd/21st Infantry, and in 1922 a detachment of A Company, 7th Battalion.

One of Maryborough's sons served with distinction in both World Wars. Edmund Herring was born in Maryborough on 2 September 1882. He attended Melbourne Grammar School and Melbourne University, and was a Rhodes Scholar in 1912. In 1914 Herring was a member of the Officer's Training Corps (OTC) at Oxford. He was commissioned into the Royal Field Artillery (RFA), and earned a DSO and an MC. Between the wars he served in the CMF. In the Second World War he first commanded the 6th Division Artillery, and later the Northern Territory and New Guinea Forces. After the war he held the position of lieutenant governor of Victoria for a record 27 years, retiring in 1972 at the age of 80.³²

In 1951 the first intake of national servicemen commenced their training. Some of the 153 from the Ballarat district were from Maryborough. Their numbers established the need for a local CMF depot, so on 1 July 1952 A Company, 8th/7th Battalion was raised and the Citizen's Brass Band hall used as the depot. On 1 January 1953 the company moved into the RSS&AILA (now the R&SL) Hall. A small depot consisting of two joined Nissen-style huts was built in Goldsmith Street in 1955.³³ During the Pentropic era the depot was 8 Platoon B Company, with company HQ at Ranger Barracks in Ballarat. After the Pentropic period, the depot was renumbered 6 Platoon, B Company.³⁴

In 1973 the depot was commanded by Raglan farmer 2nd Lieutenant Douglas Ball, who later commanded the battalion. An open day was held in 1974 and the 5 RVR Pipes and Drums, along with M113 armoured personnel carriers (APC), tracked load carriers, artillery and transport were on display. A street parade was also held. The activity was named Operation Guinea Pig, and was a trial for future recruiting activities throughout Australia.³⁵ In the 1970s the platoon assisted in the annual Maryborough Golden Wattle Festival.³⁶ A further parade was held on 28 February 1976 and included Beating the Retreat in the afternoon.³⁷ In 1980 Maryborough granted 2 RVR Freedom of Entry.

In 1985 Rick Williams moved into Newstead, east of Maryborough, and transferred into the battalion. Along with Eddie Boucher, who started with the battalion as a private, he was commissioned and eventually rose to be the OC of B Company in Ballarat, and began to build up the Maryborough depot's numbers. Williams became the battalion's regimental signals officer (RSO), and the depot changed from 6 Platoon, B Company to the signals platoon.

The platoon gave the battalion a signals capability, but after Williams retired and Boucher moved on, the depot struggled for numbers. On 26 March 1999 the CO, Lieutenant Colonel John Paterson, directed that parading cease there. The two soldiers parading, neither of whom lived in the town, transferred to Ballarat. The depot closed on 15 November 1999.³⁸ It was sold and the site turned into house blocks.

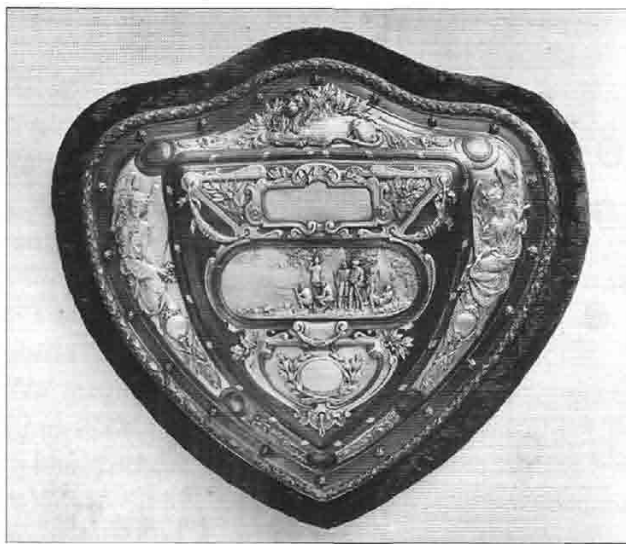


The flag comes down for the last time at the Maryborough depot
on 19 November 1999.
(Neil Leckie)

Bacchus Marsh was named after Captain William Bacchus, who in 1838 was one of the first Europeans in the area. In July 1858 the BVRR, which included two companies of light horse and covered the Bacchus Marsh area, was formed.³⁹ In 1860 Sergeant Major John Bowser, having formed and drilled similar troops in Geelong and Ballarat, came to Bacchus Marsh to form the Bacchus Marsh MR, which had contingents at Pentland Hills and Melton.⁴⁰

Bowser was appointed by Dean-Pitt, then commandant of the Victorian forces. Widely known as Instructor Bowser, he was an impressive and capable man. He had seen action in 13 campaigns in India, and had been wounded three times. T.G. Pearse in the *History of Bacchus Marsh* described him as 'the perfect model of a trained and disciplined officer – a man of splendid physique, in the prime of life with a face bronzed by the Indian sun'.⁴¹ The early recruits were sworn in at the Old Mechanics Institute, which doubled as a drill hall.⁴²

Bowser was instrumental in raising the Bacchus Marsh Rifle Association (BMRA) in 1868, after he placed a notice in the *Bacchus Marsh Express* of 4 April, which stated that '[g]entlemen who have expressed their willingness to become members of a rifle association are requested to meet at the Border Inn, Bacchus Marsh on Monday evening 6 April at 8 o'clock'. The association was formed at that meeting with a membership of 34. Members were drawn from civilians and members of the local PWVVLH troop.⁴³ The troop disbanded in 1876.⁴⁴



The Sargood Shooting Trophy won at the inaugural shoot by the Bacchus Marsh Rifle Club.
(Neil Leckie)

Under the 1912 reorganisation Bacchus Marsh came into area 65A of the universal training scheme, but as the 65th Infantry was initially not raised, the detachment came under the Castlemaine-based 66th Infantry. In 1915 the 65th Infantry was raised, taking in Bacchus Marsh, Footscray and Yarraville.⁴⁵

During the First World War Rupert Moon, who was born in Bacchus Marsh on 14 August 1892, was awarded a VC. He had previously served in the 13th LHR, and for three years in the 8th AIR, before enlisting in the 4th LHR on 21 August 1914. On 7 July 1916 he transferred to the 2nd ANZAC Mounted Regiment and on 9 September to the 58th Battalion. He was seriously wounded and returned to Australia in March 1918, but returned to active service in May.⁴⁶

The 1921 reorganisation saw a portion of the Geelong-based 2nd/23rd Infantry and a portion of the 5th/8th Infantry form the 32nd Battalion. By 1931 the 32nd covered Footscray, Yarraville and Bacchus Marsh.⁴⁷ Between 1932 and 1935, the CMF in Bacchus Marsh conducted range practices with the BMRA.⁴⁸ Williamstown and Werribee were added to the 32nd Battalion in 1939. The average attendance at Bacchus Marsh during 1938-39 was 14.⁴⁹

During the Second World War a new camp was built at Darley, then a small town north of Bacchus Marsh, but now part of Bacchus Marsh. This became home to a number of American units, but more importantly became the original camp for the 39th Battalion. This battalion was formed on 1 October 1941, initially with men from the 24th/39th Battalion from the Nagambie Road camp, followed by others from the 2nd Cavalry Division and the 3rd and 4th Infantry Divisions. On Boxing Day the battalion departed, and was in Port Moresby in the New Year. The 39th met the Japanese on the Kokoda Track in July 1942.⁵⁰

When the CMF was re-formed in 1948, the 32nd Battalion lost its country location, and with the 58th Battalion formed the 58th/32nd Battalion (West Melbourne Regiment), based in Moonee Ponds, Footscray and Brunswick.

The ARes returned a military presence to Bacchus Marsh in 1978, at the instigation of the newly appointed CO of 2 RVR, Lieutenant Colonel Lynes. The new unit was 11 Platoon, D Company, 2 RVR. The Bacchus Marsh RSL Hall became the headquarters of D Company under Captain Bob Prewett. Between 1978 and 1980 the company grew to a strength of 55, although it never managed to put a full platoon in the field on weekends or for major activities. Early members of the company were Mick Hannah (formerly of 22 RVR), Lance Jennison, Jo Farrugia, Peter Wells and Vietnam veteran Kevin Jocelyn. By 1982 the peak had passed at Bacchus Marsh, and the depot became 11 Platoon B Company in 1983, then 5 Platoon in 1984.⁵¹ At that time B Company had its HQ and 4 Platoon in Ballarat, with 6 Platoon in Maryborough.⁵²

June 1998 saw 5 Platoon transferred to the 15th Transport Squadron in Bendigo. A renamed 6 Platoon, B Company, was raised at the Bacchus Marsh R&SL. In 2003 the Bacchus Marsh depot closed and its members were transferred to the new A Company depot at Laverton, in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

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PART 3
THE LAST 60 YEARS

Part 3—Chapter 15

8th/7th BATTALION

Following the Second World War ARA infantry battalions, initially known as battalions of the Australian Regiment, were raised for the first time in the Australian Army's short history. They were soon given the title Royal and became the RAR.

In 1947 the government approved the post war Army Plan, which included a CMF field force to be the second source of military strength. The target date for raising this force was 1 July 1948. Major factors were the provision of ARA cadre staff and the selection of suitable training depots. The name training depot was used instead of the traditional name drill hall (previously orderly room), as this was where soldiers would be trained.

Country Victoria had the 6th Brigade HQ in St Kilda and two infantry battalions. In northwest Victoria this saw the linking of the 8th and 7th Battalions to form the 8th/7th Battalion (North-Western Victorian Regiment).¹ The battalion had its HQ, HQ and Support Companies and a rifle company in Ballarat, and rifle companies at Ararat, Mildura and Red Cliffs. The other battalion, the 38th, had its HQ, HQ and Support Companies and a rifle company in Bendigo, and rifle companies in Castlemaine/Kyneton, Echuca and Shepparton. The 23rd/21st Battalion from the pre-war 6th Brigade was not raised.²

By February 1948 HQ 3rd Division was allocated 36 depots, 13 of which were vacant. The remainder were occupied by Army units, Commonwealth organisations and civil industry. Many required extensive repairs before units could use them, and a battle for funds ensued. However, enlistment of soldiers commenced on 1 July. The 4th (metropolitan) and 6th Brigade HQs were raised on 1 February 1948, and the battalions and the MUR on 1 April. Raising of bands was also authorised from 1 April. Officers of the rank of major or below were appointed to the Active List from 1 May, and 'officers, WOs and NCOs down to Corporal level may be enlisted from 1 June'.³ By the end of May, the 3rd Division reported that:

Formation Commanders and COs have been appointed and the OCs are being selected by special Formation, Arm and Service Officer Selection Committees, the majority of ARA appointments have been filled and AHQ is arranging postings for the remaining vacancies and ARA OR personnel will be posted to units by HQ 3 Div.⁴

Advertisements were placed in the press, such as that in the *Ballarat Courier* on 17 June 1948:

Facts on the new Citizen Army

It will be a voluntary training force for men 18-35 years of age ... a force that will give you new confidence, character and good fellowship. Recruits will attend home-training parades, including evening lectures on the use of the Army's most modern equipment, and two week's continuous field training a year. Regular Army rates will be paid for parades or exercises.

General enlistment will commence on July 1st, but advance applications will be accepted.

The formation of Supplementary Reserve (SR) CMF units was announced in late 1949. These recruited personnel from federal and state government departments and authorities, and provided the CMF with soldiers with special skills, who undertook 14 days training each year. In Victoria the 22nd Construction Regiment was formed, supported by the Country Roads Board, State Rivers and Waters Commission and the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works. SR units followed in other states.⁵

The 8th/7th Battalion initially comprised a HQ, HQ company, two rifle companies and specialised platoons of tracked carriers, mortars, pioneers and anti-tank guns in Ballarat, with rifle companies at Mildura and Red Cliffs. The mortar platoon trained with 2-inch and 3-inch mortars, while the anti-tank platoon had 6-pounder and PIAT anti-tank guns.

The battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Scott. He enlisted in the 27th Battalion (SA) in 1925, transferred into the 2/48th Battalion in 1940 and fought in Tobruk. Scott was promoted in 1942 and commanded the 2/32nd Battalion, which he took to New Guinea, where he was awarded a DSO in 1945. He commanded the 24th Brigade of the 9th Division for a short time late in 1945. He was placed on the R of O in May 1946.⁶

Scott moved to Ballarat to manage the Garden City Flour Mill and took command on 1 April 1948. In June 1950 he was promoted to temporary brigadier commanding the 6th Brigade, which he led until his retirement from the CMF on 1 July 1953. The adjutant was Bruce McDonald, MC. He had served with the 2/5th Battalion, and was awarded his MC for 'outstanding gallantry and leadership at Ulupu on 8 July 1945'. He later served as a major with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan. The RSM was WO 1 Cyril Dring, who had served with the 37th/52nd Battalion.⁷

Two of the early recruits in Ballarat were former 2/8th Battalion member Reginald Kennedy and former 4th Armoured Brigade member Keith Young. Kennedy was awarded an MM for 'great courage & coolness at Veve Pass (Greece) on 12 April 1941'.

He ended the war as a lance sergeant with the 24th Australian Works Company. Both looked forward to further service with the new battalion.⁸

The battalion aimed to recruit 540 men in Ballarat and 240 from Mildura/Red Cliffs. To help recruiting in its area, the city of Mildura offered to 'make up the pay' of all municipal employees who enlisted, a gesture welcomed by the CO. D Company paraded in the Fitzroy Avenue depot in Red Cliffs. This was completed just before the Second World War, but not used as a training depot until the CMF was re-formed in 1948. Former 2/6th Battalion member Captain Albert Gray, MC, was the first OC, and he was followed by a former Second World War signals officer, Major Robert (Bob) Brooks.

Brigadier Porter commanded the 6th Brigade. He served in the CMF before the war, then with the 2/5th Battalion and as temporary CO of the 2/6th Battalion in the Middle East, where in 1941 he was MID. He later commanded the 24th Brigade in New Guinea and Borneo. His family was connected with Ballarat's early history, his father having served in the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers.

Porter's first visit to Ballarat in his new posting was on 30 October 1948, to attend the Military Ball held that night. While in Ballarat he attended the 'Y' (Young Men's Christian Association, YMCA) Businessmen's Luncheon Club lunch, where he described the digger as a 'nuisance on leave, fierce in battle and a most lovable character'. He also said the Australian soldier's love of children was always most noticeable. At a civic welcome held at the town hall by the mayor, Councillor F.C. Wray, when asked about the future, Porter said that Australia:

need not look forward to war, nor do I think another war is inevitable. I am seized, however, with the importance of passing on to the next generation something of the lessons learned during the last conflict. ... The voluntary system of military training had many drawbacks, mainly in the apathy of everybody, and it was just as well to be honest about it.⁹

On Friday 17 December 1948, the minister for the Army, Mr Cyril Chambers, visited Ballarat. The Army owned the triangular piece of land bounded by Sturt, Russell and Alfred Streets, west of St Patrick's College. The Sturt Street frontage had been released for housing in 1926, and since then the city had been negotiating to have the rest released for housing. Ultimately, half of the remaining land was released. The Russell Street depot was built on the remaining land in the 1950s and named Broodseinde Barracks in the 1990s.¹⁰ The editorial in the *Ballarat Courier* of 18 December 1948 inferred that the Army had a secret agenda for retaining the land, asking if the new facility was the forerunner of universal military training. The editor might have known something, as national service was introduced in 1950.

The CMF was paid each six months. The first pay night for the new members of the 8th/7th Battalion, some of whom had been serving since July, came on the last parade of 1948. Paying officers included former 22nd Battalion member Captain

Desmond Milne and a future CO, Lieutenant John Trevenen.¹¹ In the Second World War Trevenen served as a lieutenant in the 8th Battalion and ended the war as a captain at HQ 23rd Australian Infantry Brigade. He was probably the last person to use carrier pigeons in war, when he arranged an artillery fire-plan using the birds.¹²

In 1949 Sergeant Norm Strange of Ballarat received his MM from the governor general, Mr McKell, at Parliament House in Melbourne. It was awarded for 'courage and devotion to duty at Ratsua (Bougainville) on 7 August 1945' when serving with the 8th Battalion (AIF). Norm joined the CMF in Ballarat in 1937 and served throughout the Second World War, rising to the rank of sergeant.¹³ He re-joined the CMF on 12 July 1948 as an instructor, again with the rank of sergeant, and was discharged on 5 July 1950. With 8th Battalion members Partridge, VC, and Private Edgar Eubergang and Ballarat soldiers John (Jack) Horgan and Harry Gangelli, Strange marched in the Victory Contingent in London on 8 June 1946. The VC winners marched in the front rank and were not required to carry arms.

The CMF introduced a new approach to recruiting in April 1949, when it announced that on 1 May it would begin recruiting cadets for CMF units. These were different from the Australian Cadet Corps. They were aged between 14 and 18 and were given the same basic training as CMF members and specialist training applicable to the unit with which they served. While they trained with CMF units, they also attended their own camps, bivouacs and weapon training schools.

Officers were provided by their CMF unit, but non-commissioned rank could be gained in the cadet unit. On reaching 18 the cadets could transfer to the CMF and maintain their cadet qualifications. The uniform was the same as for the CMF, and they were paid fares to get to training activities. The cadet system started in November.¹⁴

A unit flag was presented to the 8th/7th Battalion by the president of the 8th Battalion Association and mayor of Ballarat, Councillor Nathaniel Callow, on 20 May 1949. The background was green, and in the centre were the numbers 8/7. On the left was an 8th Battalion Colour patch and on the right a 7th Battalion patch. Scott received the flag. Also in attendance were the president of the RSS&AILA, Mr P. Cocks, and Mr Richard Davies representing the Air League.¹⁵

The first camp was held from 21 May to 3 June. It was a brigade camp, attended with the 38th Battalion, the MUR, and the 6th Field Ambulance. The 8th/7th fielded 205 members, including 70 from Mildura and Red Cliffs.¹⁶ The Ballarat members marched from Ranger Barracks to the railway station, where they entrained for Puckapunyal. During the camp they attended an advanced infantry training course and a mortar course. A firepower demonstration was held, and included General Grant tanks and air support by Mustang aircraft.¹⁷ On 4 July 1950 Support Company was formed to handle specialist support weapons. Training was undertaken on the Bren gun carrier, the 3-inch mortar, the 6-pounder anti-tank gun and for assault pioneers. Recruiting for the cadets also commenced that day.¹⁸

The battalion participated in the unveiling of the Cenotaph in Sturt Street in Ballarat on 24 November. A combined guard from the RAAF and the 8th/7th Battalion, commanded by Trevenen, was inspected by the governor before the unveiling. Details of the parade were arranged by Scott and the CO of the RAAF School of Radio in Ballarat, Wing Commander James Reynolds.¹⁹

During 1949 the *Ballarat Courier* included a series of caricatures by Dudley Gordon featuring local identities. The 30 November edition showed the adjutant, McDonald. Under each sketch was a small verse. His read:

To train the young men of the nation
Is this soldier's special care,
To be prepared is an obligation
Every citizen should share.

That day Mr George Morton retired from the position of Ballarat town clerk after 33 years. He had 50 years of service in Ballarat, including as CO of the 71st Infantry from 1912 to 1914, overseas service during the First World War, and again as CO of the 71st from 1916 to 1920.²⁰

The year 1950 started early for the battalion when it left for the 6th Brigade camp at Puckapunyal on 14 January. While the Ballarat men loaded themselves and their baggage onto the train, there were shouts and whistles of farewell. With several men having relatives see them off, it was reminiscent of the two world wars. The biggest cheer was reserved for the man who made an affectionate farewell to his girlfriend. The train left at 0745. The Ballarat members joined those from Mildura and Red Cliffs for the camp.²¹

The camp followed on from the basic training in the 1949 camp. Specialist courses were given for mortars, anti-tank guns, signals and transport. Routine exercises were reduced to a minimum, and anti-tank defences and earthworks techniques learned in North Africa and the European campaigns in the Second World War featured.

The camp climaxed on Australia Day with an infantry attack. Rocket firing Mustang fighters from Canberra and Dakota transport aircraft from Richmond, in NSW, participated in the 'demonstration attack'. The Mustangs bombed the enemy positions, while the Dakotas dropped supplies. The 38th Battalion and the 6th Field Ambulance again participated. Unfortunately for the 8th/7th Battalion, the 38th won the inaugural 6th Brigade Efficiency Shield for 1949-50. In a first for the CMF 30 Ballarat cadets went to camp with the battalion, where they joined 20 other cadets in their own quarters for separate training. By May 1950 there were almost 90 battalion cadets.²²



Mortar Platoon training in Bren Gun Carriers at Puckapunyal, 1950.
(Syd Eltringham)

Although rumours of the introduction of compulsory military service were denied earlier in the year, on 17 January the new government's minister for Defence, Mr Eric Harrison, announced that a 'National Military Service Scheme will be put into operation as soon as possible and the government will take precautions to see that industry does not suffer by it'.²³

The world situation was tense. Slim, then the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), revealed that by 1954 Britain needed a Territorial Army of 500,000 ready and equipped to go into action at 24 hours notice. Australia also decided to bolster its forces. The governor general, in his speech opening the 19th Parliament, said that the government 'considered that steps must be taken to fill all peacetime units and formations and to build up adequate reserves'.²⁴

The ANZAC Day service in 1950 was the first held at the Ballarat Cenotaph. About 1000 ex-servicemen and women marched, led by Morton. Scott was among the marchers. The mayor, Councillor Callow, took the salute outside the Town Hall before the marchers halted at the Cenotaph, where the battalion's Catafalque party waited. As a returned serviceman and member of the Ballarat Sub-branch of the

RSS&AILA, the mayor gave the 'occasional address' at the service. He spoke of the need to work for the preservation of the ANZAC heritage of courage, sacrifice and the will to fight for liberty.²⁵

Porter had been promoted to GOC of the 3rd Division. He visited Ballarat on 23 May and, with Scott and the QM, Captain John Pemberton, paid a courtesy call on the mayor. Beechworth-born Pemberton had ended the Second World War as a captain in the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion.²⁶ In June Scott took command of the 6th Brigade as a temporary brigadier. Major Frank (Pat) Christophersen took command of the 8th/7th Battalion. He had been discharged from the 2/14th Battalion in 1945 as a major, and was promoted to lieutenant colonel on 16 August 1950.²⁷

On 13 July 1950 cabinet confirmed details of the National Service Training Scheme (NSTS) for 18-year-old males. They would receive 176 days training. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) trained its men for 82 days ashore, followed by 42 days on a ship and 13 days a year for four years. The Army gave its men 98 days of continuous training followed by 78 days of training with their local CMF unit over the next three years. The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) required its men for 176 days of continuous training.²⁸ The announcement was made around the time the Korean War commenced, and recruiting activities for the regular forces increased.

The 8th/7th Battalion continued recruiting, supported by articles such as that in the *Ballarat Courier* of 2 September 1950, which described training for the cadets and the band. That day the prime minister, Mr Menzies, announced that the NSTS would commence on 1 May 1951. The CMF strength at the time was 18,500, with a planned strength of 30,000. This target was later raised to 50,000.²⁹

The battalion had a good relationship with the *Ballarat Courier* and often had a short item in a good position. The 5 January 1951 column advised that 8 January was the last parade before camp, and soldiers who had their rifles inspected by the armourer would have them re-issued. (It was normal for members to store their rifle at home.) The column also advised details of the camp, which commenced for Ballarat members with an early morning march from the depot to the railway station, led by the band. On arrival at Seymour they met their mates from Mildura and Red Cliffs. They also met members of the other 6th Brigade units.

A 'successful' brigade camp was one where courses were run for the soldiers on the 3-inch mortar, medium machine guns, anti-tank weapons, Bren gun carriers and signals. NCO courses, junior officer, potential officer and senior officer courses were also run. In addition, the cadets held training in weapons, field-craft and minor tactics. Supervised swimming was popular. Having a band improved the standard of drill. Sergeant Alex Rizzoli received his commission and Lieutenant Harry Bowman, who had served for five years in the Second World War, was promoted to captain during the camp.³⁰ The brigade Efficiency Shield was not awarded in 1950-51.³¹

In March the minister for the Army, Mr Josiah Francis, announced that a lapel badge would be available for those CMF members who volunteered for overseas service. It had to be returned on termination of service.³²

In Ballarat the battalion provided a Cenotaph guard from dawn to dusk on ANZAC Day. A training course for NCOs was held at the depot, starting after ANZAC Day. Around that time the *Ballarat Courier* was advising weekly recruiting statistics. The first week of May, when 408 men enlisted in Victoria, was the best recruiting week since October 1950.³³

The Silver Jubilee of Federation occurred in 1951. To mark the occasion a ceremony was held in Canberra on 12 June. The 8th/7th Battalion sent a detachment of 19 men commanded by Milne, including a Colour party and the recently recovered Colours. A Colour party had also attended the opening of Parliament in Canberra in 1927. That day was marred by the death of a pilot in a crash. The second visit was marred by the death after the ceremony of Mr Ben Chifley, the leader of the opposition and former prime minister.³⁴

Further information was released in May 1951 about the NSTS. The RAN and RAAF commenced their call-up on 30 July, while the Army started on 6 August. During 1951 9000 men were called up for training in the Army, the RAAF took 3000 and the RAN 500. The government decided to double the original target; 38,250 were called up in 1952 and 40,250 in 1953.

The NSTS was a boon for the CMF, with many units reaching full strength. Most national servicemen enjoyed their training, demonstrated by the number who served on after their commitment was completed. The Ballarat district employment officer, Mr Robert Quinn, a returned serviceman, said that:

there appeared to be no problems about the district reaching its quota. He said that from his experience the boys would enjoy their time in camp. Medicals and X-Rays would commence at the Training Depot on 4 June and youths to be called-up would receive a week's notice beforehand.³⁵

On 1 June 1951 a platoon depot was opened in Daylesford at the Church of England Hall. In July a rifle shooting competition was held at the Canadian rifle range between the 8th/7th Battalion and the MUR. The visitors won, 1,096 to 904. Interaction between the two main depots was continual. In July the QM, Pemberton, went to Mildura to conduct the annual stock-take. Two other ARA members also went: Private Bosworth to replace Private Scott, who was on sick leave, and WO Murray to assist on a course. Sergeant Lanigan of Mildura and Corporal Neil Bolger of Ballarat attended a junior leaders course at the School of Infantry at Seymour.³⁶

In late August the mayor of Ballarat, Councillor John Rowe, retired. He inspected the battalion at the training depot before he was honoured with a march-past outside the town hall. Battalion members felt proud to have participated in the march,

recognising his support for the 'ownership' relationship between the council and the former City of Ballarat Regiment.³⁷

A change of officer postings was announced in early September, with Milne posted as OC A Company, Trevenen as OC Support Company and Bowman as OC HQ Company. The CO took the officers to Seymour the following weekend for a reconnaissance for the next annual camp. That same weekend a second series of courses for junior leaders, cooks, drivers and quartermaster sergeants and storemen commenced in Ballarat. Among the instructors was Maurice Armstrong, who transferred to the 59th Battalion as RSM when it was raised in 1953.³⁸ In mid-October the Daylesford detachment attended a battalion weekend at Lal Lal, the first activity they had attended since the opening of the depot in June. The cooking was of a high standard, indicating the value of the recent cook's course.³⁹

A course commenced on 19 November in Ballarat, to prepare candidates for examinations in drill, weapons, field-craft, map reading, mines and booby traps and administration. That night about 70 national servicemen reported to the depot for their first parade with the battalion following their 98 days at Puckapunyal. Christophersen addressed the new members, giving them the history of the regiment and telling them that they had joined the oldest regiment in Victoria, with an outstanding record over two world wars. One of the new members was Robert Hunter of Ballarat. A clerk in civilian life, he was a member of 16 NSTB, and reached the rank of corporal.⁴⁰

The 8th/7th Battalion was accepted by the community in Ballarat as a replacement for the 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment). When it prepared to go to camp in January 1952 the *Ballarat Courier* reported that:

the 'Mayor's Own' battalion, the 8th/7th, will leave Ballarat tomorrow for a fortnight's camp as Seymour. The battalion area extends to Mildura, and the trainees from that centre will detrain at Ballarat to join a bus convoy which will take them and the local men to Seymour. On the way the convoy will pick up the Daylesford contingent.

The battalion attended the brigade camp and this time won the Efficiency Shield.⁴¹ The mayor of Ballarat, First World War veteran Councillor William Roff, and the town clerk, Second World War veteran Mr Harold Maddern, visited the camp.

On 1 February 1952 the Army announced that 16,000 servicemen would take part in the Victorian visit of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip. The visit was cancelled when the King died, but the young Queen Elizabeth toured Australia in 1954.

The April 1952 national service intake was announced in February. There were 153 men from the Ballarat district, including Maryborough, Ballan, Linton, Clunes, Daylesford and Beaufort.⁴² On 19 May the battalion conducted a ceremonial parade

in Ballarat. Some Mildura members joined the Ballarat members, senior cadets and the band, who made up the 300-strong contingent. Before the parade the battalion was inspected by Councillor Roff. It then marched past the town hall, where he took the salute, accompanied by Scott and Christophersen. The mayor complimented the battalion on its marching and bearing. Earlier, when addressing the battalion, he had said that the 'traditions of the First and Second AIF will be upheld in the event of a third world war'.

In July 1952 important announcements were made about the Army. The minister announced a scheme to enlist 6000 women as members of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) to relieve men for service in the field in the event of war. He later announced that a division-sized CMF formation would be raised by the end of 1953, before the number of national servicemen reached its peak in August 1954.⁴³ In early September the minister advised that 279 units would be raised to handle national servicemen, 82 in Victoria. Up until then 27,828 men had been trained, but the number and size of training establishments were still inadequate to absorb all the trainees due for call-up. The new units, many of which were relatively small, included artillery, engineers, infantry, supply and transport.⁴⁴

By 1953 CMF numbers had risen to over 80,000 men. Two additional infantry brigades were raised, as well as a number of corps level artillery units. With the Army able to draw on vast reserves of Second World War surplus stocks and artillery shells, which were nearing the end of their shelf life and had to be used, units were fully equipped and manned.

The 2 IC, Major McDonald, was promoted to lieutenant colonel and assumed command of the battalion on 17 August 1953 when Christophersen transferred to the R of O. McDonald was born in Geelong in 1912 and served with the 23rd/21st Battalion in the Second World War, enlisting in Newtown in 1942. He ended his war service in 1946 with the 47th Battalion. He was awarded the MC for 'courage, bravery and coolness' at Miro River in 1945.⁴⁵

In December the battalion held a ceremonial parade and march through the city's streets. The battalion and the band marched past the town hall, where the mayor, Councillor Frank Cutts, the town clerk, and councillors took the salute. A highlight of the parade was the presentation of commissions to Sergeants Les Drury, Ian Foyster and Trevor Chapman. The CO said that they were the first national servicemen in Australia to receive commissions.⁴⁶ In a further first for the battalion Lieutenant Ron Bawden completed his three months of initial national service training as an officer, having been commissioned prior to commencing his training. The Defence Act had to be changed to allow him to carry his commission in the CMF to national service.⁴⁷

At the parade Lieutenants Geoffrey Barrell and Albert (Bert) Fry were promoted to captain and WO Robert (Bob) Cockerill was presented with a clasp to his Long

Service Medal. The CQMS, Staff Sergeant Harry Hiddle, was presented with an Efficiency Medal (EM) for his twelve years of unbroken and honourable service. The 8th Battalion Association president, Mr Ken Leslie, presented a set of cymbals to the bandmaster, WO 2 Herbert Rasmussen, who had served with the 2/8th Battalion.⁴⁸

During a speech at the 8th Battalion Association reunion in April 1954, McDonald stated that the battalion was as effective then as it ever had been. At that time the battalion had five national service officers. By late that year the battalion had a full complement of officers, half of whom were national servicemen, and approximately 800 ORs, most of whom were national servicemen.



Visit to Ballarat in 1954 by the Governor General Field Marshal Sir William Slim, seen accompanied by the CO 8th/7th Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Stuart McDonald.
(8/7 RVR depot, Ballarat)

The battalion went into camp at Scrub Hill on 22 May 1954. More than 300 national service trainees from Ballarat and district left Ballarat on a special troop train commanded by Trevenen. Earlier that morning another troop train with a further 300 national service and CMF trainees passed through Ballarat on the way to Puckapunyal from Mildura. There were almost 900 men in camp, and for some it was their last CMF camp, as their commitment ended after three years.

Training covered infantry and support weapons and wireless communications. Exercises up to battalion level were undertaken. 2nd Lieutenants Brian Etheridge, Russell Hocking and Kevin Dower wore their pips for the first time at the camp, having just received commissions. Dower later commanded the battalion. On the middle Sunday of the camp, visitors were entertained with a brigade parade, a weapons demonstration, and a band competition.⁴⁹

When the 7th and 8th Battalions combined in 1948 there was expected to be some rivalry between Mildura, the HQ for the 7th Battalion, and Ballarat, the HQ of the 8th Battalion. In November 1954 the Mildura Sub-branch of the RSS&AILA said that it would seek to have the HQ moved to Mildura. The president, Mr H.D. Dickinson, said that 'in two world wars the 7th Battalion was Mildura district's own regiment, but had merged to become 8th/7th Battalion with the HQ at Ballarat following the last war'. He believed that losing the HQ to Ballarat was the reason for local apathy towards the CMF.

In reply McDonald stated that the locations of CMF units were determined at a very high level, and those making the decisions reviewed all the facts. He asked that people 'not become parochial in outlook, but try to see that big important picture which is the defence of our country and the proper training of CMF and National Servicemen'.⁵⁰

Western Victorian-born Brigadier Gordon Hurley, CBE, a former adjutant of the 8th Battalion, was appointed honorary colonel of the 8th/7th Battalion in 1955. That year, camp was held at Scrub Hill. The advance party moved by train from Ballarat at 0530 hours on 27 April. The main body also moved by train and the battalion magazine at the end of the camp reported that:

the trip from Ballarat, it was a particularly good show. That not a single train window was broken, which is a good indication of the self-discipline and restraint exercised by the troops. It is an even better show when the crowded conditions are considered.⁵¹

At the time the CO was McDonald, the 2 IC Trevenen, WO 1 Frederick Evans, who had enlisted in Bendigo for the Second World War was the RSM. Support Company was commanded by Bowman, HQ Company by Fry, and the rifle company commanders were Captain Bob Shellard (A Company), Captain Douglas Shaw (B Company), Major Frederic Lomas, MC, MID, ED, (C Company) and Brooks (D Company).

Lieutenant Creighton Kaye of the Maryborough depot became the first member of the CMF to qualify for parachute wings. He attended a four-week course at the parachute school in NSW. Before he was allowed to attend the course he had to qualify in a small arms coaching course. On the parachute course he had to undergo rigorous physical training, long distance running, landing techniques and flight drill. Kaye qualified in basic ground instruction and took part in seven day jumps and one night jump.⁵²

At the 8th Australian Infantry Battalion (AIF) ANZAC Day eve reunion in 1955 at the North Melbourne town hall, Trevenen received the battalion flag from Captain J.McL. Bennett. The flag was brought back to Australia by Lieutenant Colonel Goslett, who was the CO when the flag was lowered for the last time, on effective disbandment of the battalion on Bougainville in February 1946. The flag was green, the battalion's regimental colour, with a white over red Colour patch on a grey background in the centre.

At the 8th Battalion Association annual dinner in May Trevenen, the acting CO, announced that new Colours would be presented to the battalion on its centenary on 10 August 1958. In proposing a toast to the regiment, Major Marcus Stone of the Association said that his members thought of the battalion as 'something alive and vital. We also think of the men who made the battalion what it is'.⁵³

Trevenen was promoted to lieutenant colonel on 18 August 1957 and assumed command of the battalion for the first of his two terms as CO of a Ballarat battalion. McDonald was promoted to colonel and temporary brigadier and posted to the Southern Command Officers Staff Group, before taking command of the 6th Brigade in 1958. He ultimately returned as CO of the 1960 Pentropic 2 RVR.

On the middle Saturday of the annual camp Brigadier Simpson addressed the 8th/7th Battalion officers and discussed his recent visit to Britain, where he visited the battalion's allied regiment, the King's Own Royal Regiment (Liverpool). He had received an inscribed silver salver on behalf of the battalion, which he passed to Trevenen. In response the CO said that the gift was an indication of the real link between the 8th/7th Battalion and the King's Own Royal Regiment (Liverpool).⁵⁴

During both training years 1955-56 and 1956-57 the battalion won the brigade Efficiency Shield. The 8th/7th Battalion won the competition four times, the 38th Battalion twice and the 59th Battalion once.⁵⁵ At the conclusion of the camp the 8th/7th was awarded the shield in perpetuity. It was judged on all aspects, including preparation and movement to camp, camp layout and administration, infantry and specialist training, ceremonial and the three-day brigade exercise.

Exercise Razorback, during the camp, was the biggest CMF exercise held since the war, with 2000 troops participating in defence and day and night patrolling activity along a razorback ridge in the state forest. Battalion attacks along a ridge were also conducted.⁵⁶

Early in 1958 CMF launched a recruiting campaign in Ballarat, seeking at least 200 more soldiers before presentation of the new Colours in August. On 3 January the strength of the battalion was 400 against the establishment of 900.⁵⁷ On 8 February 30 members commenced courses in catering, administration, QM stores management and infantry training. They lived in the Ballarat depot, and were self-sufficient and self-administering. They rose each day at 0630 and went to their civilian jobs after a PT session and breakfast. At 1750 they returned to the depot and resumed training. The course ran for ten days.⁵⁸

On 2 March the Queen Mother visited Ballarat. She walked on the same red carpet that had been laid out for her daughter's visit to Ballarat in 1954. The mayor, Councillor John Chisholm, a former 8th Battalion sergeant, referring to local arrangements for the tour, said he was particularly grateful to Trevenen and Wing Commander William Taylor of the RAAF School of Radio, both of whom were presented to the Queen Mother.⁵⁹

The visit was part of the annual Ballarat Begonia Festival. On 3 March the battalion marched through the streets as part of the celebrations. Addressing the battalion after the march Trevenen said that he had spoken with the Queen Mother for a few minutes about the battalion's centenary celebrations. She had asked him to pass on her congratulations and convey her best wishes to the troops. He also said that about 50 recruits had joined since the recruiting campaign had started.⁶⁰

The 8th Battalion Association announced that it would hold its annual reunion at the time of the centenary celebrations. The association also announced that Partridge, VC, would lead the association's march on ANZAC Day in Ballarat. He visited the battalion and was welcomed to the officers mess by Fry, then 2 IC.⁶¹

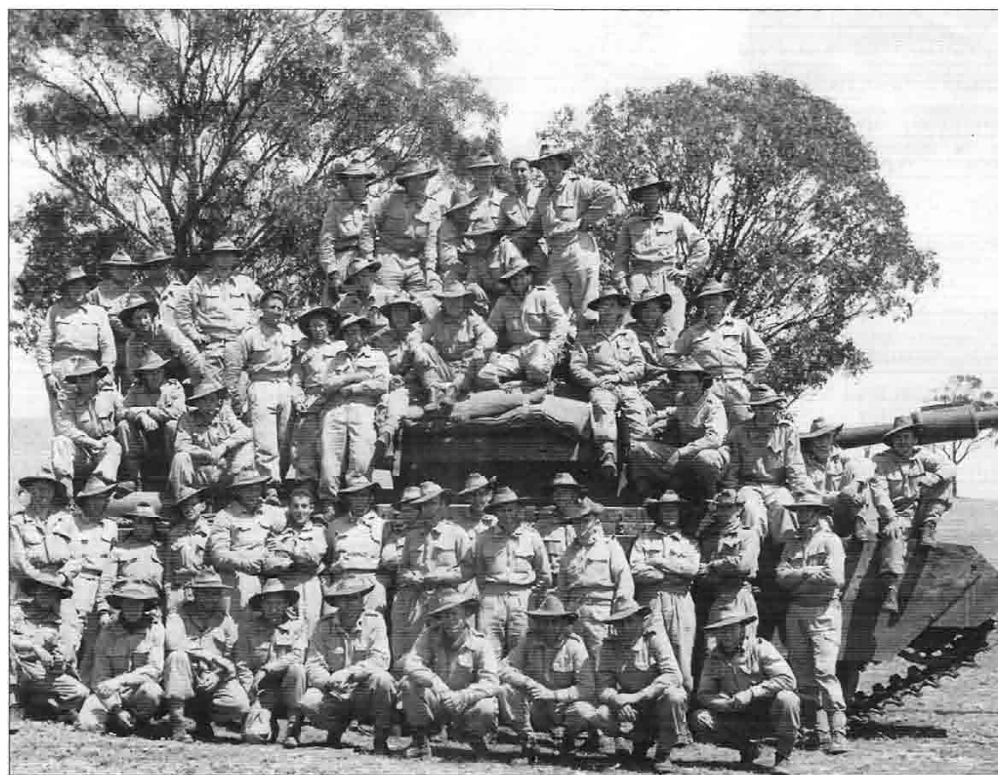
The strength of the CMF at this time made possible activities such as the 3rd Division parade held at Puckapunyal on 23 March 1958 to farewell the CGS, Sir Henry Wells.⁶² The parade commander was Major General Heathcote Howard (Tack) Hammer, CBE, DSO, ED, GOC 3rd Division. Ballarat-educated Hammer was commissioned in the 8th Battalion in 1926. During the Second World War he led the 2/48th Battalion in the Middle East and the 15th Brigade in New Guinea and Bougainville.

The deputy parade commander was Simpson, commanding the 6th Brigade. Also participating were the division's Commander Royal Australian Artillery (CRA), Brigadier Linden Parkinson, MBE, ED, and the commander of the 4th Brigade, Brigadier Ian Lowen, OBE, ED. Trevenen commanded the 8th/7th Battalion. The division marched past led by the bands of the RAA, 3rd Division, the 6th Battalion, the 58th/32nd Battalion, the 5th Battalion and the 38th Battalion.⁶³

In early June three 8th/7th Battalion officers, Lieutenants Ian Farren of Ballarat, Graeme Williams of Red Cliffs, and Noel Smith of Mildura, commenced a month's

training for junior leaders in tropical warfare at Canungra in Queensland. Ten senior battalion members had attended a specialist jungle warfare course at Canungra at Easter.

Camp was held at Puckapunyal from 11 to 26 October 1958. The first week was company and battalion level exercises. Maryborough's A Company, commanded by Major Ron Wade-Ferrell, was visited by the mayor of Maryborough, Councillor James Hedges, and Mr Brian Carter of Maryborough radio station 3CV. The visitors, with Trevenen, witnessed the final stage of an exercise consisting of an attack on a defended position in the state forest 30 kilometres from Puckapunyal. While there, Carter recorded interviews with many company members. These were played the next day and advertised the visitors' day. The second week of camp was brigade level exercises.⁶⁴



B Coy 8th/7th Battalion, Puckapunyal, 1959.
(8/7 RVR depot, Ballarat)

During the camp Lieutenant Kaye was posted as assistant adjutant, a job he found a bit boring. He gained access to an Army utility and took a quick illegal trip to Melbourne. He was very late returning to Scrub Hill, and took the back way into the camp. Unfortunately the military police (MP) were checking that road. He went so fast through the checkpoint that the MPs couldn't stop him. The next morning he found himself before the CO, and was virtually chained to the assistant adjutant's desk for the rest of the camp, preparing the camp newsletter.⁶⁵

The 1959 training year commenced with the annual range practice in March and a bivouac. The range practice brought to the battalion the new Trainfire shooting method, which was more realistic and challenging than past practices. During bivouacs conducted in 1959 companies practised contact drills and ambushes, the occupation and development of a defended area after contact with a strong enemy force and patrolling from a company base.

The annual camp was in October. The 3rd Division exercise brought together 3500 men, 510 vehicles, 13 tanks, 24 field guns and assorted supporting arms, and 1500 visitors. Junior leaders courses in February and May, specialist courses in April and June, brigade and unit TEWTs in April/May and August/September, and coaching classes each Thursday night for officers, potential officers and WOs, augmented this training. Recruitment of volunteer members for the battalion went well, some platoons having 50 percent volunteers.

Home for ten days during the 1959 camp was a hole in the ground, dug to specifications with a pick and shovel, except for HQ, which had the engineers using a backhoe. Heavy rain started falling on day two, and soon the soldiers were wondering whether they should bail or start building an ark. Once the position had been developed it was attacked. With the support of armour, artillery and the RAAF, the defenders held for three days before the enemy withdrew.

The companies had a memorable ride as guests of C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment, but were disappointed when, after riding down the slopes of Tehan Hill, they had to walk back up again. They also undertook water crossing training in Sunday Creek, and were proud to have floated their rafts and a gun across the creek. Support Company had the least 'fall-ins' and lost weapons. The mortar platoon commander, Lieutenant Ronald Pentland, 'got quite a kick to see those bombs going away, and in the right direction too!' The battalion then reclaimed its defence stores and, after a short stop at Scrub Hill, departed to its home locations.

As the time drew near for a change to the Pentropic system, the battalion paraded in Ballarat for the last time as the 8th/7th Battalion. Trevenen led about 200 members in four company groups past the town hall where the mayor, Councillor Fred Oliver, accompanied by the honorary colonel, Brigadier Hurley, took the salute.

On 1 July 1960 the 38th and 59th Battalions amalgamated with the 8th/7th Battalion to form 2 RVR under the former 8th/7th Battalion CO, Brigadier McDonald. Ballarat provided two companies for the new battalion, with Bendigo, Mildura and Geelong providing a company each.

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Part 3—Chapter 16

2 RVR PENTROPIC

In the early 1950s Australian troops fought in the Korean War as part of the 27th Commonwealth Brigade, 1st Commonwealth Division. After Korea, as a part of 'forward defence', Australia maintained a battalion in Malaya as part of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade. Despite these continuing links with British forces, Australia decided to adopt a structure compatible with US forces.

In 1956 the US adopted the pentomic divisional structure. This consisted of five combined arms 'battle groups', which were relatively self-contained, and included combat support elements. Greater emphasis was placed on strategic mobility. The number of men in a division was reduced by almost 3000, at the expense of command and control and combat service support. The US considered that these changes would increase 'foxhole strength'.

In 1956 Australian Army planners looked at two options for the reorganisation of the ARA field force:

Plan A: two brigade groups supplemented by national servicemen serving with the ARA for two years; and

Plan B: one brigade group (plus a battalion in Malaya) using ARA personnel only.

The CMF would retain a three-division structure, with some units disbanded and strength reduced from 82,000 to 51,000. The NSTS would continue on a reduced scale, with 12,000 entries per year. Modern weapons and support items were needed. In September 1957 the minister for the Army, Mr John Cramer, announced a mobile regular brigade group, implementing Plan B.¹ With the NSTS scaled down, 2000 ARA personnel were released for other duties.

A three-year defence plan was announced on 26 November 1959, based on a new strategic assessment. It included abolition of the NSTS, a 35 percent increase in ARA strength and a 50 percent increase in the volunteer strength of the CMF. Introduction of the Pentropic organisation was foreshadowed. On 22 March 1960 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported the abolition of 30 CMF battalions and the closure of 54 of

the 292 training depots, due in part to abolition of the NSTS (which finally ceased in June 1960). This effectively reduced the CMF from 50,000 to 20,000 men.

On 29 March Mr Cramer announced that Australian equipment and organisation would be along US lines. The Army was reorganised into two Pentropic divisions, each of five battle groups. Divisional strength was 14,000, compared with 13,000 for the tropical establishment (TE), or jungle, division. The Army planners did not know that in 1961 the US would scrap the pentomic organisation, and Australia would be the only country with a five-sided structure. A US journal published on 17 June 1961 was the first notice of this change received by the government.

In the CMF territorial battalions and regiments were replaced by state-based regiments, the Royal Queensland Regiment (RQR), RNSWR, RVR, RSAR, Royal Western Australian Regiment (RWAR) and Royal Tasmania Regiment (RTR). The 10th Medium Regiment was also formed.

The ARA formed two battle groups and the necessary combat and logistic units. The 1st Division consisted of the two ARA battle groups, 1 RAR at Holsworthy and 3 RAR at Enoggera, and three CMF battle groups, 1 RQR (HQ Brisbane), 2 RNSWR (HQ Sydney) and 3 RNSWR (HQ Sydney). The 2nd Division was converted to HQ Communication Zone, and the 3rd Division had five CMF battle groups, 2 RQR, 1 RVR, 2 RVR, 1 RSAR and 1 RWAR. An ARA TE battalion was maintained in Malaya, on a four company structure compatible with the British Commonwealth's Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR). A further ARA TE battalion was raised as a rotation battalion.

Both divisions had combat support groups, which were combat and support units that could be allotted to a division if required, while the communication zone included units to maintain the rear area of an operational zone. The CMF strength was set at 25,000 for 1960-61 and 30,000 for 1961-62. By June 1964 it was 27,500.

Claimed benefits of the Pentropic organisation were greater firepower, quicker dissemination of information (one fewer level of command) and greater flexibility. Problems encountered related to mobility, the wide span of command, inadequate communications, the limited range of artillery support and the negative attitude of personnel towards the organisation.

Within the infantry of a division, the five battle groups were each about one and a half times the strength of the old battalions, with over twice the firepower (80 sections rather than 36). A Pentropic division had 400 sections rather than the 324 under the old organisation. The battle groups theoretically had greater manoeuvrability, offensive capability and protection, while allowing for wastage. Each had five rifle companies of four rifle platoons and a weapons platoon. The support company had anti-tank, assault pioneer, mortar and signals platoons. Overall, however, the Pentropic division was not as effective in jungle warfare as had been hoped.

The former country Victoria battalions formed the five rifle companies of 2 RVR, which were named to retain their local identities. The HQ was formed in Melbourne from HQ 6th Brigade, located at Sandringham. The initial plan for 2 RVR was:

HQ and HQ Company	Sandringham;
Support Company	Ballarat;
A Company	Ballarat and Maryborough;
B Company	Bendigo, Castlemaine and Kyneton;
C Company	Mildura and Red Cliffs;
D Company	Kerang and Swan Hill; and
E Company	Geelong.

Within two weeks the 2 RVR organisation had changed to:

HQ and HQ Company:	Sandringham;
Support Company	Ballarat (ex 8th/7th Battalion);
A Company	Geelong;
B Company	Ballarat and Maryborough (ex 8th/7th Battalion);
C Company	Mildura and Red Cliffs (ex 8th/7th Battalion);
D Company	Bendigo, Castlemaine, Kyneton and Kerang (ex 38th Battalion); and
E Company	Shepparton, Echuca and Cobram (ex 59th Battalion). ²

The staff for the new battle group was drawn from the existing battalions and brigade HQ. Stuart McDonald, a former CO of the 8th/7th Battalion, commanded the 6th Brigade at that time and became the first CO of 2 RVR.

Recruiting did not go as well as expected and in 1961 D Company, in Bendigo, Castlemaine and Kyneton, transferred to the 6th Company RAASC. A new D Company was raised in Brighton. The Kerang, and Kyneton in 1962, depots were closed and A Company in Geelong transferred to the RAA in 1964.³ Support Company was relocated to the Brighton depot from Ballarat, with Administration Company (originally HQ Company) from Sandringham. Due to the new structure and staff changes, no camp was held by 2 RVR in the second half of the year.

In 1960 2 RVR in Ballarat consisted of B Company (less 8 Platoon at Maryborough) and Support Company. After the reorganisation WO 2 George Horwood was transferred from CSM D Company to CSM B Company. He was also a member of the battalion's long-range raiding party (LRRP), commanded by Captain Don (DB) Edwards. The first course was run in Geelong by an ARA officer, Major Welsh, who introduced himself by saying that he was a regular army officer, and he demanded

the highest standard of military discipline. One of the participants was WO 2 Jim Smith, a British Army DCM recipient from the Second World War, and a warder at the Geelong Jail next door. On hearing this introduction he said to Sergeant Wilkie 'We'll have to cut the **** down a peg or two!' And they did!⁴

On one occasion the LRRP members created a problem when they fired blanks and upset some stud cattle.⁵ On another night patrol one of the members lost his glasses in the dark. As he could not see without them, Horwood told the soldier to hang on to a nearby tree and not move until the patrol returned, as there were deep ravines nearby, and they would look for the glasses in daylight. On arrival back at the location some eight hours later, they found the digger still holding onto the tree, located on flat, open countryside.⁶

On 1 July 1961 Colonel Sydney (Spin) Buckler took command of the battalion, replacing McDonald, who was posted as *aide-de-camp* to the governor general in June. As the senior officer of a cut-off force of the 2/14th Battalion on the Kokoda Track, Buckler got some of his men back to safety after almost two weeks out of contact. He was the only one able to return to find the wounded who had been left behind. Unfortunately, the Japanese had murdered them. While serving in Korea as a battalion commander he earned the nickname 'spin' for charging his soldiers with misdemeanours and fining them a 'spin', or £5 (\$10). The fine was sent home to the soldier's mother.⁷

In the 1950s he was CO of 14 NSTB. The hill behind the battalion lines at Puckapunyal was named Buckler Hill. It was decided that a commemorative cairn would be built on the hill to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Stones were carried up the hill by men of the battalion. The cairn was unveiled on Coronation Day, 2 June 1953, by Ballarat-born Brigadier Charles Kappe, commanding the 1st Brigade, and his wife. Mount Kappe at Puckapunyal is named after him. Because of the shape of the cairn and the hill, it was affectionately known as 'Tit' Hill for years to come. In Lieutenant Colonel Darrell Strickland's time as CO of 22 RVR (around 1969), after the battalion had moved into S Block at Puckapunyal, the 22 RVR assault pioneer platoon reconstructed the cairn.⁸

Under Buckler in September 1961 Support Company moved to Warrnambool, leaving in Ballarat only B Company, less a platoon in Maryborough. The battalion attended a 3rd Division camp at Eildon as a Pentropic company with the five companies (from Geelong, Ballarat, Mildura, Bendigo and Shepparton) each providing a platoon.⁹ The country was extremely hilly and rugged. Wilkie remembers being told that the division's members consumed 30,000 dozen cans of beer during the exercise. During the camp the CMF deputy CO was Lieutenant Colonel Alex Lochhead, MM, the ARA XO was Lieutenant Colonel Tim Wilson and the RSM was WO 1 M. Dent. Lochhead's MM was awarded for actions on the Kokoda Track with the 39th Battalion. He ended the war as a lieutenant in the 2/2nd Battalion.

In 1962 HQ and Administration Company moved to George Street, Fitzroy, while Support Company moved to Brighton. D Company, which was originally to be raised in Bendigo, was raised at Brighton. The problem of the title 'Bendigo Company' was never resolved.¹⁰



Mildura Lieutenants Ian Lauder, John Clark and Vince Fundak at the School of Infantry, Ingleburn, 1962 with the new SLR and M60 MG and field equipment.
(Vince Fundak)

A composite B Company participated in the 2 RVR camp in 1962. It started with a 32-kilometre march-in to Mount Hickey. Weapons fired during the camp included the SLR (and the Energa grenade fired from it), Bren and Owen guns and the rocket launcher, while the mortar platoon fired their mortars. A nine-day patrol school, run by Major Bullard, was held near Puckapunyal.¹¹ At 0530 on the first day of the course the members found themselves marching towards the top of Mount Hickey (or Mount Tallarook). After a lunch break at Dabyminga Creek, and a chance to rest aching and blistered feet, they pushed on. The little jaunt over the top of Mount Hickey and down to Trawool was the precursor to later exercises named 'Little Kokoda'. Buckler chose the name.

He also instituted a voluntary walk called 'A message from Garcia', from Mount Puckapunyal to Mount Hickey and back, a distance of almost 60 kilometres. Men walked in pairs and Buckler, then almost 60, selected Wilkie to walk with him. Wilkie reported that the colonel was hanging on to his webbing and, although he was almost exhausted, he was basically pulling Buckler up the hills. The trek took 23 hours to complete.¹²

In 1962 C Company also sent 67 members from Mildura to the other end of the state, for a 14-day camp at Cape Schanck, on the southern extremity of the Mornington Peninsula. The base camp was Fort Pearce, at Point Nepean. The camp consisted of a number of exercises, the first called Operation Coastline. This gave the troops training in locating tracks that could be used by a force landing on the peninsula and moving inland. Another exercise saw two of the company's platoons pitted against each other during advance, attack, defence and withdrawal training in the thick scrub between Point Nepean and Cape Shanck.¹³ It was the first visit to the sea for some Mildura soldiers. Private Dixson's photograph was used in the magazine *Australia Post*.¹⁴



2 RVR Portsea Camp 1962. Private Dixson's first visit to the sea.
(8/7 RVR depot, Mildura)

Lochhead had a senior position in a flour mill, and his peak work dates coincided with camp dates, so he could not attend. He was replaced by Strickland, who had served with both the 38th and 59th Battalions before the Pentropic system.¹⁵ He raised the second country Victorian battalion, 22 RVR, in 1966.

The 1963 Eildon camp was known as the 'Wet Camp'. It was reported that 250 millimetres of rain fell in four days. Bill Whitfield was the company clerk for Major Brian Colbert's B Company. Just before the camp he broke his leg. He shouldn't have attended, but the OC considered him essential, and he came to camp with the two padres. Unfortunately, the wet meant that Bill's crutches sank into the mud each time he left the company HQ tent. The sergeant cook, Arthur Hems, brought three meals a day to him. The roads were so muddy that Shepparton's Captain Earl had to provide a half platoon of soldiers to pull the stores trucks up the hills with ropes, so supplies could be delivered.¹⁶

The GOC of the 3rd Division at this time was Major General Roy Gordon, CBE. He wanted to replace all the infantry company commanders with ARA officers. Buckler objected, and at short notice was replaced in July by Colonel Geoffrey Swan. When Gordon ended his term at the 3rd Division in November 1963 the company commanders were still CMF officers, and remained that way.¹⁷

Swan joined the CMF a couple of years before the Second World War. He was one of the early enlistees in a company raised at Lord Somers Camp for service in the Melbourne-based 14th Battalion. He soon became an NCO and was commissioned in August 1940. Two months later the 14th amalgamated with the 32nd Battalion to form the 14th/32nd Australian Infantry Battalion. Swan became adjutant of the new battalion, which fought in New Guinea and New Britain. Post-war he served in the 6th Battalion, which he commanded from 1956 to 1960, when he was posted to the Command and Staff Training Unit (CSTU) until taking command of 2 RVR.¹⁸

The following year, 1964, was known as the 'Dry Camp', where Whitfield and his mates learnt how to use knapsacks to fight bushfires. Fires almost burned through the exercise area. A track was bulldozed through the hills to save the HQ. The E Company members saved a hut full of explosives from burning, and stopped the fire at the camp.¹⁹

The battalion set up camp and signal posts along the ridges, and four Army Sioux helicopters and two light aircraft were used during the exercise. The *Melbourne Sun* had an article showing the diverse range of backgrounds of the CMF soldiers. The photograph shows Don Dow, (born in France), Gerry Discher, (Germany), Czeslan Gryson, (Poland), Helmut Borner, (Germany), Ardi van Hammond, (Holland), Kek Gober, (Hungary) and Ralph van Beek, (Holland).²⁰

At a Ballarat Airfield camp in 1964 Hawkes commanded the recruit company. His 2 IC, Captain Frank Canning-Cheal, was not happy with the state of the recruits' rooms. Hawkes harangued them about their rooms and then ordered the 40 or so

recruits to ground arms on the road outside their huts and move into the huts to correct the problems. While they were in the huts, he heard a strange grinding sound on the road behind him. As he turned around, he heard the CSM, WO 2 Michael Symons, yelling to the driver of the hygiene vehicle to stop. The driver had driven over and damaged about 16 rifles. He claimed that he was blinded by the sun.²¹



Major Ed Hawkes inspecting a bent rifle
at Ballarat Airfield, 1964.
(Ed Hawkes)

On 10 November 1964 Mr Menzies announced the reintroduction of selective national service. Under the scheme 20-year-old men had the option to serve in the CMF part-time for six years, or take the risk of their birthday being drawn out in a ballot, which meant two years full-time service in the Army. CMF service had to be effective, or national service would be required.²² As with the earlier scheme, this bolstered the numbers in CMF units.

In December the CGS, Lieutenant General Sir John Wilton, announced that cabinet had approved abandonment of the Pentropic structure. A triangular division similar to the TE division of the 1950s replaced it. Among the reasons for the change were that no-one else used the Pentropic system, the ARA needed to maintain two infantry structures and it was unwieldy in jungle conditions.²³

One of the most significant factors in the elimination of the Pentropic division was that 'it's not the size of the battalion that counts: it's the number'.²⁴ Australia needed more deployable units.²⁵ The new division organisation the consisted of three task forces each of three battalions, giving the division an extra four battalions.

The size of each battalion was reduced (to about 800), and an additional five ARA battalions (to nine) and six CMF battalions were raised. However, conscription was needed to provide the soldiers to increase the strength of the ARA from 20,000 to 40,000, and the CMF target was 35,000. National servicemen were required to serve anywhere in the world.

Plans to deploy RAF Victor, and later Vulcan, medium bombers to Darwin, the build up of troops in Malaysia, and ever-present rumblings from Indonesia were pointers to a threat from the north.²⁶ The role of the CMF was to provide follow up units and formations to supplement ARA strength in an overseas theatre, and

to provide a base for further expansion that the situation might demand, including home defence. Amendments to the Defence Act were made to allow use of the CMF and Reserves in circumstances short of war. CMF members were all volunteers and could deploy overseas.²⁷

Around this time the CO of 1 RVR, Lieutenant Colonel Mike Bacon, sketched a Regimental badge. It had a pair of crossed rifles, the letter V and the word Victoria under a crown. The design became the RVR Badge.²⁸

Endnotes

- 1 McCarthy, *The Once and Future Army*, p 91
- 2 Army Website, 2 RVR
- 3 Parade Card 1963
- 4 Interview, Wilkie, 20 October 2007
- 5 Wilkie
- 6 *Ranger 2 Annual Magazine* 1966
- 7 Interview, Strickland, 1 December 2007
- 8 Strickland
- 9 Strickland
- 10 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p3-68, and Mess Dinner Brochure 1987
- 11 2 RVR 219/1/1 (nd) of February 1962
- 12 Wilkie
- 13 *Sunraysia Daily*, 7 June 1962
- 14 1 IRC Unit brief
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- 17 Interview, Swan, 15 September 2007
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- 20 *Melbourne Sun*, 13 March 1964
- 21 Hawkes, letter of 1 August 2007
- 22 *Sunraysia Daily*, 10 November 1964
- 23 Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p222
- 24 Horner, *From Korea to Pentropic*, p67
- 25 Horner, *Duty First*, p179
- 26 www.thefreelibrary.com
- 27 McCarthy, *The Once and Future Army*, p129
- 28 RVR Association, *History of the Royal Victoria Regiment*, p91



Annual Camp Jamieson, 1964.

On 13 March the *Melbourne Sun* had an article on the exercise showing the diverse range of backgrounds of the CMF soldiers. The photograph shows Don Dow (born in France), Gerry Discher (Germany), Czeslan Gryson (Poland), Helmut Borner (Germany), Ardi van Hammond (Holland), Kek Gober (Hungary) and Ralph van Beek (Holland).

(Don Dow)

Part 3—Chapter 17
A COUNTRY BATTALION AGAIN

On 30 June 1965 the Pentropic organisation ended. On 1 July 1 RVR was split into three battalions:

- 1 RVR: HQ Moonee Ponds, and later a depot at Footscray;
- 5 RVR: HQ Hawthorn and depots at Armadale and Surrey Hills; and
- 6 RVR: HQ Melbourne and depots at Brunswick and Preston.

HQ 4 TF was formed in July, a direct descendent of the 4th Brigade, with the functions of a brigade HQ. The infantry battalions came under its control. Another HQ raised was the 1st Support Group. It had no traditional ancestry, but controlled the service units under command of the 3rd Division. Both were located at George Street, Fitzroy.¹

The HQ of 2 RVR moved to Ballarat, and a country infantry battalion was once again raised. Companies were based at Shepparton and Warrnambool, with a further company planned to be raised later at Hamilton, but this did not occur. The Mildura company became 1 IRC, RVR, under command of the 3rd Division, for reasons related to the distance from Ballarat, Mildura being a traditional infantry area and the possibility of a new battalion being raised there. The 2 RVR structure in 1965 was:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| HQ: | Ballarat; |
| B Company: | Ballarat and Maryborough; |
| C Company: | Shepparton, Cobram and Echuca; |
| Support Company: | Warrnambool; and |
| Administration Company: | Ballarat, with elements in each depot. |

The company planned for Geelong was soon absorbed by the 10th Medium Regiment, while Bendigo remained an RAASC depot.

Not only had the structure of the Army changed in 1965, but national service was re-introduced. 'Special conditions' battalions were set up in each state for those who

did not have a CMF training depot within 40 kilometres of their homes. Tasmanians trained with the Victorian battalion, 22 RVR, as the Tasmanian battalion was raised 'on paper' only.

HQ 22 RVR commenced operations from an office in Victoria Barracks in Melbourne, moved to Queen's Road, then to the depot in Gipps Street, Richmond. Two 33-day camps were held each year in 1967 and 1968, and the battalion found a home in S Block at Puckapunyal in 1969. It also fostered about seven recruit courses for the 3rd Division each year, and other unit camps and courses. S Block became known as the divisional motel.

Until after national service ended 22 RVR held two major camps and a 16-day alternative camp per year. With the help of staff from other units, it trained its own NCOs and became virtually self-sufficient. The battalion was considered a country unit, as most of the soldiers, and later its junior NCOs, were country members. Like many other units, 2 RVR lost members to 22 RVR as they enjoyed the prospect of 'getting all over and done in one hit', or it suited their occupations and sporting commitments better.²

The strength of 2 RVR grew, with about 180 members in Ballarat, good recruiting in Warrnambool and Shepparton and smaller numbers in Echuca, Cobram and Maryborough. By late February strength was around 400.³ In March WO 2 Bert Strange was farewelled after serving since 1929, Staff Sergeant Harry Scurrie after serving since 1950 and Sergeant Neil Thompson after serving since 1951.⁴

In March 1966 5 RVR went into camp at the Ballarat Airport. This battalion had been formed in 1965 with about 50 percent of its members drawn from the Pentropic 2 RVR. It was followed into the airport in mid-April by 2 RVR, which had 328 members attending from all depots. The first week covered training in counter revolutionary warfare (CRW) operations as being practised in South Vietnam. The second week saw the theory put into practice in the Creswick State Forest. The camp went over ANZAC Day, and the main body of the battalion marched in Ballarat and attended services in St Patrick's Cathedral and St Andrew's Kirk.⁵

During camp Lieutenant Colonel Bert Fry took command. He had served with the 39th Battalion on the Kokoda Track and in the 2/8th Battalion, ending the war as a lieutenant. Trevenen handed the CO's baton to Brigadier McDonald, commanding 4 TF. He in turn handed it to Fry during a battalion parade.⁶ In April Fry and the adjutant, Captain Robert Guest, were the first CMF officers granted permission to fly to visit exercise areas. They flew to Warrnambool to inspect Support Company training and to present former Support Company OC Lieutenant John (Jock) McDonald, who had transferred to Darwin, with his ED, awarded to CMF officers after 12 years continuous service. From Warrnambool they flew to C Company, training at a rifle range near Shepparton.⁷

The camp critical review stated that the full chain of command operated. Section, platoon and company tactics and movement were improved. Automatic and instinctive weapon handling were improved, resulting in better shooting performance. Living in the field developed to a high degree and administration in the field satisfactorily. In June 1966 the 4 TF battalions were rated as to how long they would require to be brought up to deployment standard. Each of 1, 2, 5 and 6 RVR was rated as needing six to seven months full-time training, while 1 IRC would require only four months.⁸

Trevenen was farewelled from the battalion at a dinner at Craig's Royal Hotel. Fifteen serving and seven past officers, including the former honorary colonel of the 8th/7th Battalion, Brigadier Hurley, attended with their partners and some guests.⁹ Trevenen spoke of his successes and failures during his Army service and what the Army had taught him. He reviewed the history of the battalion and the co-operation between it and the RAAF School of Radio, which had recently closed in Ballarat.¹⁰

The ARA cadre was an experienced group of soldiers. Guest was MID for his work in Sarawak as a platoon commander with 3 RAR. His citation read in part 'for continuous good work over a long period while stationed in Sarawak and engaged in operations in the Bau district and along the Kalimantan-Sarawak border against Indonesian insurgents'.¹¹

On the first weekend in July the battalion strength was 434, and a recruit course for 32 recruits started at Ranger Barracks. The course included weekends and night parades and was held over three months. Members from Administration and B Companies in Ballarat attended, with 15 members from 6 Platoon, B Company at Maryborough. The transport platoon was also involved, training to recover vehicles, while the medical platoon trained on evacuation and treatment methods for the wounded under the RMO, Captain Harry Gordon.¹²

Exercise Stalking Horse, a 4 TF TEWT, was held in the Kinglake West-Healesville area over the weekend 6-7 August. Fry was one of the directing staff, while the administration officer was Captain Don Ellis, who later commanded the battalion. The TEWT had a CRW theme and included a demonstration of current equipment.

In September the battalion hosted a TEWT, Exercise Dark Panther. Officers and senior NCOs from the 2 RVR depots at Ballarat, Maryborough, Warrnambool, Shepparton, Echuca and Cobram attended, with artillery and armoured corps members from Melbourne. The TEWT introduced them to CRW at company level. For a day they received instruction on the employment of cavalry, APCs, artillery and light aircraft in CRW in the Ballan-Greendale area. They then returned to Ranger Barracks where an Asian village had been set up to assist with studying the tactics, and a British anti-terrorist film was shown. Sunday saw them undertake a counter vehicle ambush exercise and an area ambush near Gordon. McDonald visited the exercise.¹³

The battalion endeavoured to make its training as realistic as possible. In Fry's era WO 2 Allan Douglass was CSM B Company and, with Sergeant Kevin Fiscallini, he organised a bayonet fighting exercise in the depot, with blood filled dummies, fires burning, bugles blaring, blank ammunition and background music. Fry was wearing his battle dress, but on hearing the commotion went outside, stripped to the waist, and joined in. Apparently he was the best of the bayonet fighters that night.¹⁴

The second half of 1966 was busy. Individual units conducted recruit training under direction from 4 TF. Over 7-9 October Ballarat and Shepparton held the first weekend of 2 RVR recruit courses that took five months to complete, including Christmas. The courses involved drill and weapons training and a bivouac each month. In Ballarat Lieutenant Lynes, who later commanded the battalion, supervised the training.

The Warrnambool members of the mortar platoon undertook drills, distance and accuracy training on their mortars at Puckapunyal. Sergeant Lyndon King set up the platoon. He eventually transferred to the catering platoon and after retiring from the Army worked as the cleaner at the depot for many years. In November Ballarat, Shepparton and Warrnambool commenced driver training. The courses involved several nights a week and two weekends. On one of the weekends of the driving courses C Company held a bivouac in the Trentham area for live firing of the Owen gun and the SLR on snap gallery and sneaker ranges. B and Administration Companies fired the M60 general purpose machine gun (GPMG) at the Canadian rifle range in Ballarat, and Support Company undertook infantry minor tactics training.¹⁵

On 16 December the former CO of the 8th/7th Battalion and later first CO of 2 RVR visited Ballarat. McDonald was welcomed back to the city at a civic reception held by the mayor, Councillor Les Kennedy. He was touring towns and depots as a major general and the new 3rd Division GOC.¹⁶

In February 1967 the battalion went on bivouac in three locations. About 90 members of B Company fired at the Canadian rifle range and undertook field craft training in the nearby forest. C Company took 120 members to Puckapunyal, and 90 members of Support Company practised at a local range. The CO and company commanders conducted a reconnaissance for the forthcoming annual camp.¹⁷

The battalion went to camp from 1 to 14 April at Jerusalem Inlet on Lake Eildon. The aim of the camp was to develop a professional approach to soldiering and included living and administration in the field, weapon training and minor tactics. The camp also included basic training for more than 20 recruits. According to the camp critical review, the battalion took 332 members (71 percent of its effective strength of 447) to the camp, and the training and administrative aims were met. The camp 'developed a fine unit spirit'. The total Q write-off was a mere \$8.45!¹⁸

The terrain was extremely hilly and the soldiers faced many false crests when moving through it. C Company was in trouble with HQ as it made a lot of noise, mainly complaining, when moving through the hills.¹⁹ Of the 150 members C Company took to the camp in five platoons; four platoons were used as infantry and one was supplied to Support Company to boost its numbers.²⁰

In June 20 members of B Company undertook Exercise Short Haul. The Ballarat Scottish Pipe Band piped the men from Ranger Barracks out of the city, after which they walked to Clunes via Creswick, a distance of 35 kilometres. On arrival at Creswick, the local band led them through the town to the swimming pool, where the marchers had a meal from their ration packs. After camping the night at the Clunes Sports Oval they walked back the next day. Marchers included DB Edwards, Douglass and Fiscalini.²¹

The 4 TF end of training year 1966-67 report suggested that the 4th/19th PWLH would be ready for active service within four months, however, the other units, the 8th/13th VMR, the four infantry battalions and the 2nd Commando Company, would take at least six months of full-time training to be ready, little change from the previous year.²²

Since 1965 annual camps had been held on an individual unit basis. In 1968 4 TF took control and held one camp for its units over the period 9 March to 5 April at Mount Hickey near Seymour. Of the infantry units, 1 RVR and 6 RVR attended the first part of the camp, when 4 TF provided the HQ. The later part was attended by 2 RVR and 5 RVR, with the 1st Support Group providing the HQ.

Brian Colbert took command of 2 RVR on 1 January 1968, having served as the 2 IC in 1966-67. He was commissioned in 1955 and became a company commander in 1958. He commanded B Company in 1961 and Administration Company from 1965. Fry was farewelled at a dinner at Craig's Royal Hotel on 15 March, attended by 18 serving and eight past officers, their partners and some guests.²³

The 1968 camp was held at Mount Hickey in late March/early April. RAAF Caribou aircraft flew 100 soldiers from Ballarat to Mangalore, north of Seymour, in chinks (groups) of 25. They were joined by 70 members from Warrnambool. The first week of the camp involved weapons training, minor tactics and field training, while the second week was a full scale company exercise.²⁴ The battalion held a junior leaders course in late 1968 to prepare for camp in 1969. Early notice was received from the 3rd Division and 4 TF on camp details, reconnaissance was carried out in October, and orders issued in December. In late October Colbert became the first of the battalion's officers to visit South Vietnam.²⁵

In 1969 the battalion had depots in Ballarat, Maryborough, Warrnambool, Shepparton, Echuca and Cobram. The camp was run at Mount Hickey by the 3rd Division, and was again in two parts. The first part was controlled by 4 TF with 1 RVR and 5 RVR in attendance. A new headquarters, X TF, was raised from personnel

not involved with the battalions and other HQ duties to run the second part, leaving the 1st Support Group unhappy at not being used as in 1968.

The emphasis was on patrolling, the advance and the attack. For 2 RVR the main problems were lack of proper manning and operating of company command posts (CP) and the training of ORs for the battalion CP. It was also found that, in an effort to get to platoon level training before the two-day company test period, the battalion did not devote enough time to section level training. TF HQ commented that the unit performed well overall, and 'adapts quickly to field conditions and derives good value from annual camps because the soldiers are more self reliant and accept orders more readily than metropolitan soldiers'.²⁶

In May C Company's Les Earl visited South Vietnam and was attached to 9 RAR. He visited Fire Support Base (FSB) Thrust near the Long Hai Mountains, where A Company, 9 RAR protected a New Zealand artillery battery.²⁷

In mid-1969 the battalion started training for the presentation of Colours in Melbourne later in the year. Soldiers attending were accommodated in the Russell Street depot. With the Vietnam War in full swing, they were not allowed out of the depot while wearing uniform.²⁸

There are pranksters in every unit and 2 RVR had its share. The weekend 23-24 August was used for rehearsals for the Colours presentation parade. Lieutenant Frank Norton hung his sword and scabbard in the anteroom of the officers mess after training. On leaving the mess he found that the sword was missing, and a search failed to locate it. On the Monday the sword was found in the depot yard standing upright, point in the ground, in a position that could not be missed. The culprit was never found, but it has been suggested came from the sergeants mess!²⁹

In an unrelated incident during Colours presentation training, WO 2 Douglass found Lieutenant Dean Swift cleaning his sword in the mess. They decided that some sword fighting would be fun. A wild swipe from Douglass broke the sword at a point where it had previously been repaired. Later, when Swift was required to draw swords during sword drill and the broken blade was discovered, he said: 'It was alright when I put it in!'³⁰

Colbert retired due to ill health in December. Major Dower, the 2 IC, was the next senior major in the battalion, but was on his tactics for lieutenant colonel course and could not take command until finishing. Major Lynes administered command of the battalion until March the following year.³¹

In 1970 depots remained at Ballarat, Warrnambool, Shepparton, Cobram, Echuca and Maryborough. Always mindful of the need for exposure in the community, C Company provided six members to act as marshals for the parade of floats in Echuca on Australia Day.³² In mid-March Lynes and five other CMF officers visited South Vietnam. Lynes was attached to 8 RAR. Among other activities he visited FSB Discovery, was attached to D Company when it redeployed with a cavalry troop,

joined a re-supply convoy to FSB Isa and visited the 1st Civil Affairs Unit and some of its projects. He also visited 6 RAR at the Horseshoe, before touring some of the engineer projects. The visit ended at the 1st Australian Logistics Support Group (ALSG) at Vung Tau.³³

In March 1970 Lieutenant Colonel Howard Taylor took command for three months, including attendance at the 3rd Division camp under X TF. As he had done in 1969 Colonel Swan, a former CO of the Pentropic 2 RVR, attended the 4 TF part of the camp as the deputy commander.³⁴ The X TF camp was held from 11 to 24 April at Scrub Hill and on the Puckapunyal range. The concept for the camp was defence and withdrawal for a two battalion TF in a CRW setting. Training was designed to improve basic soldier skills and collective skills up to company level.³⁵

The composition of X TF included 2 RVR and 5 RVR, armour, artillery, engineers, signals, RAASC, medical, dental, provost, RAEME and WRAAC elements. The RAAF provided a flight of fighter ground attack (FGA) aircraft with a forward air controller (FAC), a Caribou fixed wing transport aircraft and an Iroquois helicopter. The FGA strafed and bombed company locations several times; the Caribou accurately dropped supplies to the TF maintenance area, battalion A Echelons and the engineers. The Iroquois was heavily tasked for the four days it was in the area, with 70 percent of battalion members either flying in it or being involved with its loading or unloading.³⁶

Infantry/tank co-operation training was held, with the 8th/13th VMR providing Centurion tanks. Each battalion was tested over two days in defence, patrolling, live firing and a withdrawal exercise.³⁷ The battalion took around 250 of its 350 active members to the camp (its strength was limited to 536).³⁸ A serious incident occurred during the camp when a pistol was lost. A search failed to find it, so a kit check was carried out. The soldiers were checked first, overseen by the sergeants and officers. The pistol was still not found, so the sergeants were next. Again the pistol was not found, so the officers' kit was checked. The pistol was not found, but magically appeared before the camp concluded.³⁹

The camp critical review for 1970 stated that junior officers lacked knowledge of the principles and requirements of defence, HQ was not effectively staffed, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) had not been prepared and communications within the battalion were poor, as the signals platoon was not well-prepared. In the review 4 TF stated it was aware that the CO was only administering command for a short time, that the 2 IC was on his promotion course and that the new adjutant was not familiar with state and CMF requirements. However, the aim of exercising companies in the defensive phase of war in a CRW setting was achieved.⁴⁰

A review of the battalion over 1969-70 showed weaknesses in officer and NCO training, peace and war administration, training standards and recruiting to stop a steady decrease in numbers. The causes were given as lack of foresight and planning,

officers insufficiently trained in current military activities, mainly due to isolation combined with a lack of career planning, and outlying companies being allowed to organise their own activities, with the battalion only concentrated for the annual camp. A lack of ARA cadre support during 1969, a high turnover of troops and a high percentage of seasonal workers not being available for training also contributed.⁴¹

When the newly promoted Dower took command in August 1970 the battalion had problems. However, keenness among the B Company soldiers to shoot their weapons was not one of them. In November 1970 the company requested permission to hold a competitive shoot against the Ballarat East Rifle Club, stating that the 'value to individual soldiers of instruction in the finer points at rifle shooting by experienced rifle club members will be useful to infantrymen and help stimulate interest in rifle shooting'. The shoot was in two parts: one part with both teams using the rifle club weapons and the other with both teams using the military weapons. The activity was approved by 4 TF.⁴²

In June, July and August the battalion recruited 44 soldiers. In earlier years it conducted its own recruit training, but by 1970 centralised training had been introduced, held at S Block (22 RVR) in Puckapunyal. In August 29 recruits began their training for 2 RVR. Of these, 18 were from Ballarat, seven from Maryborough and four from Warrnambool.⁴³

The first battalion exercise held by 2 RVR in many years was Operation Pipe Cleaner in the Enfield State Forest, southwest of Ballarat, over the last weekend of September. Warrnambool and Shepparton/Echuca members were flown in by RAAF Caribou and flown home again on Sunday afternoon. Iroquois helicopters were also used. The aim was to see how quickly the battalion, with sufficient transport resources, could assemble and deploy into an area of operations (AO). B Company provided three platoons: 4 Platoon, known as 'the old black dogs' after their former commander Captain Tom Laffey, who was known as 'the drover's dog'; 5 Platoon, known as 'the screaming eagles' for a reason lost in time; and 6 Platoon known as 'Dino's Demons' after former commander Dean Swift. Some members were lucky enough to fly over the area in a Caribou to see the exercise from the air.⁴⁴

A second exercise, Operation Open Thrust, was held a month later. This was a cordon and search exercise in an Asian village constructed by the assault pioneers. In the early hours of Sunday B Company surrounded the village while C Company waited outside the cordon. Shortly after dawn C Company moved in and searched the village to capture the 'insurgents' who were 16 cadets provided by the St Patrick's College Cadet Unit.⁴⁵

Planning for the 1971 camp commenced on 8 March 1970, just prior to the 1970 camp. Following a recommendation in the 1970 camp review, the 1971 camp was moved to more difficult terrain at Jerusalem Inlet on Lake Eildon. Training was individual and unit training in the advance and attack in a limited war setting in

South East Asia, within a revolutionary war context. The early planning was for battalions to deploy to Eildon in individual AOs, with their own small arms ranges, while the 2 RVR and 5 RVR mortar platoons trained jointly at Puckapunyal.⁴⁶

An initial deployment/reconnaissance in the area was carried out by 4 TF over the weekend 26-27 September 1970. Further lead-up training occurred over the weekend 27-28 February 1971. The exercise included snap and gallery ranges built in the exercise area and watermanship and amphibious training with the 41st Transport Platoon (Amphibious). It was supported by three Sabre jets from RAAF Williamtown near Newcastle.⁴⁷ Andrew Berry of the *Ballarat Courier* attended with 2 RVR support. His report said that:

[200] troops from Ballarat, Warrnambool and Maryborough left Ballarat for the exercise. The battalion flew to the exercise by RAAF Caribou and were under command of Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Dower. The exercise included navigation, patrolling and watermanship using various engineering equipment including assault and reconnaissance boats with and without outboard motors and Army DUKW (known as Ducks). There will be several exercises in rugged terrain and the troops will be practiced [sic] in Cordon and Search operations. An Advance Party of 30 members left on Thursday 11th March in nine trucks and seven Land Rovers.⁴⁸

The camp dates for most of the units involved were 13 to 26 March.

Support for the camp was similar to that of 1970, although the 4th/19th PWLH held its camp in the Big Desert at different dates. In this camp the TF had four of the RVR battalions present, as 1 RVR, 2 RVR (less C Company), 5 RVR and 6 RVR all attended. The fifth RVR battalion, 22 RVR, was a 3rd Division unit, not a 4 TF unit, and was not involved in the exercise.

The timing of the camp did not suit C Company, 2 RVR, which requested an alternative date. March is the fruit picking season around Shepparton, and there were many seasonal workers and farmers in the company, and a shortage of full-time jobs in the area. C Company held its camp from 8 to 21 May. Lieutenant Colonel Strickland, the CO of 22 RVR, agreed to C Company using S Block in Puckapunyal for its camp. The TF camp was attended by 220 members of 2 RVR, while C Company had around 100 attend its camp, rather than the estimated 50 or 60 who could have attended the TF camp.⁴⁹

Lieutenant Dow, a Geelong-based officer who paraded at Ballarat, visited South Vietnam for 19 days in April, sponsored by 3 RAR. After being issued with an SLR and ammunition, he moved to Baria, before returning to the 3 RAR area. The tour included visits to the 1 ATF area, FSB Beth, the Horseshoe, a four-day operation with 3 Platoon, and visiting Vung Tau and 1 ALSG. His report stated that taking part in operations and seeing that ARA units use the same tactics, employments and drills as taught in the CMF was encouraging, and indicated that CMF training was on a sound basis.⁵⁰

Dower and five other CMF officers visited South Vietnam in June. The three infantry officers were attached to 4 RAR/NZ (ANZAC), based at Nui Dat. During the visit they went to 1 ATF, flew to FSB Trish and were attached to B Company for five days of operations, before returning to Nui Dat and visiting 1 ALSG at Vung Tau. During the visit Dower met the CO of 4 RAR/NZ, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Hughes, who later became the honorary colonel of the RVR, and Captain John McAloney, who as a colonel commanded 4 TF.⁵¹

Following the annual camp in 1971 the battalion prepared for another phase of war in 1972: the defence. The battalion's officers and senior NCOs attended a TEWT, Exercise Devil Cat, at Ballarat and the Enfield State Forest in mid-February. Members of 1 IRC and the 8th/13th VMR also attended.⁵²

The battalion exercise for 1972 was held in late April/early May in a forest near Gellibrand, south of Colac. It included two days of rifle shooting using gallery and snap ranges. The first few days were basic infantry training, followed by a six-day exercise where the troops carried their own rations and were only in contact with HQ by radio.⁵³

In 1960 there were 25,289 serving members in the CMF. This rose to 30,111 in 1965 and 31,549 in 1970. National service was then reduced from two years to 18 months. In 1967 there were 8000 personnel in South Vietnam, but early in 1971 the TF there was reduced from three to two battalions, and later in the year only one remained. The last battalion was withdrawn in March 1972, and on 2 December the Labor Party swept to power. National service effectively ended that day. CMF strength dropped to 20,487. Infantry companies disbanded, and many units struggled to maintain effectiveness. The problem was not simply a lack of numbers, but a lack of junior soldiers. At a parade in Hawthorn one night the CSM was heard to say that he was looking for 'the company private'.⁵⁴

In 1972 planning commenced for a TF camp in early 1973. The aim was to establish the basis for a viable 'ready reaction reserve battalion'. This would give officers, NCOs and soldiers the opportunity to exercise as members of full strength sub-units, supported by the variety and scale of arms and services normally to be expected in war (as recently experienced in South Vietnam) in a setting of continuous activity allied as closely as possible to active service conditions. The battalion to be exercised was known as 3 RVR.

Lieutenant Colonel Ingram, then the CO of 1 RVR, was the CO of 3 RVR. In an interview he said that the concept was to test how effectively the CMF could provide a ready reaction battalion at short notice for service such as in South Vietnam. He had visited 6 RAR there, and was familiar with the concepts of operations.⁵⁵ While preparing for and conducting the exercise Ingram remained in command of 1 RVR.

The exercise was between 24 March and 8 April 1973 in State Forest 1, Puckapunyal, with B Echelon at Scrub Hill, and was controlled by 4 TF operating from the 22 RVR facilities at Puckapunyal. Infantry members of 3 RVR were drawn from 1, 2, 5 and 6 RVR, which provided 422 personnel for the exercise, including support and control staff, umpires and enemy. Members of 3 RVR were released from their home units for a year for lead-up training. South Australia's 9 TF offered a rifle company to support the exercise. This was approved by AHQ and Southern Command, however, on 3 January 1973 27 RSAR withdrew the company as it was required for a Jungle Training Centre (JTC) exercise at Canungra in Queensland. This left 3 RVR with just two rifle companies.

The majority of the supporting elements came from 4 TF and from the 3rd Division, whose GOC was then Major General John (Jock) McNeill, AO, OBE, ED. Artillery support was provided by the 2nd and 15th Field Regiments, and armoured support by the 8th/13th VMR acting as the 5th LH, also with its B Echelon at Scrub Hill. Medical support for the 5th LH was provided by Captain Harry Bowman from 1 IRC, Mildura. Engineers provided by HQ RAE, Ringwood gave watermanship training at Mitchellstown and Lake Eppalock. As they were to train in watermanship, infantry members had to take swimming tests.

In the TF maintenance area the 1st Support Group controlled the 6th Transport Column, the 11th Base Ordnance Depot, a detachment from the 3rd Provost Company, Royal Australian Army Provost Corps (RAAPC), HQ Commander, Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (CRAEME) and the 2nd Company RAASC. The 3rd Signal Regiment was located 4 TF, while the 1st Communications Zone Provost Company was based at both S Block and Scrub Hill.

Activities during the exercise included armour/infantry familiarisation training with the 8th/13th VMR and a live firing display by the Armoured Centre, a company group exercise supported by air, armour and artillery, an infantry/cavalry patrolling exercise with a search and destroy operation including troop lifts with Iroquois helicopters and APCs, finding and destroying a defended locality with helicopter insertion, watermanship training and section live firing activities.

The final report stated that the concept of a combined exercise worked well. The scale of support was adequate, effective and professionally applied. Consolidation of forces from different units into a single force demonstrated that this aspect of preparation was acceptable. However, the termination of national service (between the commencement of planning and the actual exercise) meant a drop-off in the numbers of members attending.⁵⁶

In 1973 2 RVR had depots only in Ballarat, Warrnambool and Maryborough. C Company (Shepparton and Echuca) had been attached to 22 RVR to keep that battalion viable. In 1974 C Company was transferred to 22 RVR and remained until

that battalion disbanded on 30 June 1975, when the company returned to 2 RVR. Highlights for the company during its time with 22 RVR included a company range weekend in 1973 (which included helicopter training), shooting for and winning the RSL Challenge Trophy, attending a camp at the JTC and fighting the 1974 floods in Shepparton and Mooroopna.⁵⁷



3 RVR Camp, 1973. Helicopter re-supply with APCs in the background,
(8/7 RVR depot, Swan Hill)

In a change for the infantry 2 RVR began recruiting female soldiers. During the battalion's annual camp in 1974 recruiting staff conducted a campaign in Warrnambool, Hamilton and Maryborough, recruiting 52 females. After this success the battalion became a CMF centre for female soldiers. Their service covered all aspects of CMF skills except weapon handling. Training was for 33 days per year, including six weekends and a 14-day camp.⁵⁸

The battalion exercise in 1974 was held at Puckapunyal, with about 80 members from Ballarat, Warrnambool and Maryborough attending. Councillor Rizzoli, the mayor of Ballarat, and a former officer of the battalion, visited. At the same time 40 members of the battalion were training at Canungra.⁵⁹

In 1974 2 RVR participated the 4 TF courses camp. Recently commissioned Douglas Ball, from the Maryborough depot, was commander of the recruit platoon at S Block. He had met very few of the battalion staff at this time, and was pleased when visited during the camp by Dow, the battalion operations officer (OPSO).⁶⁰

When 22 RVR was disbanded in June 1975, C Company returned to 2 RVR as A Company, while 1 IRC initially became part of A Company, and soon after became 5 Platoon, B Company. The battalion held its annual camp at Gellibrand later in the year, while C Company held its own camp in the Puckapunyal area with the major exercise at Graytown.⁶¹ An open day was held at Ranger Barracks, and received support from the transport units in Stawell and Horsham and artillery units from Geelong and Melbourne. The battalion hoped to increase the numbers in Ballarat from 100 to 200.⁶²

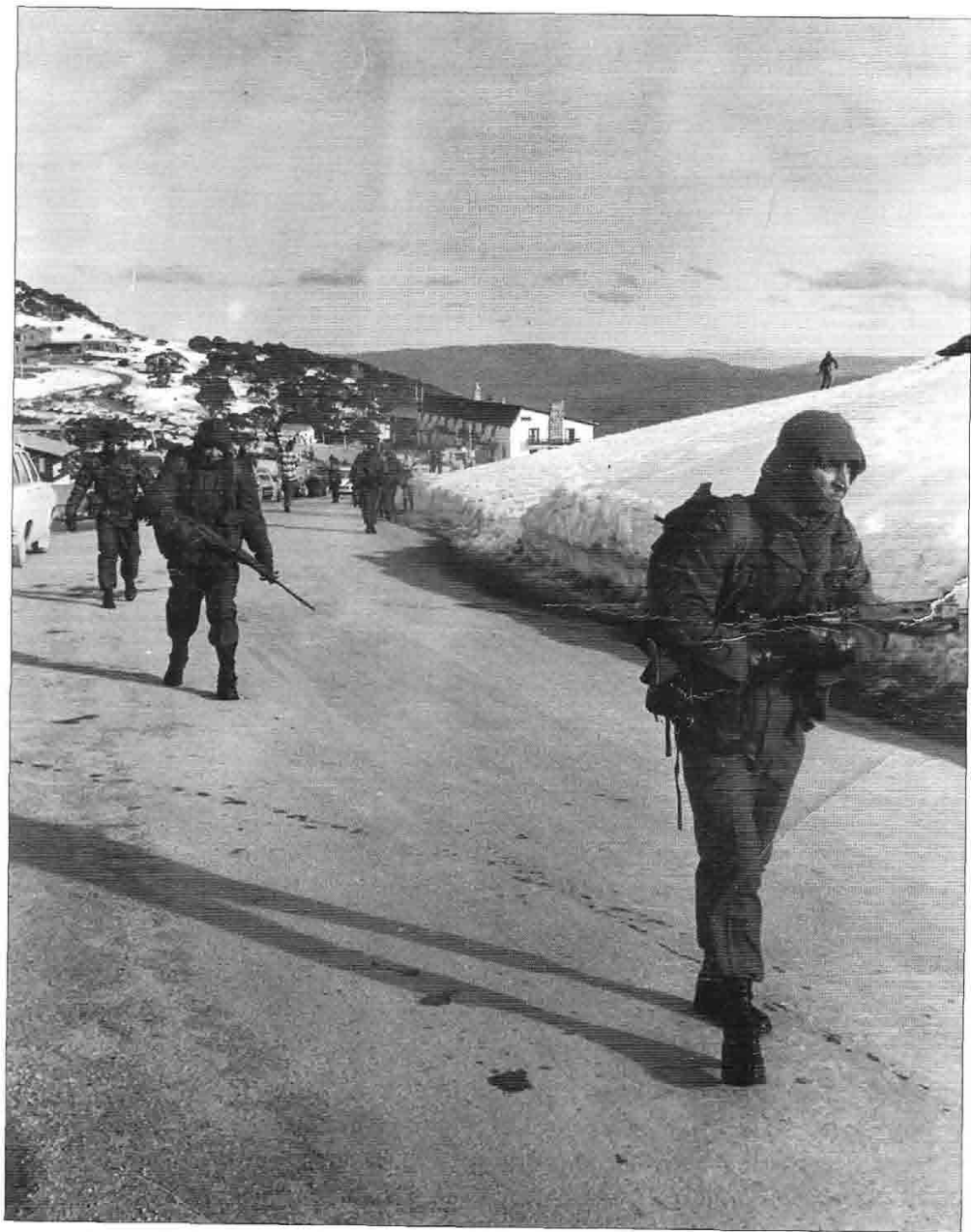
In 1976 Ingram, who had commanded 3 RVR, took command of 2 RVR. The battalion depots were:

Ballarat:	HQ, supply platoon, medical section and band; HQ B Company and 4 Platoon;
Shepparton:	HQ A Company, 1 and 2 Platoons;
Echuca:	3 Platoon (-);
Swan Hill:	Section, 3 Platoon;
Mildura:	5 Platoon, B Company; and
Maryborough:	6 Platoon, B Company.

The battalion camp was held in the Strathbogies. The main exercise was held in the Mount Hotham area at the end of the snow season. Transport to the exercise was by Caribou. The battalion also had support from Iroquois helicopters and APCs.⁶³

In 1975 the RSM, WO 1 Gary Sutherland, was behind the move to re-form the 2 RVR band, disbanded in 1960. The bandmaster was Darryl Honeyman, a teacher who was involved in the brass band movement. His deputy, later the unit bugler, was Corporal Ian Archibald. The band travelled each fortnight to Puckapunyal to participate in passing-out parades for ARes recruits. They later played at Beating the Retreat ceremonies in Geelong and Maryborough and Freedom of Entry parades in Ballarat and Maryborough, as well as playing at Mildura, Echuca and Warrnambool.⁶⁴

At the start of 1977 the strength of the battalion was 28 officers and 361 ORs, with six attachments. Depots were located at Ballarat, Warrnambool, Shepparton, Echuca, Mildura and Maryborough. In February about 250 members of the battalion, from Ballarat, Mildura, Shepparton, Echuca, Maryborough, Portland, Hamilton, Terang and Warrnambool, bivouacked in Warrnambool and Yambuk. New members trained in weapon skills, map reading, watermanship and navigation, while the trained soldiers covered mines and booby traps, and river patrols. During the weekend the battalion marched through the streets of Warrnambool with Brigadier 'Mac' Grant, commanding the 3rd Division Field Force Group, taking the salute at the Town Hall.⁶⁵



Patrolling in the snow at Mt Hotham, 2 RVR Camp, 1976.
(8/7 RVR depot, Swan Hill)

In a first for Warrnambool and the battalion, Barbara Hutton enlisted in the 3rd WRAAC Company and, with George Young of Echuca, was commissioned in September 1977 through the Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) system. She served in Support Company as signals officer before moving to other postings. In October the same year Bernadette Ackland, a Ballarat Primary School teacher, graduated from OCTU in Melbourne as a 2nd lieutenant and became the first Ballarat resident female officer attached to 2 RVR. She graduated with an award for gaining top marks. Until there was a female officer in the battalion, women could not be enlisted. Once she was posted in as administration officer, she began training a number of WRAAC members, who also served with 2 RVR.⁶⁶

As part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations the battalion marched through Ballarat on 26 November. The salute was taken by the mayor, Councillor Chisholm. The marchers numbered almost 200, and came from Ballarat, Mildura, Swan Hill and Warrnambool.⁶⁷ In 1978, two Royal coaches toured around Australia. In February they were on display in Ranger Barracks. One was a glass coach used for Royal weddings, the other was the State Postillion Landau used by the Queen when she meets foreign heads of state. They were accompanied by examples of Royal liveries worn for different occasions and a photographic display.⁶⁸

On 3 July, after taking up a position in Melbourne, Ingram handed command of the battalion to Lynes. The battalion had a strength of 420 and depots in Ballarat, Maryborough, Shepparton, Echuca, Warrnambool, Hamilton, Portland and Mildura.⁶⁹ One of the first tasks for the new CO was a march through Ballarat on 5 August 1978 to celebrate the battalion's 120th birthday. Around 200 members participated, with 2nd Lieutenant Hutton commanding the WRAAC platoon. The recently re-formed band provided music for the parade, and Chisholm took the salute, accompanied by the town clerk, Mr Ian Smith.

The remainder of the weekend was spent preparing for the battalion exercise.⁷⁰ RAAF Hercules aircraft transported the battalion to Canungra, where it exercised at the JTC. The obstacle course used during the exercise included two-strand wire creek crossings, a one-metre bridge and a flying fox. Many members used trip flares for the first time. The RSM for the camp was the ARes RSM WO 1 Brian Driscoll, and the padre Chaplain Henry (Hank) Nolan from Ballarat.

In 1979 the battalion ran an NCO promotion course commencing in early January. The first week was in Ranger Barracks and around Ballarat, while an intensive field exercise in the Enfield State Forest, south west of Ballarat, occupied week two. Major Bruce Hill from Support Company, Warrnambool, the course commander, said the participants were 'on their feet day and night' while studying fighting patrols, setting ambushes and operating in a platoon defence. The mayor of Ballarat, Councillor Melton Foo, presented Private Stan Woods of Mildura with the prize for dux of the course.⁷¹



Canungra Camp run, 1978.

Front row: Lieutenant Douglas Ball, Major Jim Mack, Lieutenant Colonel Ted Lynes.
Second row: Lieutenant Garry Wescombe, Father Hank Nolan, Lieutenant Guy Hassel.
The 'Trotting Duck' shown on the 'T' shirts was adopted by B Company after an ARA Training. WO2 Allen Jones used the sex life of a Mongolian Trotting Duck to demonstrate how lessons should be taught in the Army.

(Ted Lynes)

Over the weekend 28-29 April about 40 officers and NCOs from 2 RVR held a TEWT at Mount Buninyong near Ballarat. Some of those in attendance were Hill, Captains Ivan Close and Alex (Lex) Neville from A Company, Shepparton, Lieutenant Ball and WO 2 Brian Tobin from B Company, Ballarat, Captain Prewett and Sergeant Polwarth.

The battalion camp in 1979, attended by 216 men and women, was held at Murrayville, in the Big Desert south of Mildura, and was designed to give members experience in desert warfare in totally different country. The camp covered 260 square kilometres of scrub-covered sand hills and some of the most inhospitable country in Victoria. A two-metre by two-metre battalion HQ was dug in to a depth of three metres and sand bagged. The troops experienced the full range of temperatures that a desert can offer and the abundance and variety of wild flowers in the thick undergrowth.⁷²



Big Desert Camp, 1979. Private Laurie Benoit, Captain Douglas Ball, Captain Terry Thomas, WO2 Brian Tobin and Major Don Dow undertake an Orders Group.
(8/7 RVR depot, Mildura)

Training started early in 1980 with promotion courses commencing in mid-January for 41 students, most of whom were from 2 RVR, but some from 1 RVR in Melbourne. Subject 1 for corporal, to train candidates as instructors in drill and weapons, was completed by 20 members. Subject 2, which trains them to lead an infantry section tactically, was completed by 21. The course graduation was attended by the mayor, Councillor John (Jack) McKay, who presented awards to the top students, Private S. Tyrell of 1 RVR for Subject 1 and Lance Corporal R. Rodd for Subject 2. The most improved students were Private L. Williamson of 2 RVR (Subject 1) and Private Geoff Carland of 2 RVR (Subject 2). Staff member WO 2 D. Bruce Schmidtchen was presented with his warrant by the mayor.⁷³

Dow, still the OPSO, wrote the battalion's 1980 TEWT and planned the October 1980 camp. The TEWT was held in Horsham and concentrated on defending the town from an attacking force based in the Grampians. Melbourne-based logistics and artillery experts were brought in to provide specialist information. The camp was at HMAS *Cerberus*, the RAN base at Cribb Point on Westernport Bay. The battalion was ferried to French Island for some of the training.⁷⁴

The ARes moved into the technology age in 1981, when a computerised pay system was introduced. The new system, the result of several years of planning and trials, enabled reserve members to be paid quarterly rather than half yearly, and the pay was received within 14 days of the end of the quarter.⁷⁵

On Monday 6 July 1981 Lynes handed command to Jim Mack. The strength of the unit was then around 600.⁷⁶ Lynes left the battalion after 16 years having a 'great deal of fun and satisfaction', and transferred to Melbourne to further his military career, while still living in the Ballarat area. Mack aimed to ensure that the unit remained at the same high standard during his three years as one of the best, if not the best, in Victoria. He joined the Army through national service in 1956 and had initially served at Warrnambool, from where he undertook a visit to South Vietnam as a lieutenant.⁷⁷ He transferred to Ballarat in 1977 as a captain.

Over the weekend 1-2 August 1981 the battalion, including 55 members from Ballarat, prepared for an exercise at the JTC, while 14 newer members passed their initial employment training (IET) tests on the rifle, sub-machine gun, M60 GPMG and in map reading. Lieutenants Neil Leckie and Ackland trained soldiers in cross country navigation, obstacle crossings, fieldcraft, camouflage and commands. A third group, new recruits under Corporal Graeme Paizis, was introduced to individual shelters, health and hygiene, battle discipline and ration packs, and ended with a route march from Creswick Forest to the Russell Street depot. A second training weekend was held two weeks later.⁷⁸

A 2 RVR company trained at Canungra later in the year. The plan was to fly to Queensland for the camp, but the RAAF aircraft were withdrawn at the last minute. Davis Bus Lines in Ballarat provided three buses and drivers at short notice and drove the company to Canungra. Travelling through Shepparton and Echuca the buses met the Mildura members en route. The trip took almost 48 hours. Training commenced at the individual level before working up to section, platoon and finally company level activities. The remainder of the battalion took courses at Ballarat, including NCO promotion and driving.⁷⁹

In May 1982 Mack, with Lynes, attended the Field Force Battle School at Tully in North Queensland. The course included minor tactics, navigation and 'bush bashing', along with bayonet fighting. It was designed to bring senior officers back into touch with living in the field and the strains put on soldiers during jungle warfare.⁸⁰

Annual camp in 1982 was held at Mount Hickey near Puckapunyal. A and B Companies conducted advance to contact exercises, A Company moving clockwise around the mountain and B Company anti-clockwise, with HQ in a static control position in the middle. The two companies never met during the advance, although they were close enough on one occasion to require HQ to direct B Company to move its night location after it had dug in for the night in the best digging soil it had seen all exercise. On the last night of camp the usual BBQ was held and the 'two cans per man' rule was applied. With non-drinkers providing a few extra cans, none of the

drinkers went short. Kevin Watson, from Mildura, was acting 2 IC of B Company. That night he had a close encounter with a snake when it slithered over his face while he was in his sleeping bag.⁸¹

On the battalion's birthday, 9 August 1983, two refurbished cannon were returned by the Maribyrnong Ordnance Factory, having been fully restored by the apprentices there. The 32-pounder cannon were manufactured by the Low Moor Foundry in England in 1896, and were part of the armament of Her Majesty's Victorian Ship (HMVS) *Nelson*. They had stood for many years outside Ranger Barracks and were in disrepair, but within three months were back in as new condition.⁸² The battalion went to camp at Puckapunyal in September. This camp, Exercise Forthright Defender, was the first in a series of four 'Forthright' brigade exercises.

In an unprecedented move the government taxed the pay of ARes members in 1983. The move was not well-received, and many highly trained members left, as they felt that they were not being adequately recompensed for their time. Their ARes pay became a second income and pushed many into the next tax bracket, effectively cutting their pay rates. Many good members were lost over this decision. The government soon realised that this was a bad move, as reserve pay being taxed also meant that tax deductions could be made, and the decision was costing money. The tax was removed, but many did not return.⁸³

In August 1984 Mack handed command of the battalion to Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Skardon. In an interview in the *Ballarat Courier* in September, Skardon said that recruiting more soldiers for the battalion was a priority. He came to the battalion after 25 years service in the ARA, having graduated from the Officer Cadet School (OCS) Portsea in 1960, and served in the Special Air Service (SAS), the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTv) and the Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR) in New Guinea. He commanded a 7 RAR company in South Vietnam, and later commanded 5/7 RAR. The adjutant, Captain Michael Brown, said that there were 100 vacancies in the battalion and that the ARes had a thorough selection process, which included physical and psychological tests.⁸⁴

In 1984 the battalion had depots at:

Ballarat:	HQ, Administration Company, band, B Company HQ and 4 Platoon;
Shepparton:	A Company HQ and 1 Platoon;
Swan Hill:	2 Platoon, A Company;
Echuca:	3 Platoon, A Company;
Bacchus Marsh	5 Platoon, B Company;
Maryborough:	6 Platoon, B Company;
Mildura:	C Company;
Warrnambool:	Support Company HQ and mortar platoon;
Portland:	assault pioneer platoon; and
Hamilton:	detachment, Support Company.



Lieutenant Colonel Ted Lynes hands over the CO's cane to Lieutenant Colonel Jim Mack on 1 July 1981. The CO's cane was first used by the first CO of the 8th/7th Battalion, The North Western Victorian Regiment in 1948.
(Ted Lynes)

Camp for 1984 was a 4th Brigade camp, Exercise Forthright Consolidator, held in October, and included a series of courses. A former ARA officer, Major Bill Wallace was 2 IC, while former OC B Company Major Ball was OPSO. The tactical component of the exercise involved patrolling from a defensive position in Puckapunyal Range West, ambushing, harbours and live firing platoon attacks.⁸⁵ A Company, under Major Kevin Hone, and B Company, under Major Leckie, each provided two platoons of two sections. The exercise ended in a battalion withdrawal. A Company was given the left feature, B Company the right feature and HQ the centre feature. HQ was split into two groups, the 'Tac' HQ and the operations group. Embarrassingly for the 'Tac' HQ, it ended up on the B Company feature. While the problem was being resolved, B Company was attacked and carried out a fighting withdrawal.⁸⁶

As a recruiting activity, B Company participated in a bonfire and fireworks night at Creswick in November 1984. The crowd of around 2000 was entertained by a platoon of 20 soldiers who conducted an attack supported by SFMGs. As usual, it was the children who were most interested.⁸⁷ A further recruiting activity took place in February 1985 when B Company supported the National Airshow at Ballarat Airport. The soldiers participated in a mock attack supported by a B25 Mitchell bomber and three Mustang fighters. The Mitchell provided a bombing run on an enemy bunker, and was supported by the Mustangs strafing the bunker before the infantry attack. Pyrotechnics were used to simulate the bombs and machine gun fire.

The May 1985 weekend for A Company was at Nyah. The company patrolled in flat featureless terrain under Sergeants Graeme and Keith Pickens. Members from Shepparton, Echuca, Rochester and Deniliquin attended, along with 14 new recruits from the Echuca depot. The Echuca platoon commander was Lieutenant Ramm and the ARA depot commander was Sergeant Harry Jeffrey. The July weekend saw A Company conduct roping, rappelling and watermanship training in preparation for the annual field exercise (camp) later in the year.⁸⁸

The battalion exercise for 1985 was in the Eildon State Forest. The main body arrived by bus and RAAF air transport on 12 October. Once the battalion was off the buses the rain started. There was rain every day of the exercise until the main body left, when it stopped. Early in the exercise the companies conducted individual skills, specialist weapons and radio procedures training. Training with boats, flotation devices, constructing rafts and emergency boats, and live field firing, followed.

The companies marched over mountain tracks in full marching order, A Company reported having covered 35 kilometres. The exercise ended with company patrols for six days through thick vegetation with much large-diameter deadfall. B Company ended the exercise with a difficult attack through a thick, newly seeded gum plantation. The exercise was remembered for rain, hail, sleet and even snow, with some members of the rifle companies evacuated with hypothermia. Some of the B Company members were evacuated using trolleys on a woodcutter's railway.⁸⁹



Above: Swan Hill members prepare to fly to the 1985 annual camp at Eildon.
(A.J. Whittle)

Below: Watermanship training at Eildon Camp, 1985.
(Peter Ramm)





Hotbox meal delivery under threatening skies at Eildon camp, 1985.
(Peter Ramm)

In late March 1986, during a weekend in Swan Hill training with the APCs of the 8th/13th VMR from Cobram, Hone, after two years as OC, handed command of A Company to Lieutenant Brian McKenzie of Shepparton.⁹⁰ Major General Jim Barry, the 3rd Division GOC, visited the country depots in the week 23 to 26 June. He met depot members and local dignitaries in the towns of Warrnambool, Hamilton, Horsham, Mildura, Swan Hill, Cobram and Echuca, and spoke of the value of the recently released Dibb Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities to the ARes.⁹¹

The Defence White Paper released in 1987, after the Dibb review, outlined proposed changes. RAAF bases across the north of Australia from Exmouth (RAAF Learmonth) and Derby (RAAF Curtin) in WA, through Katherine (RAAF Tindal) in the Northern Territory, to Weipa (RAAF Scherger) on Cape York Peninsula would enable flexible application of air power.

The 4th Brigade was given a VAP task, protecting RAAF Tindal, the new home of No. 75 Squadron RAAF and its supporting units. Tindal was extensively redeveloped in the mid-1980s, becoming operational on 1 October 1988. The base was named after Wing Commander Archibald Tindal of No. 24 Squadron, who is believed to have been the first RAAF combat fatality on Australian soil. He was killed during the first Japanese air raid on Darwin, on 19 February 1942.

On a spongy Puckapunyal range after heavy rain, the battalion participated in the 4th Brigade's defence Exercise Forthright Indian in late October. Support Company members flew by Hercules from Hamilton to the activity. The battalion had the use of Leopard tanks for two days and helicopter support to move companies, insert patrols, deliver stores and evacuate medical cases. A Caribou was used to air drop supplies to the companies. Unfortunately the drop missed the target, but the supplies were recovered a short distance away.

Company members fired all battalion small arms and some anti-armoured weapons. The companies conducted live field firing with live mortar support. A Company, with the now Captain McKenzie as OC, Ramm as 2 IC and WO 2 Melis as CSM, repeated their shoot, with mortar support, as a demonstration for visiting VIPs. The mortars had three hits on the weapon pits dug by the companies, but later inspections showed little damage on the well-constructed pits.⁹²

In early 1987 the recently promoted Brigadier Douglas Perry, RFD, ED, the 4th Brigade commander, flew from Mildura to Swan Hill and on to Echuca to visit Bobdubi Barracks, where he was shown the facilities by Sergeant Keith Pickens of 3 Platoon. He described the facilities as excellent and expressed a desire to see more young men become involved in the ARes, especially as leaders. He flew on to Shepparton, before returning to Melbourne.⁹³

Major General Barry Nunn AO, RFD, ED, paid his first visit as the 3rd Division GOC to Shepparton's Somme Barracks on 28 April 1987. He was met by five members of the battalion: Lieutenant Steven Sandow (acting OC A Company), WO 2 Alan Barry (CSM A Company), Sergeant Ivan Glover, WO 2 Mark Stephens (training WO) and Staff Sergeant Len Rogash (CQMS). He and the mayor of Shepparton, Councillor Bill Hunter, and Shepparton Shire representative Councillor Les Wynne, inspected the barracks.⁹⁴

In late April members of A Company attended a 14-day promotion course, which tested the theory of infantry tactics and the employment of support weapons at platoon level in the four phases of war. Private Darren Sutherland, who worked for J. Furphy and Sons (manufacturers of the Furphy water cart used at Gallipoli), topped the course for promotion to corporal. Also there was Corporal Mitch Kennedy, who was sitting for his sergeant's exams. He served the battalion for some years as a sergeant.

In May the OC B Company, Major Leckie, was selected as one of six ARes members to participate in the ARA 1st Brigade CP Exercise Tropic Lightning. The exercise was a joint US/Australian activity, which started with US Army personnel training at the 1st Brigade's Holsworthy HQ. The major part of the exercise was at the 25th US Infantry Division's Schofield Barracks in the centre of Oahu. Over 160 Australians flew to Hawaii in an RAAF Boeing 707 for the exercise, while the Australian stores were flown across by Hercules, which took two days each way.⁹⁵

Some weeks later, in early July, 54 ARes members, including nine from 2 RVR, participated in Exercise Pacific Reserve in Hawaii. Their OC was Major Paul Lang from Melbourne, while the infantry platoon was commanded by Ramm, WO2 Gary Pearse from Mildura was CSM.⁹⁶ There was also a mortar section and an engineer section. Workup training was at Portsea. The detachment flew by Hercules to Townsville, and then to Hawaii, taking a total of three days. While in Hawaii they were hosted by the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry of the US Army Reserve under Lieutenant Colonel Raymond E. Gandy Jr. The engineers were hosted by the 227th Engineer Company of the US Army National Guard.

Initial training was at Schofield Barracks on Oahu, before moving to the Pohakuloa Military Training Area on the 'Big Island' of Hawaii. The Australians used the M16 rifle, claymore mines, plastic explosives, mortars and gas marks, flew in Blackhawk helicopters and were supported by the US Army's Humvee, the High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle. The training area was covered with lava, and was 'murder' on boots.



2 RVR soldiers about to load into a Blackhawk Helicopter during
Exercise Pacific Reserve in Hawaii, 1987.
(Peter Ramm)



Setting a Claymore mine in the lava on the 'Big Island' of Hawaii, 1987.
(Peter Ramm)

The exercise concluded with an advance to contact by 1800 members of the 29th Infantry Brigade of the National Guard. The Australians raided Upolu Point. A wildfire broke out on the range, and while the Australians were ready to fight the fire they were not allowed. Chinook helicopter water bombers were used.⁹⁷

In July 1987 A Company trained at Cobram with the APCs of the 8th/13th VMR. The Shepparton, Echuca and Swan Hill members practised mounted platoon and company level attacks and night training with the APCs.⁹⁸ A similar activity was held with B Company in August. Shepparton, Swan Hill and Echuca members of A Company completed their promotion courses earlier in the year, and received their promotions at a bivouac held in early August at Graytown. Their new ranks were: Sergeant Kennedy, Corporals Trevor Hooper, Tony Emmi and Lorraine Gallagher, Lance Corporals Sutherland, Glen Fehring and Paul Curlis (all of Shepparton), Sergeant (later captain) Tony Watson and Corporal Grant Moroney (both of Swan Hill) and Lance Corporal Robert Hart and Martin Rudeforth (both of Echuca).

The battalion had been tasked with providing VAP for significant national assets. Over the last weekend in August B Company put its VAP training into practice at Maryborough Airport. Approval to use the airport was gained from the council, and the company spent the weekend patrolling the perimeter and manning checkpoints

and MG posts. A local aircraft owner took a number of members for a flight over the area to check the defences from the air.

B Company members attending the exercise well remember the radio call from the RRF: 'We have a 'Rover over, over!' The RRF Land Rover had run off a track into a drainage ditch. Fortunately there was little damage to the vehicle, and no injuries to the crew. Around 75 members from Bacchus Marsh, Maryborough and Ballarat participated in the activity.⁹⁹ The battalion attended camp in late October at Puckapunyal. Mortar, assault pioneer and driver courses were held.

On 17 August 1982 the Melbourne-based 1 RVR was split to form 1 RVR and 5/6 RVR. On 14 November 1987 1 RVR was absorbed into 5/6 RVR.¹⁰⁰ The same day, at the instigation of Lieutenant Colonel Skardon, 2 RVR was renamed 8/7 RVR, returning to the battalion the number it had held from 1948 until 1960. The four Victorian First World War battalion numbers from the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, AIF, were all now back on the Army's order of battle.

Endnotes

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- 5 *Ballarat Courier*, 22 April 1966, forecasting events during the camp.
- 6 *Ballarat Courier*, 20 April 1966.
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- 9 Farewell dinner brochure, 6 May 1966, Lieutenant Colonel Trevenen.
- 10 *Ballarat Courier*, 7 May 1966.
- 11 *Ballarat Courier*, 25 May 1966.
- 12 *Ballarat Courier*, 18 July 1966.
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- 20 Interview, Earl, 22 October 2007.
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- 29 Lynes.
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- 52 3rd Division files, 2 RVR R211-1-5, 24 March 1971.
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- 55 3rd Division files, HQ 4 TF Minute R875-1-26 of 16 September 1969.
- 56 3rd Division file R145/73/1, and private papers, Lieutenant Colonel Ingram.
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Part 3—Chapter 18

RETURN TO 8/7

The renumbering of the battalion on 14 November 1987 saw little actual change. Companies continued to train in their own areas. During the weekend of the name change, Support Company conducted range activity at Yambuk, near Warrnambool, A Company travelled to the Grampians for infantry minor tactics and B Company travelled to Puckapunyal for range practices. The following weekend C Company trained in Berry, while some members attended the 3rd Division military skills competition at Puckapunyal.

One thing that did change was the introduction of the entwined white and brown lanyard. It took some time for this to be manufactured, so as an interim measure members wore two lanyards: a white and a brown. In February 1988 the battalion received colour belts. They were made in England, and had been ordered some years earlier. Unfortunately, the manufacture had occurred before the change to 8/7 RVR, and they remain numbered as the 2nd Battalion.¹

With the change to 8/7 RVR, the battalion became eligible to wear a Colour patch. The Chief of Reserves (CRes) presented the CO with an 8th Battalion Colour patch in mid-1987. Former adjutant and by then Colonel David Chinn became the project officer for Colour patches in July 1986, when he transferred from the ARA to the ARes. In letters to the 2 RVR adjutant, he stated there was no 8th/7th Battalion in either World War, but that precedent had been set in the Second to use the Colour patch of the first numbered battalion rather than that of the senior battalion. Consequently, 8th Battalion Colour patches were issued in 1988.² The white over red patch is worn on the right side of the puggaree on the slouch hat.

Lieutenant Colonel Ball took command of 8/7 RVR in 1988. He commenced his career as a national serviceman and continued in the CMF and ARes. He graduated from the OCTU and commanded the Maryborough depot before becoming successively OC Administration Company, OC B Company and OPSO. He hoped to raise the strength of the battalion from 415 to 500.³ The 8/7 RVR structure in 1987 was:

Ballarat:	HQ, Administration Company, band, B Company HQ and 4 and 6 Platoons;
Shepparton:	A Company HQ and 1 and 2 Platoons;
Echuca:	3 Platoon, A Company;
Bacchus Marsh	5 Platoon, B Company;
Mildura:	C Company HQ and 7 and 8 Platoons;
Swan Hill:	9 Platoon, C Company;
Warrnambool:	Support Company HQ, mortar platoon;
Portland:	SFMG platoon;
Hamilton:	assault pioneer platoon; and
Maryborough:	signals platoon.



RSM Peter Smith, CO Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Ball, Adjutant Captain Paul Prickett, QM Captain Bill Akell and Battalion 21C Major David Lewien inspect the new Colour Patch on the slouch hat, in 1988.
(8/7 RVR depot, Ballarat)

Between 5 and 20 March 1988 24 Mildura-based members including the OC C Company, Captain Wescombe, and WO 2 Max Boyle, the Training WO, went to New Zealand with the battalion's 130-strong rifle company to participate in Exercise Tasman Reserve '88. The company 2 IC was Captain Peter Dempster from Shepparton, while the CSM was WO 2 Melis from Swan Hill. Platoon commanders were Captain Ramm from Echuca, Lieutenant Skinner from Swan Hill and 2nd Lieutenant David Clark from Waubra, near Ballarat.

This was the fifth time Exercise Tasman Reserve was held. The aims were to give Army reservists experience in military operations with an overseas unit, to increase military co-operation between the two countries and to maintain and enhance friendly relations between NZ and Australia. The exercise was hosted by the 3rd (Auckland North) Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (RNZIR), and was based at Papakura Military Camp, home of the NZ SAS.

The first phase of the exercise was in the Woodhill State Forest, a pine forest with a floor thick with trimmed branches and difficult to walk in. There was heavy rain and much of the North Island was flooded. The exercise was halted and the company placed on standby for flood relief, but it was not required. The second phase started with a helicopter insertion into the Pouto Peninsula. The plan was for the HQ and three platoons to rendezvous the next morning, however, Cyclone Bola hit, and all the platoons and HQ could do was take shelter for the night. The next morning about half of the company was evacuated with hypothermia.

Phase three in the Russell State Forest was considerably easier, with good weather and beautiful scenery (forests and a coastal region adjoining the Bay of Islands). There was an end of trip visit to Rotorua. Gifts were exchanged with the mayor of Auckland, Mrs Catherine Tizard, later the Honourable Dame Catherine Tizard, the first female governor general of New Zealand.⁴ One of the more interesting parts of the exercise for company members was their first use of the Individual Weapon Electronic Sighting System (IWESS), which uses lasers to indicate when 'hits' were made during 'war games'. The Australian Army was studying the IWESS at the time.

While the company was in New Zealand, the remainder of the battalion held the annual field exercise at Puckapunyal with a company from 3 RNZIR. The exercise included firing weapons while wearing gas masks, throwing grenades and firing anti-tank weapons. This was followed by a five-day tank and APC exercise and a three-day foot advance. Visitors to the exercise included the mayor of Ballarat, Councillor Neil Steinman, and his family. The camp concluded with a firepower exercise. The Kiwis visited Ballarat and Melbourne after the exercise.⁵

In May 1988 A Company trained with the Royal Australian Naval Reserve (RANR) aboard the Attack Class patrol boat HMAS *Bayonet*. Training commenced at Station Pier in Melbourne and moved down Port Phillip Bay to Portsea. The soldiers were introduced to the type of support that could be available during a deployment in their VAP role.⁶ B Company also carried out similar training.



Sergeant Phil Baulch instructs Lance Corporal Bev Thornton on the IWESS System in New Zealand, 1988.
(Peter Ramm)



Ex Tasman Reserve. Very wet soldiers at a very wet Pouto Light House
on the Pouto Peninsular in New Zealand, 1988.

(Peter Ramm)

During the year companies trained with the APCs of the 8th/13th VMR at Cobram, C Company in June, A Company in September and B Company in October. They travelled to Cobram on a Friday night, undertook familiarisation training on the Saturday morning, and section and platoon level training along the banks of the Murray River on the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, before returning home in the afternoon. During the A Company visit to the depot, Melis was not impressed with the number of cigarette butts that were spread across the parade ground. He assembled the company and told them that the Army was conducting a survey on what percentage of its members were smokers. The company split into two groups. The smokers then did an 'emu bob' to clean up the butts.⁷

Officers of the 3rd Division attended a TEWT at RAAF Tindal over the Queen's Birthday long weekend to develop skills related to the 4th Brigade's VAP task there. The base was still under construction, but with almost every member carrying a camera on the TEWT, units had plenty of photographs from which they could gain knowledge of the layout and facilities prior to deployment there. Two Hercules were used, one flying from Laverton direct to Tindal and the other flying via Adelaide to pick up South Australian officers. At Tindal they met the prime minister, Mr Bob Hawke, and his wife Hazel, who had been to the opening of RAAF Curtin.⁸

In August B Company, now commanded by Maryborough's Captain Boucher, exercised in the Havelock State Forest northeast of Maryborough. The vegetation was similar to that surrounding RAAF Tindal, where the troops later exercised in 1989.⁹ Some members participated in Exercise Northern Explorer in the Northern Territory over six days in September, but for the rest there was the Freedom of Entry Parade in Swan Hill. On the last weekend in October the battalion again participated in the 3rd Division military skills competition at Puckapunyal.

The last weekend in November was busy on many fronts. At Ranger Barracks the cooks and stewards had the inaugural *Salon Culinaire* cooking competition, won by 5/6 RVR. Shepparton's A Company and Ballarat's B Company provided teams for the Military Tattoo in Melbourne, where A Company won its race against 5/6 RVR and B Company was narrowly defeated by the 8th/13th VMR. Other B Company members conducted adventure training in the Beaufort/Avoca area, with Support Company providing the enemy. Other A Company members held a range practice at Puckapunyal, while C Company trained for its participation in Exercise Kangaroo '89 (K89). Members from HQ, B and Administration Companies provided a defence section for HQ 4th Brigade at Puckapunyal. During this activity they were trained to use night vision goggles.¹⁰

In April 1989 C Company continued its build up to K89 when it took over the town of Werrimull, west of Mildura. The company set up protection for the town's water supply, microwave dish and the communications antennae used by the emergency services. Werrimull was chosen for its similar terrain to that around RAAF Tindal, where K89 would be held. Soldiers from as far away as Shepparton participated.¹¹

That month the battalion received the news that two of its members would receive the Prince of Wales Award for 1989. Lieutenants Clark of Waubra and Alan Donovan of Bacchus Marsh, both of B Company, were given the opportunity to travel overseas for two weeks of civilian-related work and two weeks of military training. Clark attended an urban warfare course at the British Army School of Infantry, Warminster and looked at farming and conservation for his civilian activity. Donovan attended summer camp with the British Territorial Army's 3rd Battalion, Staffordshire Regiment, and spent his civilian time with the Customs and Immigration Department in Britain. The Staffordshire Regiment is allied to 8/7 RVR.¹²

In May the battalion provided eleven members for three months training in Malaysia as part of the 5/7 RAR rifle company in Butterworth. The deployment included 'rest and recreation' in Thailand and Singapore.¹³ Also in May the 4th Brigade commander, Colonel McAloney, the BM, Major John Herbert, the 8/7 RVR CO, Lieutenant Colonel Ball, 2 IC, Major Leckie, RSM, WO 1 Warren Payne and RQMS, WO 2 Geoff Hallam conducted a final reconnaissance at RAAF Tindal. Ball first flew to Brisbane to receive the battalion's orders from the 1st Division for K89.

The others flew from RAAF Laverton to RAAF Richmond, and then on to Tindal by Hercules.

The next two days were spent around the base and its facilities, however, RAAF Tindal was deserted after 1430 on a Friday, so the four officers went to Darwin. The CO and 2 IC returned to Tindal for further reconnaissance from Monday until the Thursday flight south. For the 8/7 RVR members, the visit also included discussions with the mayor of Katherine and the *Katherine Advertiser*. Another 3rd Division TEWT was held at Darwin over the Queen's Birthday long weekend in 1989 to consider VAP tasks there.

On 28 July the minister for Defence, Mr Kim Beazley, opened the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum at Ranger Barracks. Under the direction of the QM, Captain Akell, and with assistance from Sergeant Jeff Whitten, two offices in the barracks were converted into a museum for the collection and display of the military history of the battalion and the district. After the opening the barracks were quickly cleared for concentration of the K89 battalion group of over 400 soldiers for their final briefings and equipment issues. Members from 5/6 RVR, 8/7 RVR, the 108th Signals Squadron, the 8th/13th VMR and the 7th FER formed the group.

The road party left on 5 August. The main body concentrated at Tullamarine on 12 August and flew to the Katherine Airport, at RAAF Tindal. Every seat on the aircraft was used. A smaller advance party, consisting of Leckie, Captain Roger Gale, the intelligence officer, Corporal David Lowe and Private Trevor Beales, flew to RAAF Tindal to prepare for the main body's arrival. The 21 Land Rovers taken by car carrier from Ballarat were located covered in dust and missing many parts, including spare wheels and even batteries. It took until day eleven of the exercise to get all of them running.

Before the exercise the Australian Federation of Air Pilots had been in dispute with the government. On 18 August, mid-way through the exercise, the federation embarked on an industrial campaign ostensibly in support of a pay claim. Pilots were limited to working from 0900 to 1700. The daily question asked by the 2 IC was 'How are we getting home?' Finally, on the day before the battalion was due to leave, it was advised that it would depart on a QANTAS B747 that night. The plane landed at 0200 the next day, and after loading took off for Tullamarine at 0600. Not surprisingly, most members ate their breakfast and then slept the rest of the trip. K89 was claimed to have been the most ambitious military exercise undertaken in Australia since the Second World War, with 25,000 service personnel taking part between 31 July and 28 August.¹⁴

At the end of the exercise the adjutant, Captain Mark Elliott, had a task to complete: he was stripped of all money and his kit, and told to make his own way home. With the help of truck drivers, police and a few civilians he did this in three days. The rear party returned to Ballarat on 2 September.

In September the battalion received its first allocation of the new 110 Series Land Rovers. The Mark 3 versions, some up to 20 years old, were withdrawn. The new vehicles were quicker, safer and more comfortable. As it happened, they also saw 20 years of service with the battalion.¹⁵

The school at Nambucca Heads in northern NSW was named the Frank Partridge, VC, Public School on 9 November 1989. Partridge was born at nearby Grafton and made Nambucca Heads his home. He was the last VC recipient in the Second World War, the youngest Australian recipient, and the only militia member to receive the VC. The battalion was represented by the RSM, and provided a bus to transport some Ballarat 8th Battalion veterans to the event.¹⁶

Parade nights for the battalion had been on Monday since 1948. They were not usually held on the Monday after a weekend activity and some public holidays were on Mondays each year. This, combined with a directive from the 4th Brigade to align with the remainder of the brigade, saw parade nights changed to Tuesday in December 1989.

In the latter part of March 1990, 8/7 RVR ran a battalion exercise, Ranger Dawn, and an IET course. As in the previous two years, the 3rd Division officers went on another TEWT on the Queen's Birthday long weekend. This time it was held at Wyndham, Broome and Kununurra in northern WA. In early September the battalion supported the 4th Brigade courses camp at Puckapunyal for IET, Subject 2 for corporal, mortars, assault pioneers, signals and drivers. The IET course ended with two platoons in defence. The platoon sergeants were Echuca twins Graeme and Keith Pickens. This caused unbelievable confusion. A question would often bring an uncomprehending look, as it was asked of the wrong twin. At the end of the camp jungle greens were exchanged for the disruptive pattern combat uniform (DPCU).

In one of his last acts as CO, Ball led the battalion when it was presented with the Freedom of Entry to Hamilton in late October. Lieutenant Colonel Paul Riley took command in January 1991. He had been appointed CO of 1 RVR in 1987, and was acutely aware of the fine traditions and excellent record established by 8/7 RVR over its long period of existence. The battalion had been spared some of the continuous re-organisation inflicted on metropolitan units, and a large number of senior members had served with the unit for considerable periods of time. Captain Darryl Clarke was appointed adjutant, the assistant adjutant was Lieutenant Belinda Martin, and WO 1 Norman Wallis was appointed RSM. Major Doug Hasson continued as 2 IC and WO 1, later Captain, Peter Ashton completed the senior ARA team.

The training objective established the unit charter 'to train junior leaders to lead their troops in war', and all training was focused on this. Increased personal readiness was sought despite severe restrictions on training time. The battalion was required to 'achieve more with less'. A blueprint for training an ARes infantry battalion was established, with priorities for the utilisation of the totally inadequate resources allotted to the unit identified as:

officer and senior NCO professional development;
 junior NCO professional development;
 junior leader development training;
 competency training of individuals;
 collective training;
 recruiting; and
 community service and public relations

The training program identified the scenario and outline plan for the battalion's annual field exercise. Officer/senior NCO and junior NCO training programs included topics related to the objectives.

While this training required additional participation by all members, the opportunity to work closely with supporting arms elements, the 1st Armoured Regiment, the 16th Air Defence Regiment, the School of Survey, the Infantry Centre and the RAAF was appreciated. These activities generally involved one day of presentations, discussions and problem solving exercises and one day of TEWTs.

Competency-based training was conducted in accordance with a structured program designed to take an individual from post-recruit to first promotion. Package training, as it was more commonly called, was generally conducted on parade nights in depots or during weekend field activities. This training also provided opportunities for instructor development programs. Weekend activities provided collective training at section and platoon level in a company setting. While the program ensured that individual training remained relevant, and avoided the practice of 'going back to basics', it required a high level of maintenance to ensure that training was conducted in accordance with the Army Training System, and individual records were maintained.

An individual soldier's record of achievement was introduced. Details of individual performances during collective training activities were incorporated into this record and the platoon commander's notebook. This 8/7 RVR initiative was subsequently taken up by the Infantry Centre and developed into the competency log in service today.

Support Company specialist sections conducted field training and live fire activities in conjunction with 5/6 RVR and 10/27 RSAR. The battalion military skills competition was held over the first weekend in May 1991 at Wangaratta. The Corporal Peter Kinleyside/Lance Corporal Reyne team, one of three from C Company, won the competition and later came fifth in the 2nd Division competition.

In an effort to improve the standard of shooting, indoor sub-calibre ranges were constructed at most depots using local resources and battalion volunteer labour. These ranges proved to be worthwhile additions to unit training facilities. While 0.22-inch ammunition was available in abundance, serviceable Heckler-Koch sub-calibre devices were difficult to obtain. A high level of interest in shooting developed, with training opportunities for small arms coaching keenly sought.

The Colours were refurbished and a more suitable display case constructed in the officers mess to enable them to be properly displayed. Equipment for Colour ensigns was also procured and included in the display case. On 1 August 1991 the battalion received approval to adopt a puma as a mascot. The puma, owned by Mr Geoff Woess of Maryborough, was given the name Lazer Ranger and numbered VX87. The RSM was adamant that he was not marching anywhere in front of Private Ranger in any parade.

The battalion sponsored a pilgrimage by former members of the 7th and 8th Australian Infantry Battalions to Darwin, where they dedicated a plaque to commemorate their efforts in the area during the Second World War. Denis Scott, 2 IC A Company, Shepparton, was appointed host officer for the exercise.

Despite the limited resources available, annual field exercises were conducted each year. These provided the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge accumulated during the year. Battalion HQ and A Echelon were tested under some very trying conditions. The 1991 exercise in late August was part of the 4th Brigade Exercise Hamel Wood at Puckapunyal, and was attended by over 250 battalion members. After arriving in snow on day one, the soldiers began digging their pits, most of which were completed by day two. The CO complimented Sergeant Baulch and the assault pioneers on the HQ pits. After three sunny days the rain came. Then it was patrols, night ambushes, live fire attacks and defensive shoots, along with air reconnaissance, APC patrols, patrols, patrols and more patrols. The sun broke through again just as the battalion went back on the offensive. WO 2 Len Brereton and the catering section performed magnificently under these circumstances.

All elements of the battalion moved by helicopter from the HQ area to a quarry site near the Hume Highway, where roping training was undertaken with the usual spectacular results. The 1st Division Intelligence Company was also in the area, and many battalion patrols were captured and subjected to some rigorous code of conduct training. This was followed by a three-day battalion advance to contact exercise and company attacks. The exercise was completed with a 16-kilometre march to Puckapunyal.

This was a most successful exercise. Major Wallace was rewarded for his excellent work as OPSO and appointed 2 IC while Hasson took up the OPSO duties. Visitors included the Land Commander, Major General Murray Blake, 4th Brigade commander Brigadier Kerry McManus, staff officer grade 1 (SO 1) operations, HQ 2nd Division, Lieutenant Colonel David Hurley and the RSM of the Army, WO 1 Peter Prewett.

Early in 1992 Major Greg Smith was posted as OPSO. As a result of his efforts to ensure that no training opportunities were lost, the unit deployed sections and platoons in support of other units prepared to 'foot the bill'. A rifle company and elements of Administration Company also deployed on Exercise K92 under command of 5/6 RVR to protect RAAF Tindal.

Exercise K92 began on 7 March when the 8/7 RVR company assembled at Ranger Barracks in Ballarat as D Company 5/6 RVR, with Major Wescombe as OC. There were 80 members of 8/7 RVR in the company. They flew north, arriving in warm darkness. Monday morning saw the full effect of the change of weather from the southern states. Whereas K89 was hot but comfortable, K92 was hot with high humidity. It was the wet season, but there was little rain and the company called it the sweat season. Acclimatisation was the buzz word.

Nicknames abound in the Army, and Lieutenant Nigel Bailey's platoon, with platoon Sergeant Jeff Maddocks, became known as the 'monkey platoon', as they were often seen climbing trees to see above the two to three-metre high spear grass. Company HQ was known by some as Club Tindal, where Private Nick Arundell had a close encounter with a king brown snake when it slithered over his wrist. Maddocks, helped by Wescombe, quickly killed the snake, the first of many during the exercise. Water and washing were luxuries, but each night two sections had local protection tasks around Club Tindal and were able to use the showers. The CQMS, Staff Sergeant Tom Chambers, and his assistants Corporal Stan Nemtsas and Private Neil (Beetle) Bailey, ensured the troops were well-supplied with cool water.

Battalion members became used to the early morning wake up calls of departing F111 bombers and FA18 fighters, along with road trains. They were also awakened one morning by the sound of approaching LAV 25s from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment. These vehicles later provided mobility, protection and fire support to one of 8/7 RVR's platoons, commanded by Lieutenant Stuart Pike of 5/6 RVR. He enjoyed working with the platoon and returned to Ballarat at the end of the exercise to spend the last night with the company. The third platoon, led by Lieutenant Paul Thomas, conducted a successful ambush and would have taken several prisoners, except that when the enemy realised there were no umpires present, they simply walked off.

The soldiers who participated in K92 upheld the standard of the 8/7 RVR soldiers who had been to Tindal previously. That there was only one heat-related illness (on day one!), and two minor injuries during the deployment was a testament to the leadership within the company, particularly from the junior leaders.¹⁷

In late 1992 HQ 4th Brigade staged Exercise Northern Explorer at RAAF Tindal. This was a nine-day exercise in which senior personnel from all units of the brigade participated in TEWTs and open forum discussions. The outcome was the brigade concept of operations for the protection of RAAF Tindal and the Katherine area. The exercise concluded with a CP exercise, which tested some elements of the concept. Riley stated that this 'was one of the most useful exercises I had ever been involved with'. Detailed plans for the protection of the Katherine area by 8/7 RVR were then prepared.

The 1992 annual field exercise in the northwestern area of the Puckapunyal range, Exercise Ranger Rampart, incorporated a defensive phase with a number of live firing

activities. The battalion had 250 members attending. The 4th Brigade had received a rifle company issue of IWESS equipment, so the battalion had the opportunity to use this equipment during the exercise, along with battlefield noise simulation, which added to the realism. The change in focus on infantry minor tactics techniques by section and platoon commanders was noticeable.

This exercise was supported by a troop of engineers from the 10th Field Squadron. They used their plant to dig holes for prefabricated CPs they had built. They 'dug in' the operations CP, the personnel/logistics CP and the regimental aid post (RAP). A section of APCs from the 4th/19th PWLH and a tank troop from the School of Armour were also involved. Enemy was provided by the 4th/19th, the 8th/13th VMR and 5/6 RVR.

One of the last phases of the exercise saw an engineer obstacle and armoured mobility display, with Leopard tanks and M113 APCs challenged by the engineers to breach the obstacles, followed by a visit to the SFMG and mortar positions. One company then conducted an armoured/infantry company attack on a strongly defended position. Later activities included Blackhawk familiarisation flights and a recruiting display in Shepparton, where some members rappelled down the Telecom Tower into the main mall.

The battalion exercise led into the brigade military skills competition. A rifle section from B Company (Ballarat) led by Corporal Mark Trainor took all but one of the awards, establishing it as the most competent section in the brigade. The same section subsequently qualified as the rop section in the 2nd Division.

Although the battalion was performing well, the same could not be said for the band, which was disbanded in 1992 due to lack of numbers, and the instruments were returned to the store at Broadmeadows. This was the last year the battalion had its own band.¹⁸

Training resources in 1993 were cut further than the previous year. It became obvious from briefings to the Land Commander, the CGS, and other senior officers, that Army Office and Land Command were collectively incapable of managing ARes training salaries. HQ 2nd Division had devised a training management system that could not be sustained because of limited resources.

Captain Kyle Tyrell was appointed adjutant and Mark Stephens returned to the battalion as RSM, having previously served as the CSM at Shepparton. Bill Wallace, the 2 IC, retired. He was an ARA officer of considerable experience and had served the battalion well in his appointment as an ARA member, and subsequently for a number of years as an ARes member.

In order to sustain the battalion deployment to Cultana in 1993, it was necessary to conduct a nine-day exercise only, so that sufficient training time would still be available during the first half of 1994. Exercise Puma's Trek was supported by the 10th Field Squadron and the RAAF, with the unit airlifted from Ballarat to Whyalla

and back. The focus for this deployment was to be military operations in urban terrain (MOUT). The initial plan was to deploy to Woomera, where a whole town remained in which to exercise. However, due to excessive damage caused by over enthusiastic members of the SAS, the battalion was denied access to the area. Instead it utilised the facilities of the Alamein camp and a corrugated iron village constructed by the 10th Field Squadron on the Cultana range.

Apart from a range of section and platoon activities, including live firing exercises, a battalion advance to contact was staged to exercise battalion HQ in a mobile role. While only one company participated, known for the exercise as B Company, lower and higher controls were employed to provide the necessary activity to exercise all HQ elements. Lieutenant John Meropoulos from the Royal Regiment of Canada (RRC), who was visiting the battalion at the time, commanded the enemy platoon provided by 5/6 RVR. One of the lessons from this exercise was the need to use basic navigation skills when traversing such terrain.

A rifle company commanded by Major Dempster from Shepparton flew to New Zealand to participate in Tasman Exchange '93. This was a battalion group exercise conducted by the 6th Battalion (Hauraki) RNZIR.

A high point of 1993 was the mounting of the 'self-funded' pilgrimage to Villers-Bretonneux by a party from the RVR. The prime mover was Lieutenant Colonel Jock Burns, ably assisted by Allan Blankfield. The Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), General Peter Gration, provided some assistance. Tour group members from the battalion included the CO, Paul Riley and his wife Shirley and Lieutenant Pat Challis. Former CO Ted Lynes and his wife Margaret joined for the ANZAC Day service.

While ANZAC Day in Villers-Bretonneux, Bullecourt and surrounding areas was moving, the hospitality provided by the French people and the French Army was magnificent. The tour also included a visit to Britain, where the party was hosted by the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers at Warminster. The visitors were present at the St George's Day parade, during which new Colours were presented to the Fusiliers' 1st Battalion.¹⁹

Officer manning of a country battalion was always difficult. A concerted effort was started in 1991 to have each 8/7 RVR sub unit identify a suitable soldier each year. Every effort was then made to ensure their selection for, and qualification at, the annual commissioning course conducted at Land Warfare Centre (LWC) at Canungra. The battalion was relatively successful and a number of officers were commissioned. In addition, 8/7 RVR was successful in encouraging graduates from the university units to join it. By the end of 1992 the battalion had all of the required officers and could release those scheduled for attendance at promotion courses. By the middle of 1993 most NCO positions were filled by qualified personnel, with a number of senior NCOs identified for postings outside the battalion to further their careers.

The frequent cancellation, often at extremely short notice, of specialist officer/senior NCO courses at the Infantry Centre remained a cause of frustration. Staff at the centre clearly did not understand the effort required by ARes soldiers to arrange leave from their workplace to attend courses.

From 1991 to 1993 conversion courses were conducted to qualify individual members on the new F88 Steyr individual weapon that replaced the SLR. The Steyr was to have been introduced into service in 1992, but as a result of the delay many members were required to repeat conversion training previously undertaken.²⁰

Deniliquin-based Wayne Dunbar took command in 1994. Major Gale became the 2 IC and ARA Major David Smith the OPSO. Brigade directives were for battalions to spend time in the field and conduct live firing, especially as the Steyr was still new to many members. A courses camp was held, and for the mortar course, the last mission fired each day was 'danger close'. Danger close is firing the mortars at the minimum safety distance. The pioneer course hand built a bridge in 24 hours and then took much delight in blowing it up.²¹

Over the next three years the battalion participated in Exercise Northern Explorer, a 14-day exercise at RAAF Tindal, where each of the RVR battalions provided a reinforced company and logistics support, with artillery and engineers in support. It also sent a rifle company to the LWC, conducted a battalion live fire attack supported by armour, artillery, mortars and infantry heavy weapons, and conducted a dismounted company attack against a platoon defensive position.²²

The focus for 1997, under new CO Lieutenant Colonel Robert Barnes and RSM WO 1 Stephen Ward, was on junior leadership, Army Individual Readiness Notification (AIRN) and infantry core competencies. Early in the year the battalion hosted the book launch for the history of the 8th Battalion AIF, *Cobbers in Khaki*, by Ron Austin. Mr Angus Clark, an 8th Battalion AIF veteran, attended the launch.

The Hamilton depot closed and the assault pioneer platoon transferred to the new A Company HQ in Geelong. The remaining Hamilton members, including long-serving Sergeant Baulch, transferred to the Warrnambool depot. On 18 February 20 members of 5/6 RVR who paraded at the 2nd/10th Medium Regiment depot in Geelong transferred to 8/7 RVR, and formed the assault pioneer platoon. Later in the year Sergeant Phillip McIlroy attended an officer/NCO course, and two sections of soldiers a battalion assault pioneer course.

In May the battalion conducted Exercise Polygon Wood at Puckapunyal, the first of its block training periods. The nine-day activity covered first aid, navigation, camouflage and concealment, section attacks, survival training and dental and medical checks. The exercise included an officers mess dinner, which the honorary colonel of the RVR, Sir John Young, AC, KCMG, and the regimental colonel Brigadier William Hocking, ED, RFD, attended. Sir John spoke on his experience as a guard commander for Rudolph Hess at Spandau Prison in Germany. During the August

block training period, Exercise Gallipoli was held at Kapooka. This included the 'high wire' obstacle course. The battalion celebrated its 139th Birthday with a cake cut by the CO and the youngest soldier, Private Darren Sculley.

A number of charities were supported by the battalion during the year: \$120 was raised for Legacy by members having their heads shaved; soldiers served at McHappy Day at McDonalds, and Staff Sergeant Mick Wakeling and Private Jacquie Grant organised an 'around the lake relay' for bone marrow transplants. The officers mess held a Christmas in July with Chaplain Glynn Murphy presiding, and a past officers dinner. Squadron Leader Bernie Farley transferred from the RAAF, joining the Army as a major and OC A Company.

Following the Restructuring of the Army report, in 1998 the Chief of Army (CA), Lieutenant General John Sanderson, AC, introduced Army 21, which included revitalising the 4th Brigade as an objective. Army 21 also aimed to raise the profile of the Army in the eyes of the defence community, as it had fallen behind in comparison with the RAN and RAAF.²³ Revitalisation meant giving the reserve more resources, more ARA staff and more training, to see what the effect would be and how the ARes could support the ARA.

The 4th Brigade was used as a trial for revitalisation, receiving an increase in its ARA component to 33. The trial proved that, given resources and staff, the ARes could support the ARA well. Unfortunately, many of the additional ARA staff were withdrawn because of developments in East Timor in 1999, and the trial was abandoned. In another form of support to the ARA, the brigade provided the guard for the opening of Parliament and the visit of the Chinese president.

Exercise Tobruk was held over nine days in February 1998 at Pooncarie, north of Mildura. The exercise was designed as a 'shake out' for Exercise Amiens, held in Cultana in April. The most remembered aspects of the exercise were the sand, which bogged vehicles and made digging in difficult, and the heat, regularly in the 40s, which made even the simplest tasks arduous. However, the battalion was well prepared for Exercise Amiens.

The advance party left Ballarat for Cultana on a rainy ANZAC Day. WO 2 Paul Tyrell was a sight to behold, wrapped in a blanket while driving a Land Rover with a ripped canvas roof. Meanwhile, battalion members, with some 5/6 RVR personnel, flew by Hercules to Whyalla before moving into the Cultana training area. The battalion group consisted of an infantry battalion of two rifle companies, Support Company and A Echelon, with support from the 4th/19th PWLH, the 38th Field Battery of the 2nd/10th Medium Regiment, the 4th CER and the 4th Brigade Administrative Support Battalion (BASB). Rifle company members practised their defensive skills and conducted many live firing activities. The highlight for the infantry was a 30-plus kilometre pack march interspersed with live firing activities, which included Bangalore torpedoes, artillery and mortars.²⁴

The battalion travelled to Kapooka twice during the year. The first occasion was Exercise Somme in July. This was primarily an AIRN week, with additional training such as the high wire obstacle course. The second was for Exercise Borneo, which included abseiling from the RAAF Wagga (44-metre high) water tower, and a two day military skills competition.

During 1998 A Company attended Exercise Helles, a weekend near Beech Forest in the Otways. The Otways could only be described as 'close' country, with plenty of deadfall and regrowth. Later in the year the company undertook Exercise Break-In, MOUT training at the former Brierley Hospital near Warrnambool. Those who attended this activity were well-prepared when they went to East Timor.

In 1999, for the first time an ARA CO, John Paterson, took command of the battalion. WO 1 David Ashley continued as RSM. The first major activity for the year was Exercise Tasman Reserve. A company group went to New Zealand, taking two days to deploy across the Tasman. When they arrived, they were introduced to the harsh alpine meadows around the Tekapo area. The exercise area had small hillocks and no concealment higher than some small grassy tussocks. Visibility was about three kilometres. The company wore IWESS, and this equipment showed the difficulty of operating in the area, with patrols having many 'hits'. The weather was extremely cold and several members suffered hypothermia. However, in true ANZAC spirit, the company pushed on for much valuable training before the weather closed in and caused the exercise to be abandoned.

While the company was in New Zealand, a company from the 2nd Battalion RNZIR was training at Puckapunyal and Longlea, a former ammunition depot at Junortoun near Bendigo. The Kiwis visited Ballarat after the exercise and tried their hands at gold panning at Sovereign Hill.²⁵

A couple of weeks later, assisted by some B Company members, A Company performed the Beating the Retreat ceremony at Fort Queenscliff, in front of a crowd estimated at around 3000. The parade commander was Major Jeff Cole, OC A Company. The event included the 8/7 RVR guard firing volleys, and the Army Band Melbourne playing the 1812 Overture, accompanied by the guns of the 2nd/10th Medium Regiment.

The first major exercise for the year was an A Company nine-day activity at Puckapunyal, Exercise Albert. A full array of Administration and Support Company personnel attended but, unfortunately, of the 90 or so personnel in attendance, there was only one section of infantry, the most controlled section ever seen during a battalion exercise. However, much valuable training was still undertaken, although very little used the Army's radios. They failed to operate, and most communication was by mobile telephone. During the final weekend the battalion provided a CP for the 4th Brigade CP exercise.

In June A Company conducted an abseiling display as a recruiting activity at the Geelong Football Ground during the Geelong-West Coast Australian Football League (AFL) match. The battalion was back at Puckapunyal for Exercise Hari River in July. A much better attended activity than Exercise Albert, this AIRN week included specialist weapons firing and a night move under difficult conditions leading to a company attack, while the assault pioneers undertook demolitions training. The exercise commenced from well-worn Site 6 facilities that didn't look good at the start of the exercise, but felt like the Hilton by the end.

When deployments to East Timor began in 1999, around 500 members of the 4th Brigade volunteered for service there.²⁶ Later in the year the battalion began providing soldiers to the ARA to round out 6 RAR, which deployed to East Timor in 2000. The ARes members undertook 15 months of continuous full-time service (CFTS), which included six months lead-up training, a six month deployment, and three months of post deployment administration and leave. The battalion also provided a few members to 5/6 RVR for the Christmas rotation of the rifle company at Butterworth.

The Echuca depot closed on 10 November 1999 and 5 Platoon, B Company moved to Bendigo to expand its recruiting base. The platoon shared facilities with the 15th Transport Squadron at Passchendaele Barracks.

The battalion's major activity for the year was Exercise Bobdubi II. The exercise was in three phases. The first was a range practice at Puckapunyal, where all members qualified for that component of their AIRN, along with other AIRN requirements such as basic fitness assessment (BFA) and medical check. In the second phase the battalion, with the BASB and other elements, deployed to the Warrnambool area, where the infantry company undertook MOUT training at the former Brierley Hospital, while supporting elements were based at the Warrnambool depot. The transport platoon conducted familiarisation training along Warrnambool beach. During this training the transport officer, 2nd Lieutenant Warwick Stapleton, succeeded in bogging a Land Cruiser, which took two and a half hours to recover.

The final phase was a deployment by some members by Hercules. The flight was a 'tactical' deployment with the 'Tac' HQ, the A Echelon advance party and a platoon of infantry (77 members altogether) flying from Portland Airport to RAAF East Sale. On landing at East Sale the battalion members disembarked from the Hercules immediately the wheels stopped turning. Within a couple of minutes the Hercules had taken off. This phase included the use of APCs for the defence of the airstrip and the deployment of infantry to the Dutson bombing range (referred to by some as a mosquito-ridden hole) and the Omega satellite navigation station.

Battalion locations in 2000 were:

Ballarat:	HQ, Support and Administration Companies, B Company HQ and 4 Platoon;
Geelong:	A Company HQ and 1 and 2 Platoons;
Warrnambool:	3 Platoon, A Company;
Bendigo:	5 Platoon, B Company;
Bacchus Marsh	6 Platoon, B Company;
Swan Hill:	C Company HQ and 8 Platoon;
Mildura:	7 Platoon, C Company; and
Shepparton:	9 Platoon, C Company.

The battalion returned to Queenscliff on 26 February to Beat the Retreat. As *Ranger* 2000 said, 'the drill was outstanding, the food was great, the fireworks went on for ever and the beer was cold'. Training then began for Operation Gowan Gold, support for the Sydney Olympics. The 6 Platoon, B Company Bacchus Marsh depot transferred to A Company as 3 Platoon and moved into the former ground defence building in the RAAF Williams base at Laverton. At the same time the Warrnambool depot transferred to B Company as 6 Platoon.

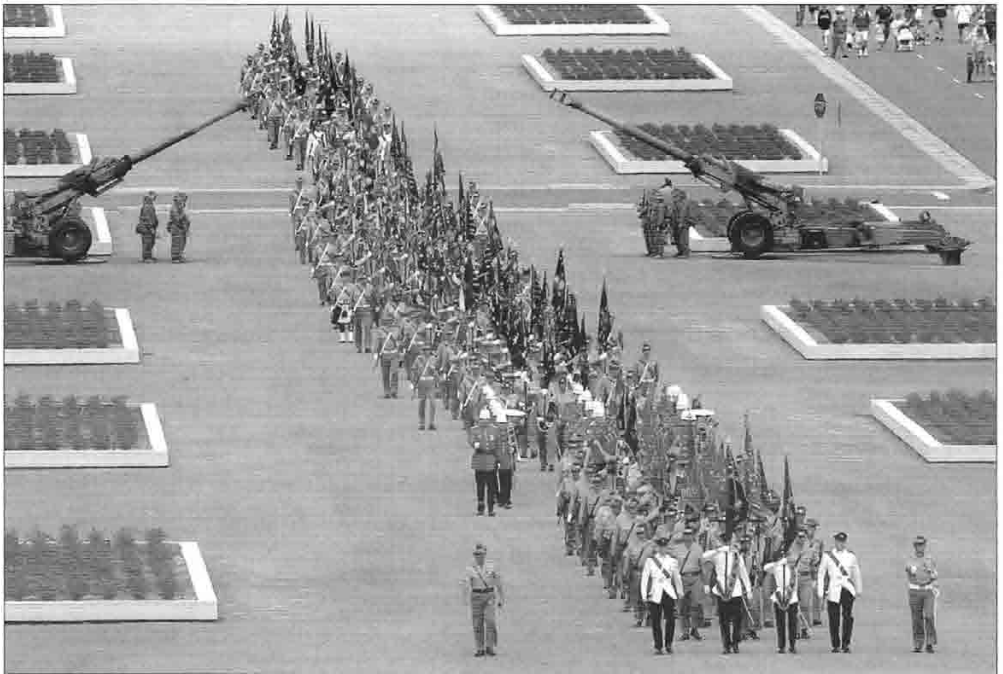
In late March the OPSO, Major Pat Rynne, deployed to East Timor as a United Nations Military Observer (UNMO). As an UNMO he lived under quite different conditions to personnel serving with the Australian Army. UNMOs were provided with a 'subsistence allowance', and were responsible for their own offices, housing and food. He spent the first four and a half months in Aileu and the remainder of his time as a member of the border liaison team in the Maliana district, returning to Ballarat in October.

Exercise Tobruk was conducted in April at Puckapunyal. This was a nine-day exercise, which included a classification range practice, direct fire support weapons (DFSW), sneaker, section defence and live fire section attacks by day and by night. Some members of the battalion, having left it at home, discovered on this exercise why 'wet weather gear' is issued! With a forthcoming move from Passchendaele Barracks in Bendigo to Longlea, the battalion began using Longlea for training. The May training weekend saw B Company there rehearsing for and carrying out a night ambush, with a successful result. The battalion provided staff and students for the 4th Brigade courses camp at Puckapunyal in July. Courses included Subject 2 for corporal and a driver's course.

The biggest commitment for the year was the support provided to the Sydney Olympics in September. Members for search teams were provided at both Sydney and Melbourne Olympic venues. The Melbourne teams searched the Melbourne Cricket Ground and undertook vehicle check point (VCP) tasks with the Victoria Police and explosive detection dogs. In Sydney members were used on venue searches, VCP and driving tasks. Corporal John (Jacka) Smith reported that 2000 Holden Commodores were provided for the Olympics, and at the end of the games 30 were missing.

In early October the battalion was visited by Lieutenant General Peter Cosgrove, the CA. After a lunch at the officers mess with the officers and senior NCOs, he visited B Company at Russell Street. He spoke on his plans for the ARes, gave promotions and medals, and in particular presented Bill Akell, the 2 IC, with his Defence Long Service Medal. These presentations were followed by an informal gathering in the Percy Lay Club at B Company. Paterson left the battalion in October after he was posted on short notice to East Timor as an UNMO. He was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Haughton, a former company commander within the battalion.

WO 1 Peter Croft, a former Warrnambool depot commander, was posted back into the battalion in early 2001 as RSM. The year started with the usual training weekends at Puckapunyal and other areas, a Colour Party participating in the Army's Centenary Parade in Canberra and another Beating the Retreat ceremony at Queenscliff.



Centenary of the Australian Army Colours Parade, Canberra, 2001.
(*Army Newspaper*, 2008)

At this time Ranger Barracks was sold. HQ, Support and Administration Companies moved to Broodseinde Barracks in Russell Street, while the Q store and transport platoon moved into a warehouse in Dowling Street, Wendouree, near the Ballarat Basketball Stadium. While it was not the best arrangement, it was the best option available at the time. The Ballarat Ranger Military Museum found a 'temporary' home in a disused room in the Sebastopol R&SL.

Once the move was completed the battalion settled down to prepare for Exercise Hamel '01 in November/December. Hamel included most units of the 4th Brigade. The battalion trained in three areas: Puckapunyal, Longlea and Greenvale. At Puckapunyal mounted operations were undertaken with the 4th/19th PWLH. Each of the two companies undertook a 'relief in place' to begin its mounted phase. The company then cleared its AO with the support of APCs.

A second 'relief in place' saw the companies commence dismounted operations under the control of 5/6 RVR. After 'digging in' each company conducted defensive routine with live fire defensive shoots, which included firing Claymore mines and mortar white phosphorus shells. Both companies were transported from Puckapunyal to Longlea in a convoy of APCs for a rear area security exercise there. The large training area at Longlea allowed foot, Land Rover and APC patrols. Checkpoints were manned, civilian riots were controlled and negotiations with the mayor of Longlea (Croft) and his 'offsider' (Haughton) were undertaken.

The culmination of the exercise was at the former Greenvale Hospital, north of Melbourne. After a reconnaissance of a suspected enemy force at the hospital, a blocking force was inserted, and a building clearance conducted under MOUT conditions. Observers at the exercise included the CA and Brigadier Peter Alkemade, then commanding the 4th Brigade.

In 2002 a new structure was implemented that departed from the physical location of the members and combined the training levels. A Company conducted training for all fully qualified riflemen. C Company took all direct to unit enlistees (DTUs) and soldiers requiring their Rifleman Infantry Operations Basic (RIO-B) course, the start of their IET as a rifleman. B Company was responsible for training the soldiers after RIO-B to fully trained riflemen. This system meant that company staff could concentrate on organising and resourcing training at one level. The soldiers gained from having useful numbers of similarly trained personnel at an activity.

The first major activity for the year for B Company was the Ballarat Federation Tattoo over the Australia Day weekend. This gave soldiers the opportunity to display their talents in the field and on ceremonial duties. It included a display of uniforms from different eras of the Australian Army.

July was a busy time. The ARA had many commitments around the world, which included two battalions in East Timor. This level was unsustainable for an ARA that at the time had only six infantry battalions, none at full strength. To bolster the

numbers in the next rotation to Timor, a company of 5/7 RAR was made up from the ARes. In the earlier deployment of ARes members to East Timor with 6 RAR, they were used as 'round-out' personnel for the battalion and were placed on 15 months CFTS. That experience showed that only twelve months CFTS was required.

With 5/7 RAR, the ARes members were all in one rifle company, which helped with their training and integration into the battalion. On 15 July 27 members of 8/7 RVR moved to Darwin with the reserve rifle company. They had undertaken a comprehensive three months selection process at Puckapunyal and faced a further three months of training with 5/7 RAR in Darwin before deployment. This company deployment was the first identified reserve force element to serve overseas since the Second World War.

The battalion co-ordinated the Southern Region courses camp in the first half of July. Courses run included: Rifleman Infantry Operations Platoon (RIO-P), RIO-B, DFSW, Supervisor Infantry Operations Section (SIO-S) and a drivers course.

On 20 July, the last weekend of the courses, the Bendigo multi-user depot (MUD) was opened on the old Longlea ammunition depot site in Atlas Road, Junortoun. It was named Passchendaele depot, but locally is called Passchendaele Barracks after the old depot in Mollison Street Bendigo. This facility is shared by 5 Platoon, B Company, 8/7 RVR, HQ 15th Transport Squadron, Training Ship (TS) *Bendigo* (Navy), 309 Regional (Army) Cadet Unit (RCU) and 410 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets. The half guard for the opening ceremony included members from all of these units. The commander of 5 Platoon, B Company, 2nd Lieutenant Andreas Fouras, was the half guard 2 IC. The CA, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, opened the depot.

In August the regular attendees of A Company were rewarded with an adventurous training exercise, Exercise Howling Blizzard, near the Falls Creek Ski Resort. Commanded by the OC, Major Doug Laidlaw, and the CSM, WO 2 Peter Young, the eight members trained for five days in cross country skiing, navigation and survival techniques in the snowfields, camping in tents.

Weekend training for the remainder of the year concentrated on preparations for Exercise Hamel '02, held in late November/early December. The exercise was in three parts. The first was lead-up training for Laidlaw's A Company as a force protection company group (FPCG), after which a short exercise was run. The second was Major John Murphy's B Company holding the field phase of the RIO-P course to allow partly trained soldiers to graduate into A Company. The third part was the battalion military skills competition.

The FPCG undertook a number of activities including: a weapons training simulation system (WTSS) shoot, nuclear biological and chemical defence (NBCD) training (including wearing gas masks and NBCD suits), a navigation exercise, ambushes, VCP, law of armed conflict (LOAC) and rules of engagement training.

B Company conducted range practices before their defensive training, which included digging weapon pits in to Stage 3 (overhead protection). The military skills competition included weapons tests of elementary training (TOET), a WTSS shoot, erection of a wire obstacle, an obstacle course and an escape and evasion exercise. Most sections were caught in this exercise and went through interrogation in a PoW cage. The winning section was Corporal Peter Baird's from A Company.

In January 2003 the battalion was asked to provide personnel to assist with fighting bushfires in northeastern Victoria. Twenty five 8/7 RVR members arrived in Myrtleford on 1 February and joined some 4th CER and 4th/19th PWLH members for basic fire safety training. They were then split into teams of twelve, each team having a chainsaw group and a hand group. The teams mainly cleared firebreaks in the Mitta Mitta and Eskdale areas in preparation for back burning. They stayed in the area until 7 February.

For A Company the year started with the company providing a platoon (-) to conduct an airmobile attack demonstration using Iroquois and Blackhawk helicopters during the Avalon Air Show in March. The company also assisted with the ARes recruiting display during the show. The 4th Brigade wanted more cooperation between its two infantry battalions, and 5/6 RVR ran a weekend activity in April, providing good training for those who attended. A week later Support and C Companies provided troops to Beat the Retreat at Queenscliff.

On 25 May the brigade welcomed home the contingent from East Timor at a parade at Simpson Barracks. There were 60 Victorians in the 90-strong rifle company. They were welcomed by the GOC 2nd Division, Major General Paul Irving, and Brigadier Dunbar, commanding the 4th Brigade and a former CO of 8/7 RVR. After the parade and afternoon tea the members went on leave, and most returned to the battalion in July. The announcer for the parade was the 8/7 RVR adjutant, Captain Andrew Butcher. During the deployment to East Timor, some of the ARes members had their employers visit them, funded by the Defence Reserves Support Council (DRSC). Other visitors included Dunbar.

The May brigade weekend was run by 8/7 RVR, and included the issue at brigade HQ of a complete set of orders for the exercise. The weekend had a turn out of over 250 brigade members. The activity included FPCG training with APCs, demolitions and mortars firing in support of rifle companies. The task of the FPCG was the protection of an airfield. A month later, a directive was received advising of a change in focus, and RRF training commenced.

In July 20 battalion members and two commandos successfully completed an RIO-B course run at Puckapunyal by B Company. The next major activity was the military skills competition, held at the Pax Hill Scout Camp and including the usual military competencies along with the use of a four lane mobile WTSS. A highlight for those watching was to see two colonels (Haughton, the CO, and Colonel Riley,

AM, RFD, the regimental colonel) changing a flat tyre on a civilian car. . While A Company's Corporal Baird was awarded the Champion Section Commander prize, C Company's composite section under Lance Corporal David Logan won the Champion Section. The Champion Soldier was awarded to Laverton's Private Karl Gerhardt, spreading the awards around.

In August a further restructure was undertaken in the battalion, with A Company responsible for trained soldiers in the Geelong, Laverton, Warrnambool and Ballarat depots. Trained soldiers in Bendigo, Shepparton, Swan Hill and Mildura were trained by C Company. B Company, under Major Peter George, a Ballarat-based RAE officer, took charge of soldiers from enlistment to the completion of their infantry IET.

The regular attendees in A Company were again rewarded with adventurous training in the snow in August on Exercise Howling Blizzard 2. The nine members attending, again led by Laidlaw and Young, camped the first two nights in the Tawonga Caravan Park for their snow training revision. Skiing was at Falls Creek. The weather was perfect, unlike the year before. In September the battalion ran a reconnaissance course.

In 2002 the battalion had opened Passchendaele depot at Longlea (Bendigo). Planning for the opening of a second new depot, Ranger Barracks in Ballarat, commenced in June 2003 with a target date of the battalion's 145th birthday on 9 August. It soon became evident that this target would not be met, and 18 October was chosen. Computers at Broodseinde Barracks were unplugged on 22 September, before the move to the new barracks commenced on 6 October, and it was said by some that work efficiency improved. The Q store and transport moved first, followed by the cadet units, B Company and finally HQ. Computers were reconnected on 31 October, to a huge backlog of emails.

Under a spring sky, sunny enough to sunburn some participants, the battalion provided two guards and a Colour party for the opening. The former medium artillery unit, now the 2nd/10th Field Regiment, provided the band. The parade commenced at the Arch of Victory in Sturt Street and proceeded for almost two kilometres to the barracks. On arrival the participants were met by four detachments from the DFSW platoon holding ground and a guard from each of 300 RCU and 425 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets, co-tenants of the barracks.

The reviewing officer for the opening was National Party Senator Julian McGauran, while the host officer was Brigadier Dunbar. Other official guests were the mayor of Ballarat, Councillor David Vendy, the member for Ballarat, Ms Catherine King, and the Land Commander, Major General David Hurley. The battalion's two padres, Glenn Buijs, based at Ballarat, and Martin de Pyle, based at Swan Hill, jointly dedicated the facility.

After the parade presentations were made. Sergeant Shane Armstrong received his warrant and 2nd Lieutenant Robert Francesevic received his commission. Baird and

Private Nick Jones received Soldier's Medallions while Private Liz Vorbach received a CO's commendation. After doing so much to help with the move of the battalion the adjutant, Butcher, was farewelled from the battalion.

In 2004 Lieutenant Colonel Craig Hinchliffe took command. He had recently retired from the ARA, and was living in Ballarat while running the family farm near Ararat. WO 1 John Glover remained as RSM and was involved in the preparation of a Catafalque party for the opening of the PoW memorial in Ballarat in February. B Company was tasked with Beating the Retreat at Queenscliff in March, its numbers being bolstered by other companies.

C Company held Exercise Borneo, the first eight-day exercise for the year. Infantry skills were revised and applied to an activity that included close surveillance followed by a cordon and search. Plenty of small arms ammunition and the battalion's allocation of high explosives were available. As the training company for the battalion, B Company ran an IET Module 2 course in Puckapunyal in June/July. Soldiers from 8/7 RVR, 11/28 RWAR, 12/40 RTR and the Sydney University Regiment (SUR) attended. The completion of this course gave A and C Companies a boost in numbers.

Later in the year the battalion's and the brigade's attention focused on providing a rifle company for Butterworth, the November/February rotation each year now being an ARes company. The 4th Brigade had deployed the first such company in 1999. The division's policy was to include infantry soldiers supplemented by sections from supporting arms units.

The initial response from 4th Brigade units exceeded 250, and a rigorous selection process started in August. Four weekends were required to trim the numbers to the required 120. The company HQ was mainly from 8/7 RVR, with a platoon of infantry. A platoon was provided by 5/6 RVR, while rifle sections were provided by the 4th/19th PWLH and the 4th CER. Administrative support came from those units and the 4th Combat Service Support Battalion (CSSB), the 108th Signals Squadron and non-brigade units. Laidlaw was the OC and WO 2 Anthony Skiparis the CSM, both from A Company, 8/7 RVR.

Planning for the deployment, known as Rifle Company Butterworth Rotation 68 (RCB68), commenced in February 2004. At 1322 on 8 November the first Hercules carrying 70 members of the company left Tullamarine for Darwin, *en route* to Malaysia. The company arrived at Butterworth on 10 November and was in Malaysia when the Boxing Day tsunami hit Indonesia. None of the 100 members of the company on leave when the tsunami hit was injured, and all returned to Butterworth. Some supported the recovery, Butterworth becoming a transit location for supporting forces.

On short notice Hinchliffe took a two-year contract and returned to Papua New Guinea, so Robert Marsh, a former company commander, took command in January

2005. After providing tsunami support, RCB68 ref-ormed in late January for final training and returned to Melbourne on 10 February. Meeting the company was one of Marsh's first duties.

The year started at a frenetic pace. As RCB68 returned, the battalion was running an IET Module 1 course at Puckapunyal. Then on 5 March A Company participated in the Beating the Retreat at Queenscliff, and the battalion provided another platoon (-) as the airmobile attack demonstration at the Avalon Air Show, and a recruiting team and security detachments at Avalon and Laverton. The senior Army member at the Air Show was Leckie, while 2nd Lieutenant Paul O'Donnell commanded the security detachments.

Between 14 and 22 May C Company conducted Exercise Finisterres, a nine-day range and field exercise which concentrated on individual, section and platoon level skills. In late June/early July the battalion supported the 4th Brigade Southern Region courses camp at Puckapunyal. Between 29 and 31 July the battalion provided a Colour party at the 2nd Division 90th birthday parade.

A significant event occurred during the year when one of the battalion's allied regiments, the Staffordshire Regiment, held its 300th birthday celebrations. It was planned that new Colours would be presented, however, the regular battalion was in Iraq, so less impressive celebrations were held. Major Leckie, then 8/7 RVR executive officer (XO), was in England. He and his wife Kaye attended the birthday luncheon, with over 200 other guests. These included Prince Andrew, Duke of York and colonel in chief, six past colonels of the regiment and the Lady Mayor of Stafford. The luncheon lasted almost five hours!

The Avenue of Honour in Mildura was dedicated in August. Deakin Avenue, the main street, was dedicated to Samuel Pearse, VC, MM, by the state governor and honorary colonel of the RVR, Mr John Landy. C Company carried the Colours. Also in August 8/7 RVR returned to Pax Hill, in Ballarat, for the military skills competition. Due to other demands placed on the battalion, only five sections competed, however, the standard was very good. The C Company team under Corporal Logan won the Champion Section, Champion Section Commander and Champion Soldier. The B Company team under Corporal Troy Best ran a close second.

The August weekend was used by the FPCG for mounted operations training, while the September weekend was used for VCP operations in preparation for the October exercise. A Company, supported by HQ, Support and Administration Companies, conducted Exercise Ypres at Graytown, north of Puckapunyal, between 8 and 15 October. This was the first time the battalion had operated in the FPCG role and 114 members attended.

Another courses camp, which included DFSW and IET Module 2 courses, was held in early December. At this time the battalion had Paul O'Donnell (promoted to lieutenant during the deployment) and a number of soldiers attached to the RAN

on Operation Relex (later called Operation Resolute), described on the internet as a 'whole-of-government program to detect, intercept and deter vessels carrying unauthorised arrivals from entering Australia'. The ARes members were 'tasked with general security augmenting Navy boarding parties and providing security and support onboard intercepted vessels'.²⁷ The RAN conducted this task in conjunction with RAAF Orion aircraft. The ARes members were based in Darwin and sailed as far as Christmas Island during their deployment. The 2nd Division GOC, Major General Ian Flawith, CSC, praised them for their work.

During the year Private Erica Rosewarne of Administration Company received the Student of Merit award on her recruit course at Kapooka, Sergeant Anthony Linnane receiving the Student of Merit on his QM course, his brother Corporal Steve Linane, who spells his name with one fewer letter, receiving the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps (RAAOC) Junior NCO of the Year regional and national awards, and Lieutenant Daniel Strack received the Prince of Wales Award. For his civilian training Strack, a customs officer, undertook research into the development of drug detector dog capability. He was attached to US Customs and Border Protection, attended the Canine Enforcement Training Centre in Virginia and observed operational dogs at Miami International Airport. His military attachment was for two weeks at the US Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. He observed and participated in live fire MOUT exercises.

An establishment review during the year cost the battalion five full-time positions. Fortunately, these were not filled at the time, so the effect was small. A new battalion structure was developed for the part-time component, with a HQ (including a signals platoon and training team), and three rifle companies, each with embedded elements of the former Support Company. The establishment of the battalion was changed to 328 ARes and 28 ARA members.

Apart from Operation Relex, the battalion had several members on operations in 2005 and 2006. WO 2 Anthony Osmond from Bendigo was in California, training United States Marine Corps (USMC) personnel for deployment to Iraq. Corporal Craig Hansen from Mildura was seconded to 6 RAR in East Timor as a sniper supervisor. Captain Kaylene Baird, who started her ARes career as a driver with the battalion, spent six months with a US Army hospital in Iraq before rejoining the battalion as acting adjutant. The RQMS, WO 2 Brian Kirby, and C Company storeman Private Ian Browne-Kerr both joined 8/7 RVR after tours in Iraq.

The 2006 training year started with an IET Module 1 course at Passchendaele depot, using the nearby Wellsford State Forest for the navigation phase. Osmond, CSM C Company, managed the course with the help of Combat Service Support (CSS) Company catering staff. CSS was the new name for Administration Company. The Laverton members moved into new accommodation early in the year. The platoon had outgrown the former airfield defence guard facility and was offered an

old HQ building and a Second World War hangar. After being cleaned up the hangar was separated into a teaching area, Q store, gymnasium and a soldiers' club, and an area for the soldiers' lockers.

Operation Acolyte, the Army's support to the 18th Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in March, had Lieutenant Colonel Marsh as the senior defence liaison officer at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Joint Task Force (JTF) 636 included 15 battalion members. It was based at the RAAF Williams facility at Point Cook, and conducted facility searches, support to the Victoria Police with access control, and VCPs. Corporal Gary Wilford, the battalion pay clerk, looked after ARes pay.

In another first for the Victorian battalions, 8/7 RVR provided Corporal Hansen from Mildura and Corporal Steven Oakley from Laverton as instructors on a reconnaissance course jointly run with 5/6 RVR at the Buckland Training Area in Tasmania in May. At the same time the battalion used its Warrnambool depot to conduct a basic and a specialist communicators course. The now Major Michael Bowman, OC A Company, managed the course, which qualified twelve battalion members.

A nine-day activity, Exercise Polygon Wood, was conducted by the battalion in late June. Bowman and WO 2 Sean (Tas) McGinley of A Company organised the exercise. Many members had their AIRN brought up to date, and weapons qualifications and re-qualifications were undertaken. The exercise included blank and live fire platoon attacks, and culminated in a night company live fire defensive shoot. The catering platoon set up a field kitchen for the first three days of the exercise.

The major brigade activity for the year was Exercise Hamel '06, held at Cultana. This was a 5/6 RVR sponsored activity for which 8/7 RVR provided 6 Platoon, commanded by Lieutenant Cameron Warfe of A Company. The battalion also provided an opposing force (OPFOR), commanded by Lieutenant Marcus Doherty, also of A Company, and personnel for the 4th Brigade HQ and the CSS element. The activity was visited by Flawith and some of the employers of ARes members. The GOC was impressed by what he saw and asked that the same type of activity be held again in 2007. The training included ranges, tactical scenarios and a firepower demonstration of battalion weapons, along with field guns from the 2nd/10th Field Regiment.

In 2006 details of the Hardened and Networked Army (HNA) concept were released, covering ARA and ARes forces. For the ARA this concept meant the formation of nine combined arms battle groups, increased readiness, relocation to Adelaide for 3 RAR and re-rolling it as a mechanised battle group; increasing the strength of the ARA by almost 1500 personnel; and transition to the information age. Support by the ARes was also increased. The ARes in 2006 comprised around 16,000 active personnel with an average attendance of 40 days per year over a median length of service of 4 years. In addition, there were 9000 Standby (previously Inactive) Reserve members.

Between January 2000 and 2006, over 1000 reserves served in East Timor, over 1000 in Bougainville, the Balkans, Afghanistan, the Solomon Islands and other places, and over 1300 on three-month deployments at Butterworth. Three Regional Force Surveillance Units (RFSU) have continued operating and seven reserve response forces have been generated. Between 400 and 700 ARes members are on CFTS each year, and 230 have served on the Christmas rotation for Operation Relex/Resolute.²⁸ Many of these tasks involved 8/7 RVR members.

Under the HNA concept, the ARes provides about 2800 high readiness reservists as immediate round out and reinforcements for first and second rotation ARA forces. FPCGs will be established within the 1st and 2nd Divisions. These will be used to protect HQs, logistic nodes and critical infrastructure. The active ARes provides domestic security capabilities, round out third rotation forces and strategic depth. The Standby Reserve provides a pool of individuals with critical skills, available in an emergency.²⁹

The battalion's annual military skills competition was held in Ballarat in August 2006. Baird and his section from A Company won the Champion Section Award, with Private Nicholas Coates-Holiday the Champion Soldier. The prizes were again presented by the Ballarat branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA), which has supported 8/7 RVR in this way for a number of years.

A solemn event took place on 31 October at Ranger Barracks, when the gymnasium was named after the late Corporal Alex Gaitan. He joined 8/7 RVR in 1995, before transferring to the ARA. He returned to the battalion as an ARes member in 2003, as a physical training instructor (PTI) and RAP clerk. Despite undergoing a bone marrow transplant, he succumbed to leukaemia and died. His mother Clara, father Manuel, sister Magaly and brother Henry attended the service by Chaplain Buijs and the unveiling of the nameplate for the gymnasium.

There was a relatively quiet period after Exercise Hamel, until activities began again with two courses starting in Tasmania on 11 November, the same day 8/7 RVR was presented with the Freedom of Entry to Greater Bendigo. Some members who attended the presentation immediately left for Tasmania as students or staff on the consecutive Module 1 and Module 2 Infantry IET courses. Conducting these courses in an unfamiliar environment, with an elevated level of logistic preparation, was evidence of the professionalism within the battalion. In another first for the battalion, both sea and air transport were used to get the stores and the 46 students for Module 1 and over 80 students for Module 2 to the course.

In 2005 the RVR Association awarded a travelling scholarship to Corporal Kevin Williams of 5/6 RVR. The scholarship covered the cost for an RVR corporal to travel overseas for two weeks of military training. In 2006 it was awarded to Baird. In November he travelled to Britain to visit the Territorial Army's West Midlands Regiment. Two companies of the West Midlands are formerly Staffordshire Regiment companies, and the Staffordshire Regiment is allied to 8/7 RVR. Along with social

activities and museum visits, Baird attended two parade nights, a recruit training weekend and the Fields of Remembrance ceremony at Westminster Abbey. This is usually attended by the Queen, but as she was ill it was attended by Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh.

The year concluded with A Company completing its move into the refurbished Geelong barracks. The end of the year also saw Marsh promoted to colonel and posted. The battalion's second ARA CO, David McKerral, was then finishing a six-month posting in Iraq.

For 8/7 RVR 2007 was typical for the ARes of the 2000s. The battalion provided support to various units and operations, including the Royal Military College (RMC) Duntroon, Monash University Regiment (MonUR) and the OPFOR for an Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) exercise, while personnel with specialist skills supported other units. Captain Baird and Corporal Vorbach supported the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP) at Doomadgee in Queensland.

Among other tasks, Captain John Spencer from B Company spent four months in the US training soldiers for deployment to Iraq, while WO 2 McGinley from A Company, and later Captain Matthew Whitwell, the adjutant, trained Australian soldiers with the force insertion team in Kuwait prior to their deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan.

The battalion participated in 32 services over the ANZAC Day period, including providing Catafalque parties and guest speakers. It also provided guards and guest speakers at Remembrance Day activities. The CO was the guest speaker at the Ballarat service. The battalion ran the courses for first aid and navigation required for ARes recruits to complete their basic training, and Module 1 and 2 courses for infantry IET. For the first time 8/7 RVR deployed to the ACT for weapons training and live firing at the Majura range, also used by the ADFA and RMC. As part of the week's activities, some members went to Holsworthy to qualify on the DFSW, the 84-mm Carl Gustav anti-tank weapon.

The battalion provided 33 members for the company deployed on Operation Anode, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The deployment started with lead-up training in the freezing cold of Puckapunyal, followed by the heat of Townsville. After a farewell parade at RAAF Townsville, the company left for four months of gruelling, energy sapping, work in the Solomons, returning home just before Christmas.

A weekend at the refurbished national service lines at Puckapunyal in February started 2008 for 8/7 RVR. This was attended by 170 members, who completed their range, fitness and medical requirements for the AIRN. They also underwent the mandatory 'corporate governance' lessons for the year. The battalion's members looked forward to a year where they could reflect on its achievements over 150 years, and on what lay ahead for those who participate in a month's deployment in Germany as the Australian contingent for the America, Britain, Canada and Australia (ABCA)

Exercise Co-operative Spirit '08. The ANZAC spirit, formed by and inherited from their forebears, will be rekindled when an NZ company is attached and the combined battalion operates with US, British and Canadian troops.

Predecessor units were raised, trained, provided men for the Maori Wars, South Africa, the nucleus for eight AIF battalions in the First World War, and for two AIF and five militia battalions in the Second World War. In more recent times, 8/7 RVR has provided men and women for active service in East Timor and the Solomons, and individuals on other deployments around the world.

With the planned deployment to Germany cancelled due to funding problems, the battalion, having completed a two week High Readiness Reserve exercise at LWC Canungra, participated in the battalion's 150th Birthday celebrations in Ballarat. The RSM, WO1 Darren Murch, co-ordinated the activities which included a Freedom of Entry March, the opening of the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum building at the rear of Ranger Barracks, and a battalion reception. The members of County Victoria's Own looked forward to commencing the next 50 years of the battalion's history with a live firing exercise in September 2008 at the Majura Range near Canberra.

Endnotes

- 1 *Ballarat Courier*, 25 February 1988.
- 2 Chinn, letters, 28 August and 14 October 1987.
- 3 Interview, Ball, 11 August 2007.
- 4 Interviews, Ramm, 11 August 2007, Wescombe, 19 October 2007.
- 5 *Shepparton News*, 3 March 1988.
- 6 *Shepparton News*, 25 May 1988.
- 7 Interview, Melis, 20 October 2007.
- 8 Leckie, personal recollections, *Ballarat Courier*, 17 June 1988.
- 9 *Maryborough Advertiser*, 3 August 1988.
- 10 *Ballarat Courier*, 3 December 1988.
- 11 *Sunraysia Daily*, 13 April 1989.
- 12 *Ballarat Courier*, 19 April 1989.
- 13 *Ballarat Courier*, 16 May 1989.
- 14 AHU Website, <http://www.defence.gov.au/Army/AHU/HISTORY/K89>.
- 15 *Ballarat Courier*, 30 September 1989.
- 16 Brochure and *Ballarat Courier*, 4 November 1989.
- 17 *Ranger* 1992.
- 18 Interview, Archibald, 3 February 2008.
- 19 Blankfield and Corfield, *Never Forget Australia*, p169.
- 20 Interview, Riley, 11 August 2007.
- 21 Interview, Dunbar, 22 October 2007.
- 22 Dunbar.
- 23 Ball.
- 24 *Army*, 25 June 1998.
- 25 *Bendigo Advertiser*, 3 February and *Ballarat Courier*, 5 February 1999.
- 26 Ball.
- 27 www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/RAAF14_17July2003/report/chapter1.
- 28 *The Australian Reservist*, Issue 9, February 2007.
- 29 *The Bayonet*, Issue 6, 2006.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

British Army Units that Served in Australia^{1, 2}

1789-1810:	102nd	New South Wales Corps, known as the Rum Corps
1810-1814:	73rd	Royal Highlanders
1814-1817:	46th	South Devonshire
1817-1824:	48th	Northamptonshire
1823-1827:	3rd	East Kent (Bufs)
1824-1829:	40th	2nd Somersetshire
1825-1832:	57th	West Middlesex
1827-1832:	39th	Dorsetshire
1829-1833:	63rd	West Suffolk
1830-1836:	17th	Leicestershire
1832-1837:	4th	King's Own
1833-1841:	50th	West Kent (Queen's Own)
1833-1839:	21st	Royal North British Fusiliers
1835-1842:	28th	North Gloucestershire*
1837-1844:	80th	South Staffordshire
1838-1846:	51st	2nd Yorkshire West Riding
1841-1848:	96th	Manchester*
1843-1856:	99th	Wiltshire (Lanarkshire)*
1844-1846:	58th	Rutlandshire
1845-1857:	11th	North Devonshire
1846-1849:	65th	2nd Yorkshire North Riding
1852-1860:	40th	2nd Somersetshire* – 2nd occasion
1854-1861:	12th	East Suffolk*
1857-1858:	77th	East Middlesex
1866-1869:	50th	West Kent (Queen's Own) – 2nd occasion
1867-1869:	14th	2nd Battalion Buckinghamshire
1870-1870:	18th	2nd Battalion (Royal Irish)
1861-1868:	No. 1 Battery, 15th Brigade,	Royal Artillery (Melbourne)

*Regiments with detachments in Victoria

Endnotes

- 1 *Defending Victoria website users.netconnect.com.au/-ianmac/Britain.*
- 2 The county names were added to the regimental number after 1782.

APPENDIX 2

Country Victorian Volunteer, Militia, CMF and AIF Infantry Units and their Commanding Officers

VOLUNTEER, MILITIA AND CMF INFANTRY UNITS

BALLARAT

Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment

1858 Lieutenant Colonel Richard Belford

Ballarat Volunteer Rangers

1858-64 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Wallace

1863: North-western Battalion formed, including the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers

1864-68 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rede

1868-72 Captain William Collard-Smith

1872-83 Major/Lieutenant Colonel William Collard-Smith

3rd Battalion, Victorian Rifles and 3rd (Ballarat) Battalion, Victorian Rifles

1884-88 Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Sleep

1888-92 Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Greenfield

1st Battalion, 3rd Victorian Regiment

1892-94 Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Greenfield

1894-98 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Williams, CMG, VD

3rd Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade

1898-1901 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Williams, CMG, VD

3rd Battalion, Infantry Brigade

1901-03 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Williams, CMG, VD

7th Australian Infantry Regiment (GO 296/1903)

1903-06 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Williams, CMG, VD

1906-07 Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Bennett, VD

1st Battalion, 7th Australian Infantry Regiment (MO 87/1908)

1908-12 Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Bennett, VD

70th Infantry (MO 277/1912)

1912-14 Lieutenant Colonel William Bolton, CBE, VD

71st Infantry (MO 277/1912)

1912-14 Lieutenant Colonel George Morton, VD

70th Infantry (Ballarat Regiment) (MO 427/1914)

1914-16 Major Julius Lazarus

1916-18 Lieutenant Colonel William Bolton, CBE, VD

71st (City of Ballarat) Infantry (MO 427/1914)

1915-1918 Lieutenant Colonel George Morton, VD

2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment (MO 364/1918)

1918-20 Major Julius Lazarus

1920 Lieutenant Colonel William Brazenor, DSO and Bar, VD

5th Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment (formed Footscray 1919)

1919-21 Major Duncan Beith, DSO

2nd Battalion 39th Infantry Regiment (MO 364/1918)

1918-20 Lieutenant Colonel George Morton, VD

1920-21 Lieutenant Colonel William Brazenor DSO and Bar, VD¹

8th Infantry Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment) (MO 95/1921)

(formed from the 2nd/8th and 2nd/39th Infantry and part of the 6th Field Ambulance)

1921-24 Lieutenant Colonel Aubrey Wiltshire, CMG, DSO, MC, VD

1924-29 Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Tucker, VD

1929-33 Lieutenant Colonel William Ellwood, MC

1933-39 Lieutenant Colonel Augustus Heseltine

1939 Major Cletus (Clete) Kisler

8th Infantry Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment)

1939-41 Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Reed, DSO, VD

1941-42 Major Edward (Stanley) Walker, AFC

1942 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Wallis, MC

1942 Lieutenant Colonel Keith Montgomery, OBE

8th Australian Infantry Battalion (AIF) (GRO G777/1943)

1943 Lieutenant Colonel Keith Montgomery, OBE

1943 Major Malcolm Edwards

1943-45 Lieutenant Colonel Bernard Berry, MC

1945 Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Loughran

1945-46 Major Michael Moran

8th/7th Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment)

1948-50 Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Scott, DSO, ED

1950-53 Lieutenant Colonel Francis (Pat) Christophersen

1953-57 Lieutenant Colonel Stuart McDonald, CBE, MC, ED

1957-60 Lieutenant Colonel John Trevenen, ED

2nd Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment (Pentropic)

1960-61 Brigadier Stuart McDonald, CBE, MC, ED

1961-63 Colonel Sydney (Spin) Buckler, OBE

1963-65 Colonel Geoffrey Swan, MBE, OAM, ED

2nd Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment

1965-66	Lieutenant Colonel John Trevenen, ED
1966-67	Lieutenant Colonel Albert (Bert) Fry
1968-70	Lieutenant Colonel Brian Colbert, ED
1970	Lieutenant Colonel Howard Taylor, OBE, ED
1970-72	Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Dower, ED
1972-75	Lieutenant Colonel Donald Ellis, ED
1975-78	Lieutenant Colonel Barrington (Barry) Ingram, ED
1979-81	Lieutenant Colonel Edward (Ted) Lynes, RFD, ED
1981-84	Lieutenant Colonel James Mack, ED
1984-87	Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Skardon

8th/7th Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment

1987	Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Skardon
1988-90	Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Ball, AM, RFD
1991-93	Lieutenant Colonel Paul Riley, AM, RFD
1994-96	Lieutenant Colonel Wayne Dunbar, CSC, RFD
1997-98	Lieutenant Colonel Robert Barnes, RFD
1999-2000	Lieutenant Colonel John Paterson
2000-03	Lieutenant Colonel Robert Haughton
2003-04	Lieutenant Colonel Craig Hinchliffe
2005-06	Lieutenant Colonel Robert Marsh, RFD
2007-08	Lieutenant Colonel David McKerral

BENDIGO**Bendigo Rifle Regiment**

1858	Raised and disbanded
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Bendigo Volunteer Rifle Corps

1860-61	Captain Musgrave (Warden) Anderson
1861-62	Captain James Skene
1862	Captain Charles Brewer

1863 Mount Alexander Battalion (unofficial title) formed, including the Bendigo and 1st and 2nd Castlemaine Corps – part of the North-western Battalion – later the Northern Battalion

1863-69	Lieutenant Colonel John Bull
1870-72	Captain John Aitken

Bendigo Volunteer Rifle Corps (as a part of the Mount Alexander Battalion)

1862-64	Captain John Lysaght
1864-72	Captain/Major John Taylor

1872 Mount Alexander Battalion Rifles (official title) formed, including the Bendigo and Castlemaine Corps

1872-83	Captain/Major John Aitken
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Bendigo Volunteer Rifle Corps

1872-73 Major John Taylor
 1873-78 Captain/Major George Joseph
 1878-83 Captain/Major William Blackham

4th Battalion, Victorian Rifles (Bendigo and Castlemaine)

1884-87 Lieutenant Colonel John Aitken

4th (Mount Alexander) Battalion, Victorian Rifles

1887-88 Lieutenant Colonel John Aitken
 1888-92 Major Peter Robin

2nd Battalion, 3rd Victorian Regiment

1892 Major Peter Robin
 1893-98 Major Arthur Hannam

5th Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade

1898-1901 Major G. Alec Thompson

5th Battalion, Infantry Brigade

1901-03 Major G. Alec Thompson

8th Australian Infantry Regiment (GO 296/1903)

1903-08 Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable James McCay, VD

2nd Battalion, 8th Australian Infantry Regiment (MO 87/1908)

1908-12 Major/Lieutenant Colonel Charles Davis, VD

67th Infantry (MO 277/1912)

1912-13 Lieutenant Colonel Charles Davis, VD

67th (Bendigo) Infantry (MO 493/1913)

1913-16 Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Bayne
 1916-18 Senior Officer, acting adjutant, temporary Captain G.F. Cole

2nd Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment (MO 364/1918)

1918-20 Lieutenant Colonel John Adams
 1920-21 Major George Lansell

38th Infantry Battalion (Bendigo Regiment) (MO 95/1921)

(formed from the 2nd/38th and 5th/7th Infantry)

1921-22 Lieutenant Colonel Ivie Blezard
 1922-27 Major/Lieutenant Colonel Percival Roberts, DSO, MC
 1927-29 Major/Lieutenant Colonel George Lansell

38th/7th Battalion (AAO 530/1929)

1929-31 Lieutenant Colonel George Lansell
 1931-36 Major/Lieutenant Colonel John Swatton

38th Battalion (Bendigo Regiment) (AAO 83/1937)

1936-40 Lieutenant Colonel John Swatton

38th Infantry Battalion (Bendigo Regiment)

1940-41	Lieutenant Colonel George Langley, DSO
1941	Major Roy Shadforth
1942	Lieutenant Colonel Athol Teele

38th Australian Infantry Battalion (AIF) (GRO G732/1943)

1943	Major Stanley Wilson
1943	Major William Melville
1943-44	Lieutenant Colonel Wilford McGregor
1944	Captain Edington Bush
1944	Disbanded

38th Battalion (Northern Victorian Regiment)

1948	Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Cotton, DSO, MC
1949-51	Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Shanahan
1951-52	Lieutenant Colonel Edmond Seymour
1952-55	Lieutenant Colonel Henry Snell
1955-59	Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Scholes
1959-60	Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Robinson

CASTLEMAINE**Castlemaine Volunteer Rifle Corps**

1860-63	Captain John Bull
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1st Castlemaine Volunteer Rifle Corps and 2nd Castlemaine Volunteer Rifle Corps

1863	Lieutenant Colonel John Bull
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1863 Mount Alexander Battalion (unofficial title) formed, including the Bendigo and 1st and 2nd Castlemaine Corps – part of North-western Battalion – later the Northern Battalion

1863-69	Lieutenant Colonel John Bull
1870-72	Captain John Aitken

1872 Mount Alexander Battalion Rifles (official title) formed, including the Bendigo and Castlemaine Corps

1872-83	Captain/Major John Aitken
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4th Battalion, Victorian Rifles (Bendigo and Castlemaine)

1884-87	Lieutenant Colonel John Aitken
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4th (Mount Alexander Battalion) Victorian Rifles

1887-88	Lieutenant Colonel John Aitken
1888-92	Major Peter Robin

2nd Battalion 3rd Victorian Regiment

1892	Major Peter Robin
1893-96	Major Arthur Hannam

4th Battalion, Victorian Infantry Brigade

1896-99 Major Arthur Hannam
1899-1901 Major G. Alec Thompson

4th Battalion, Infantry Brigade

1901-03 Major G. Alec Thompson

8th Australian Infantry Regiment (GO 296/1903)

1903-07 Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable James McCay, VD

1st Battalion, 8th Australian Infantry Regiment (at Castlemaine) (MO 87/1908)

1908-11 Major John Field, VD
1911-14 Lieutenant Colonel Frank Newell

66th Infantry

1912-13 Lieutenant Colonel Frank Newell

66th (Mount Alexander) Infantry

1913-14 Lieutenant Colonel Frank Newell
1914 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Gartside
1914-18 Lieutenant Colonel James Lang, VD

2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment

1918-20 Lieutenant Colonel James Lang, VD
1920-21 Lieutenant Colonel William James, DSO

5th Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment

1918-19 Major George Lansell
1919-21 Lieutenant Colonel Ivie Blezard

7th Infantry Battalion (Mount Alexander Regiment)

(formed from the 2nd/7th and part of the 2nd/21st Infantry)

1921-27 Lieutenant Colonel William James, DSO
1927-29 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Wadsworth, DSO, MC
7th Battalion not maintained, now 38th/7th Battalion

MILDURA

7th Battalion (North West Murray Borderers) (unlinked from the 38th/7th Battalion)

(AAO 83/1937)

1936-40 Major/Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Goucher
1940 Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Conran
1940-41 Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Goucher
1941 Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Sadler, DSO, MC, VD

7th Infantry Battalion (North West Murray Borderers)

1941-42 Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Sadler, DSO, MC, VD
1942-43 Lieutenant Colonel John Wilmoth

7th Australian Infantry Battalion (AIF) (GRO 777/1943)

- 1943-44 Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Norris
- 1944-45 Lieutenant Colonel Howard Dunkley, MC
- 1945-46 Lieutenant Colonel Peter Webster

8th/7th Battalion (North-Western Victorian Regiment)

COs based in Ballarat from 1948

SHEPPARTON

- 1912-13 E Company, 60th Infantry
- 1913-14 E Company 58th Infantry
- 1914-18 B Company, 57th Infantry
- 1918-21 B Company, 2nd Battalion, 57th Infantry Regiment
- 1921-38 C Company, 58th Battalion

59th Infantry Battalion (Hume Regiment)

- 1938-40 Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Hill, MM, ED
- 1940-42 Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Whalley, VD

58th/59th Australian Infantry Battalion

- 1942-43 Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Whalley, VD
- 1943 Major Arthur Palmer
- 1943 Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Starr
- 1943-44 Major/Lieutenant Colonel George Warfe
- 1944 Captain Hyde Sweet
- 1945 Lieutenant Colonel William Mayberry

59th Battalion (Hume Regiment)

- 1953-55 Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Crowle
- 1955-60 Lieutenant Colonel Francis Trainor

GEE LONG**Geelong Volunteer Rifle Corps**

- 1854 Captain L. Kitz
- 1858 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rede

Geelong and Western District Volunteer Mounted Rifles

- 1860 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rede
- 1861 Became a light horse unit

1863 Western District Battalion formed, including Geelong, Warrnambool, Portland and Belfast units

- 1863 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rede

70th Infantry (Ballarat Regiment)

- 1912-15 CO based in Ballarat

69th Infantry (MO 405/1915)

1915-18 Major/Honorary Lieutenant Colonel Francis Purnell, VD

72nd Infantry (MO 405/1915)

1915-17 Senior Officer in HQ Lieutenant Edward Hare

1917-18 Captain Arthur Jordan

69th Infantry now 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment (MO 364/1918)

1918-19 Major/Temporary Lieutenant Colonel John Edgar

1919-21 Lieutenant Colonel Neil Freeman, DSO

72nd Infantry now 5th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment (HQ Warrnambool)

1918-21 Temporary Major Arthur Jordan

23rd Infantry Battalion (MO 95/1921)

(formed from the 2nd/23rd and 5th/23rd Battalions and part of the 29th Light Horse Regiment)

1921-26 Lieutenant Colonel Neil Freeman, DSO

23rd Battalion (City of Geelong Regiment) (AAO 132/1927)

1927-29 Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Godfrey, MC

23rd/21st Battalion (City of Geelong Regiment) (AAO 530/1929)

1929-32 Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Godfrey, MC

1932-34 Lieutenant Colonel James Harrison, VD

1935-39 Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Godfrey, MC

1939-41 Major/Lieutenant Colonel John Robertson, MC, VD

1941 Captain Walter Whineray

1941 Captain John Newstead

1941 Major Joseph Hall

1942-43 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Ainslie

1943 Major Leonard Ralton

1943 Disbanded

COUNTRY VICTORIA

73rd Infantry (former Victorian Rangers) (Ararat)

1912-18 Lieutenant Colonel John Hutchinson, VD

Part 73rd Infantry now 2nd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment (MO 364/1918) (Ararat)

1918-20 Major/Temporary Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Harris

1920-21 Honorary Lieutenant Colonel Bernard Duggan, DSO

Part 73rd Infantry now 5th Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment (Melbourne)

1918-19 Temporary Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Hart, VD

1919-21 Lieutenant Colonel Henry Bennett, CB, CMG, DSO

21st Infantry Battalion (Victorian Rangers) (MO 95/1921) (Warrnambool)

(formed from the 2nd/21st and 5th/23rd Infantry and part of the 19th Light Horse Regiment)

1921-22 Lieutenant Colonel John Mitchell, DSO

1922-27 Major Arthur Jordan

1927-29 Major/Lieutenant Colonel James Harrison

21st Battalion not maintained, now 23rd/21st Battalion (The City of Geelong Regiment)

AIF INFANTRY UNITS**7th Battalion AIF**

1914-15 Lieutenant Colonel Harold (Pompey) Elliott, CB, CMG, DSO, DCM, VD

1915 Major (temporary Lieutenant Colonel) Robert Gartside

1915-16 Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Jackson, OBE, VD

1916 Lieutenant Colonel Harold Elliott, CB, CMG, DSO, DCM, VD

1916 Lieutenant Colonel Carl Jess, CB, CMG, CBE, DSO, PSC

1917 Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Herrod, CMG, DSO, VD

2/7th Battalion AIF

1939-40 Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Walker, DSO

1940-44 Lieutenant Colonel Henry Guinn, DSO

1944-46 Lieutenant Colonel Philip Parbury, MC

8th Battalion AIF

1914-15 Lieutenant Colonel William Bolton, CBE, VD

1915-16 Lieutenant Colonel Charles Brand, CB, CMG, CVO, DSO

1916-17 Lieutenant Colonel Graham Coulter, DSO

1917-18 Lieutenant Colonel John Mitchell, DSO and Bar

2/8th Battalion AIF

1939-41 Lieutenant Colonel John Mitchell, DSO and Bar

1941-43 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Winning, DSO, OBE

1943-45 Lieutenant Colonel Walter Howden, DSO, OBE, ED

21st Battalion AIF

1915-16 Lieutenant Colonel John Hutchinson, VD

1916 Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Forbes, CMG, DSO, VD

1916-18 Lieutenant Colonel Bernard Duggan, DSO

23rd Battalion AIF

1915 Lieutenant Colonel George Morton, VD

1915-16 Lieutenant Colonel George Knox, CMG

1916 Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Fethers, DSO, VD

1916-17 Lieutenant Colonel William Brazenor, DSO and Bar

1917 Lieutenant Colonel William Bateman

1917-18 Lieutenant Colonel William Brazenor, DSO and Bar

38th Battalion AIF

1916-18 Lieutenant Colonel Charles Davis, CBE, DSO, VD
 1918-19 Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Hurry, DSO, VD

39th Battalion AIF

1916 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rankine, DSO
 1917 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Henderson, DSO
 1918 Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Paterson, DSO, MC, VD

59th Battalion AIF

1916 Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Harris, VD
 1916 Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Layh, CMG, DSO, VD
 1917-18 Lieutenant Colonel Charles Mason, DSO
 1918 Lieutenant Colonel John Scanlan, DSO and Bar

60th Battalion AIF

1916 Lieutenant Colonel John Field, VD
 1916 Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Jackson, OBE, VD
 1916-17 Lieutenant Colonel Harry Duigan
 1917 Lieutenant Colonel Charles Davies, CMG, DSO
 1917-18 Lieutenant Colonel Norman Marshall, DSO and 2 Bars, MC
 1918 Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Layh, CMG, DSO, VD

Endnote

- 1 Lieutenant Colonel Brazenor commanded both the 2nd/8th and 2nd/39th Infantry.

APPENDIX 3

Regimental Sergeant Majors: 1948-2008

While commanding officers have been listed for predecessor battalions of 8/7 RVR, the RSMs were not. However, an honour board is held by the battalion listing the names of the RSMs since the formation of the 8th/7th Battalion (North-Western Victorian Regiment) in July 1948.

8th/7th Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment)

1948	WO 1 Cyril Dring
1949	WO 1 Maurice Armstrong
1950-52	WO 1 John Connell
1953-60	WO 1 Frederick Evans

2nd Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment

1960	WO 1 Frederick Evans	1961	WO 1 Ralph Marsh
1961-63	WO 1 Michael Dent	1963-64	WO 1 Ian Robertson
1965	WO 1 Ian Wall	1966-69	WO 1 Peter Murphy
1970-73	WO 1 Tasman (Tassie) Long	1974-76	WO 1 John May
1977-78	WO 1 Gary Sutherland	1979	WO 1 Tasman Long
1980-81	WO 1 Gerald Astin	1982	WO 1 Alan Frisby
1983-84	WO 1 Ken Scaysbrook	1985	WO 1 Barry Laurenceson
1985-87	WO 1 Peter Smith		

8th/7th Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment

1987	WO 1 Peter Smith	1988-90	WO 1 Warren Payne
1991-92	WO 1 Norman Wallis	1993-95	WO 1 Mark Stephens
1996-97	WO 1 Stephen Ward	1998-99	WO 1 David Ashley
1999-2000	WO 1 Paul Tyrrell	2001-02	WO 1 Peter Croft
2002	WO 2 John Spencer	2003-05	WO 1 John Glover
2005-06	WO 1 Sean O'Connor	2006	WO 2 Shane Armstrong
2007	WO 1 Darren Murch		

APPENDIX 4

Battlefield Experiences of the Country Victorian AIF Battalions

Reproduced from the *Australians at War*, Australian Military Units webpages
with kind permission of the Australian War Memorial

THE AIF

First Division Battalions

7th Battalion, (Colour Patch: horizontal rectangle brown over red)

The 7th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 5th, 6th and 8th Battalions, it was recruited from Victoria and, together with these battalions, formed the 2nd Brigade.

The battalion was raised by Lieutenant Colonel H. E. "Pompey" Elliott within a fortnight of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked just two months later. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving on 2 December. It later took part in the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915, as part of the second wave. Ten days after the landing, the 2nd Brigade was transferred from ANZAC to Cape Helles to help in the attack on the village of Krithia. The attack captured little ground but cost the brigade almost a third of its strength. The Victorian battalions returned to ANZAC to help defend the beachhead, and in August the 2nd Brigade fought at the battle of Lone Pine. While holding positions captured by the 1st Brigade, four members of the 7th Battalion, Corporal A. S. Burton, Acting Corporal W. Dunstan, Lieutenant W. Symons and Captain F. H. Tubb, earned the Victoria Cross – Burton posthumously. The battalion served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli in December 1915, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front and entered the front line trenches for the first time on 3 May. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozières in the Somme valley where it fought between 23-27 July and 15-21 August. After Pozières the battalion manned trenches in the Ypres salient in Belgium, before returning to the Somme valley. It saw out the horrendous winter of 1916-1917 rotating between training, working parties and duty in the trenches.

In early 1917, the Germans withdrew to the Hindenburg Line and the 7th Battalion participated in the brief advance that followed and then came to a grinding halt before Bullecourt. The battalion was withdrawn from the front line for training on 9 May 1917 and did not return to action until the Ypres offensive of September and

October. It fought major battles at Menin Road on 20 September and Broodseinde on 4 October, and then spent much of ensuing winter in the Ypres mud.

In March and April 1918 the 7th helped stop the German spring offensive in northern France and later participated in the Allies' own great offensive of 1918, that began with the battle of Amiens on 8 August. The advance by British and empire troops on 8 August was the greatest success in a single day on the Western Front, one that German General Erich Ludendorff described as, "the black day of the German Army in this war".

The battalion continued operations until late September 1918. At 11 am on 11 November 1918, the guns fell silent. The November armistice was followed by the peace treaty of Versailles signed on 28 June 1919.

In November 1918 members of the AIF began to return to Australia for demobilisation and discharge. In March, the battalion was so reduced that it and the 6th Battalion were amalgamated to form a composite battalion. In turn, this battalion was merged with another, formed from the 5th and 8th Battalions, to form the 2nd Brigade Battalion.

8th Battalion (Colour Patch: horizontal rectangle white over red)

The 8th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions, it was recruited from Victoria and, together with these battalions, formed the 2nd Brigade.

The battalion was raised from rural Victoria by Lieutenant Colonel William Bolton within a fortnight of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked just two months later. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving on 2 December. It later took part in the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915, as part of the second wave. Ten days after the landing, the 2nd Brigade was transferred from ANZAC to Cape Helles to help in the attack on the village of Krithia. The attack captured little ground but cost the brigade almost a third of its strength. The Victorian battalions returned to ANZAC to help defend the beachhead, and in August the 2nd Brigade fought at the battle of Lone Pine. The battalion served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 the battalion was heavily involved in operations against the German Army. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozières in the Somme valley in July 1916. Private Thomas Cooke, one of 81 members of the battalion killed at Pozières, earned a posthumous Victoria Cross during the action. After Pozières, the battalion fought at Ypres, in Flanders, returning to the Somme for winter. In 1917, the battalion

participated in the operations that followed-up the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, and then returned to Belgium to join the great offensive launched to the east of Ypres.

In March and April 1918 helped to stop the German spring offensive. The battalion subsequently participated in the allies' own offensive, launched near Amiens on 8 August 1918. The advance by British and empire troops was the greatest success in a single day on the Western Front, one that German General Erich Ludendorff described as, "the black day of the German Army in this war". For his actions on this day, Lieutenant William Joynt was awarded a Victoria Cross. The next day, Private Robert Beatham also earned a Victoria Cross by rushing four separate machine guns. He was killed in action two days later.

The battalion continued operations to late September 1918. At 11 am on 11 November 1918, the guns fell silent. The November armistice was followed by the peace treaty of Versailles signed on 28 June 1919.

In November 1918 members of the AIF began to return to Australia for demobilisation and discharge. In April, the battalion was so reduced that it and the 5th Battalion were amalgamated to form a composite battalion. In turn, this battalion was amalgamated with another, formed from the 6th and 7th Battalions, to form the 2nd Brigade Battalion.

Second Division Battalions

21st Battalion (Colour Patch: diamond black over red)

The 21st Battalion was raised, as part of the 6th Brigade, at Broadmeadows in Victoria in February 1915. Its recruits hailed from all over the state. The later enlistment of these men, and their average age of 29, would seem to indicate a more considered decision to enlist that set them apart from those who did so amidst the heady enthusiasm of late 1914.

The 21st Battalion arrived in Egypt in June 1915. As part of the newly raised 2nd Australian Division, it proceeded to Gallipoli in late August. It was an eventful trip – the battalion's transport was torpedoed near the island of Lemnos and had to be abandoned. The battalion finally landed at ANZAC Cove on 7 September. It had a relatively quiet time at Gallipoli, as the last major Allied offensives had been defeated in August.

After evacuation from Gallipoli in December 1915, the 21st Battalion arrived in France in March 1916. In April, it was the first Australian battalion to commence active operations on the Western Front. During the battle of Pozières it was engaged mainly on carrying duties, but suffered its heaviest casualties of the war during the fighting around Mouquet Farm.

In early May 1917, the battalion fought at Bullecourt, and then in October participated in the 3-kilometre advance that captured Broodseinde Ridge, east of Ypres. Like the rest of the AIF the battalion saw out the year recuperating from the trials of the Ypres sector.

After helping to blunt the German spring offensive of April 1918, the 21st battalion participated in the battles that would mark the beginning of Germany's defeat – Hamel, Amiens and Mont St. Quentin. The fighting for Mont St Quentin resulted in the battalion's only Victoria Cross, awarded to Sergeant Albert Lowerson.

Like many Australian battalions, the 21st could barely muster a company after the 1918 offensive. It was ordered to disband and reinforce its sister battalions. In response, the men of the 21st mutinied on 25 September 1918. By the end of that day, the order was withdrawn, and the battalion fought its last battle at Montbrehain on 5 October. The following day it became the last Australian battalion to withdraw from active operations on the Western Front. The 21st Battalion was disbanded on 13 October 1918.

23rd Battalion (Colour Patch: diamond brown over red)

The 23rd Battalion was raised in Victoria in March 1915 as the third battalion of the 6th Brigade. After initial training, it left Australia in March and arrived in Egypt, where it would complete its advanced training, in June.

As part of the 2nd Australian Division, the 6th Brigade landed at ANZAC Cove in early September. The 23rd Battalion was soon manning one of the most trying parts of the Anzac front line – Lone Pine. The fighting here was so dangerous and exhausting that battalions were relieved every day. The 23rd manned Lone Pine, alternating with the 24th Battalion, until they left Gallipoli in December 1915.

The battalion was next “in the line” on 10 April 1916, when it occupied forward trenches of the Armentières sector in northern France. This relatively gentle introduction to the Western Front was followed in July by the horrific battles of Pozières and Mouquet Farm, after which it was estimated that the Battalion lost almost 90 per cent of its original members.

After manning the front line throughout the bleak winter of 1916–17, the battalion's next trial came at the second battle of Bullecourt in May. After the failure of the first attempt to capture this town, by troops of the 4th Australian Division, this new attack was heavily rehearsed. The 23rd Battalion succeeded in capturing all of its objectives, and holding them until relieved, but, subjected to heavy counter-attacks, the first day of this battle was the battalion's single most costly of the war. Later in 1917 the battalion moved with the rest of the AIF to the Ypres sector in Belgium, and in October participated in the battle to secure Broodseinde Ridge.

In April 1918 the 23rd helped to turn back the German spring offensive, and then took part in the battles that would mark the beginning of Germany's defeat – Hamel, Amiens and Mont St Quentin. The fighting for Mont St Quentin resulted in the battalion's only Victoria Cross, awarded to Private Robert Mactier.

The battalion fought its last battle around the town of Beaurevoir between 3 and 4 October. It left the front for the last time on the night of 5 October, and was resting when the armistice was declared on 11 November. The 23rd Battalion disbanded in Belgium on 30 April 1919.

Third Division Battalions

38th Battalion (Colour Patch: elliptical black over red)

The 38th Battalion was formed on 1 March 1916 at a camp established on the Epsom Racecourse at Bendigo in Victoria. Early training was disrupted by a severe outbreak of cerebro-spinal meningitis in the camp, as a result of which the healthy members were transferred to a camp at Campbellfield, where the Battalion had to be rebuilt from fresh reinforcements.

After training in both Australia and Britain, the 38th Battalion crossed to France in late November 1916 and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 1 December. During the harsh winter of 1916–17 the 3rd Division was heavily involved in raiding the German trenches. In February 1917 the 38th Battalion provided 400 troops, with a similar party from the 37th Battalion, to form a special raiding “battalion”. After several weeks of training this force staged a single 35-minute raid on the night of 27 February and was then disbanded.

The 38th fought in its first major battle at Messines, in Belgium, between 7–9 June 1917. It fought in another two major attacks in this sector – the battle of Broodseinde on 4 October, and the battle of Passchendaele on 12 October. Broodseinde was a success, reflecting careful planning and preparation, but the 38th still suffered 29 per cent casualties. Passchendaele, however, was a disaster, executed in haste amidst horrendous conditions brought on by torrential rain. It was the 38th’s most costly operation of the war, resulting in 62 per cent casualties.

Belgium remained the focus of the 38th Battalion’s activities for the next five months, until it was rushed south to France in late March 1918 to meet the German Army’s Spring Offensive. The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August 1918, but the 38th was in reserve on this day and did not play an active role. It was involved, however, in an ill-conceived attack that failed to capture the village of Proyart on 10 August. Undaunted, the battalion continued to play an active role throughout August and early September in the 3rd Division’s advance along the Somme Valley.

The 38th participated in its last major action of the war between 29 September and 2 October 1918 as part of the Australian-American operation that breached the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line along the St Quentin Canal. It was disbanded in April 1919.

39th Battalion (Colour Patch: elliptical brown over red)

The 39th Battalion was formed on 21 February 1916 at the Ballarat Showgrounds in Victoria and drew most of its recruits from the state's Western District. It became part of the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. Sailing from Melbourne on 27 May, the battalion arrived in Britain on 18 July and commenced four months of training. It crossed to France in late November and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 9 December, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916–17.

The 39th fought in its first major battle at Messines, in Belgium, between 7–9 June 1917. During its march to the start-line for this operation the battalion suffered heavily from a German gas bombardment and less than a third of the troops earmarked to attack actually did so. The battalion, however, captured all of its objectives. The 39th fought in another two major attacks in this sector – the carefully planned and executed battle of Broodseinde on 4 October, and the disastrous battle of Passchendaele on 12 October.

Belgium remained the focus of the 39th Battalion's activities for the next five months as it was rotated between service in the rear areas and the front line. When the German Army launched its last great offensive in the spring of 1918, the battalion was rushed south to France and played a role in turning the German drive aimed at the vital railway junction of Amiens.

The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August 1918, but the 10th Brigade was the 3rd Division's reserve on this day so the 39th did not play an active role. It was involved, however, in an ill-conceived attack that failed to capture the village of Proyart on 10 August. Not daunted by this experience, the battalion continued to play an active role throughout August and early September in the 3rd Division's advance along the Somme Valley.

The 39th participated in its last major action of the war between 29 September and 2 October 1918 as part of the Australian-American operation that breached the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line along the St Quentin Canal. Along with much of the AIF, the 39th was resting out of the line when the war ended in November. It was disbanded in March 1919.

Fifth Division Battalions

59th Battalion (Colour Patch: vertical rectangle brown and red)

The 59th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 21 February 1916 as part of the expansion of the AIF. Approximately half of its recruits came from the veteran 7th Battalion, and the other half were fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 7th, the 59th was predominantly composed of men from rural Victoria. The battalion became part of the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

On 19 July 1916, the 59th became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front, less than a month after it arrived in France. The battle of Fromelles was a disaster for the 59th. Attacking in the first wave, the 59th suffered heavy casualties at the hands of German machine-gunners, and its advance faltered far short of its objective. Despite grievous losses, the units of the 5th Division manned the front line around Fromelles for a further two months.

The 59th spent the winter of 1916–17 rotating in and out of the front line. In March 1917 the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, but was spared having to assault it. It did, however, defend gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 59th's major battle there was at Polygon Wood on 26 September.

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This came in late March and the 5th Division moved to defend the sector around Corbie. During this defence, the 59th Battalion participated in the now legendary counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April.

When the Allies launched their own offensive around Amiens on 8 August 1918, the 59th Battalion was amongst the units in action, although its role in the subsequent advance was limited. The battalion fought around Peronne in the first days of September and entered its last battle of the war on the 29th. This operation was mounted by the 5th and 3rd Australian Divisions, in co-operation with American forces, to break through the formidable German defences along the St Quentin Canal. The battalion withdrew to rest on 2 October and was still doing so when the war ended. The 59th Battalion disbanded on 24 March 1919.

60th Battalion (Colour Patch: vertical rectangle white and red)

The 60th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 24 February 1916 as part of the “doubling” of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 8th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. The majority of both groups were Victorians. The new battalion formed part of the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Having only arrived in France on 28 June, the 60th became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front on 19 July, without the benefit of an introduction to the trenches in a “quiet” sector. The battle of Fromelles was a disaster for the battalion. In a single day, it was virtually wiped out, suffering 757 casualties. These losses meant the battalion saw little further offensive action in 1916.

Early in 1917, the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, but it was spared having to assault it. It did, however, defend gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 60th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September. This assault was a success – a product of the systematic way in which the early actions during the third battle of Ypres were fought.

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This came in late March and the 5th Division moved to defend the sector around Corbie. During this defence, the 60th Battalion participated in the now legendary counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April. When the Allies launched their own offensive around Amiens in August, the 60th Battalion was amongst the troops in action on the first day.

By September 1918, however, the AIF was considerably under-strength and one battalion in each brigade was ordered to disband to reinforce the other three. The 60th Battalion was so ordered, and the men mutinied. After being addressed by Brigadier H.E. “Pompey” Elliot they complied with the order and the battalion disbanded on 27 September 1918. Their actions are indicative of the high regard in which Elliot was held, and of the high standard of discipline within the 60th; it was the only Australian battalion ordered to disband in September 1918 that did so.

THE SECOND AIF

2/7th Battalion (Colour Patch: horizontal rectangle brown over red with grey surround)

Part of the 17th Brigade of the 6th Australian Division, the 2/7th Battalion opened its headquarters at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds on 25 October 1939. It relocated to the newly-established camp at Puckapunyal on 3 November to carry out its basic training, and departed Melbourne for service overseas on 15 April 1940.

Arriving in the Middle East on 17 May 1940, the 2/7th conducted further training in Palestine and Egypt, before embarking on its first campaign – the advance against the Italians in eastern Libya – just before Christmas. It fought in the battles for Bardia (3–5 January 1941) and Tobruk (21–22 January 1941) and ended its activities in Libya manning defensive positions at Marsa Brega – the western extent of the advance.

In early April 1941, the 2/7th, with the rest of the 6th Division, deployed to Greece to resist the anticipated German invasion. For the 2/7th, the Greek campaign was essentially one long withdrawal through a series of rearguard positions, beginning on 16 April. The majority of the 2/6th were evacuated from Kalamata aboard the “Costa Rica” on the night of 26 April. On the afternoon of 27 April, however, the “Costa Rica” was crippled by German aircraft. The men of the 2/7th were rescued by a pair of British destroyers and landed on Crete.

On Crete, the 2/7th were initially deployed to defend the coastline around Georgioupolis but, after the German airborne landings on 20 May, were soon moved up to join the fighting around Canea. On 27 May the battalion took part in a wild bayonet charge at 42nd Street that temporarily rebuffed the German advance. The 2/7th subsequently played a critical rearguard role as the Allied forces retreated across the island to Sphakia. As a result, the battalion was left behind and taken prisoner after the withdrawal of the last evacuation vessels from Sphakia on 1 June.

Rebuilt in Palestine, the 2/7th formed part of the garrison in Syria between October and February 1941, before leaving the Middle East on 12 March 1942. Between mid-March and mid-July it formed part of a force defending Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) from possible Japanese attack, and did not disembark in Australia until 4 August 1942.

The 2/7th, as a whole, first met the Japanese in battle in the mid-January 1943 as part of the force defending Wau in New Guinea, although its carrier platoon had already been involved in fighting at Buna in Papua. Once Wau was made secure in early February, the 2/7th subsequently participated in the drive towards Salamaua. After arriving back in Australia on 6 October 1943, the battalion spent most of 1944 training in northern Queensland.

On 16 November 1944, the 2/7th disembarked at Aitape in New Guinea for its final campaign. Between January and June 1944, it was engaged mainly in arduous patrolling to clear the Torricelli Range, and in August it carried out a similar role in the Prince Alexander Range. The battalion returned to Australia on 18 December 1945 and disbanded at Puckapunyal in February 1946.

2/8th Battalion (Colour Patch: horizontal rectangle white over red with grey surround)

The headquarters of the 2/8th Battalion opened at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds on 30 October 1939 and four days later relocated to the newly-established camp at Puckapunyal. After completing its basic training, the battalion departed Melbourne for service overseas on 14 April 1940. The battalion was originally formed as part of the 17th Brigade of the 6th Australian Division, but in February it was decided to reorganise Australian infantry brigades along British lines, with three battalions instead of four. This meant the 2/8th was eventually transferred to the 19th Brigade, but remained part of the 6th Division.

Arriving in the Middle East on 18 May 1940, the 2/8th trained in Palestine and Egypt in preparation for its first campaign, against the Italians in eastern Libya. It played only a small role at Bardia (3–5 January 1941) but suffered the heaviest casualties of any Australian unit during the battle for Tobruk (21–22 January 1941), after having to attack a strong point constructed around a line of dug-in tanks. The 19th Brigade led the divisional advance onwards to Benghazi, which was reached on 6 February; the Italian forces surrendered the next day.

In early April 1941 the 2/8th deployed to Greece. It fought a fierce battle with German troops at Vevi in the country's north on 11 and 12 April but, overstretched and assailed by a vastly superior force, was forced to withdraw. The battalion became disorganised, lost a great deal of its weapons and equipment, and many of its troops were separated. It played no significant role in the rest of the campaign and was evacuated from Kalamata, in two ships, on the night of 26 April. 199 members of the battalion were taken straight back to Egypt, while another 394 were landed on Crete after their transport, "Costa Rica", was sunk. This party fought around Canea after the landing of German paratroops on 20 May.

The battalion was reunited in Palestine on 3 June and in October it joined the force garrisoning Syria. It left Syria in mid January 1942, embarked for home on 12 February, and arrived at Adelaide on 28 March. In June, the 19th Brigade was deployed to defend Darwin and the 2/8th remained there for what became a boring and frustrating year. The brigade rejoined the rest of the 6th Division training in northern Queensland in June 1943 but another 18 months would pass before it saw action again.

The 2/8th landed at Aitape in New Guinea on 12 November 1944 to undertake its only campaign against the Japanese. It was involved in the Danmap River operations between December 1944 and February 1945, and then the advance on Wewak and clearance of the Prince Alexander Range between April and July 1945. The capture of the dominating heights of Mount Shiburangu on 27 June was the battalion's greatest achievement of the campaign.

Following the Japanese surrender on 15 August, drafts of 2/8th men began returning to Australia for discharge. The remainder of the battalion departed Wewak on 10 November, and disbanded at Puckapunyal on 14 December 1945.

APPENDIX 5

Battalion Depots

In the early days of the Victorian gold rush the gold commissioner's HQ, or government camp, which the miners were required to attend for the issue of a miner's licence and other administrative matters, was often fortified. After the Eureka Stockade rebellion in 1854, changes were made to the administration of the goldfields and the commissioners were replaced with wardens. The camps were gradually transformed from the focal point of government persecution and poor administration to showpieces of local government and public recreation.¹

The gold commissioner in Ballarat at the time of Eureka, Rede, later commanded the Ballarat Volunteer Rangers. The warden at Castlemaine, Bull, later commanded the CVRC, and Musgrave Anderson, known as Warden Anderson, the BVRC.

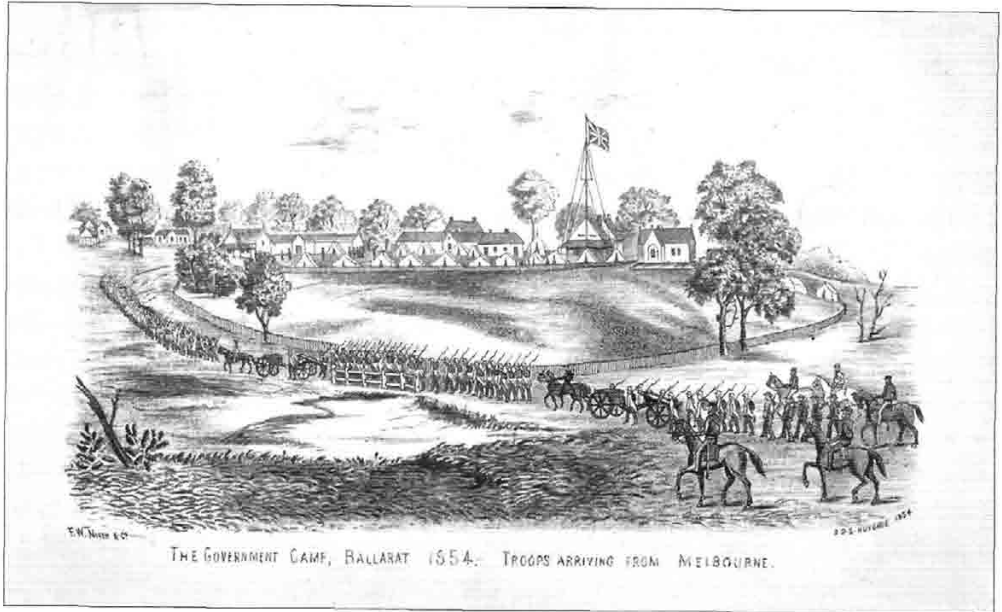
BALLARAT

The government camp in Ballarat was originally located at Golden Point in the gold field. It was relocated to high ground west of the main diggings in the area bounded by Sturt Street, Lydiard Street North, Mair Street and Camp Street (which then ran from Mair Street to Grenville Street). From there the police could observe the thousands of diggers working along Yarrowee Creek.²

After the formation of the BVRR, the first drills were held in the Victoria Theatre, which no longer exists, but was located on the east side of Main Road between York and Clayton Streets. The volunteers later moved to a vacant piece of land on the site of the old gasworks at the corner of Eastwood and Albert Streets.

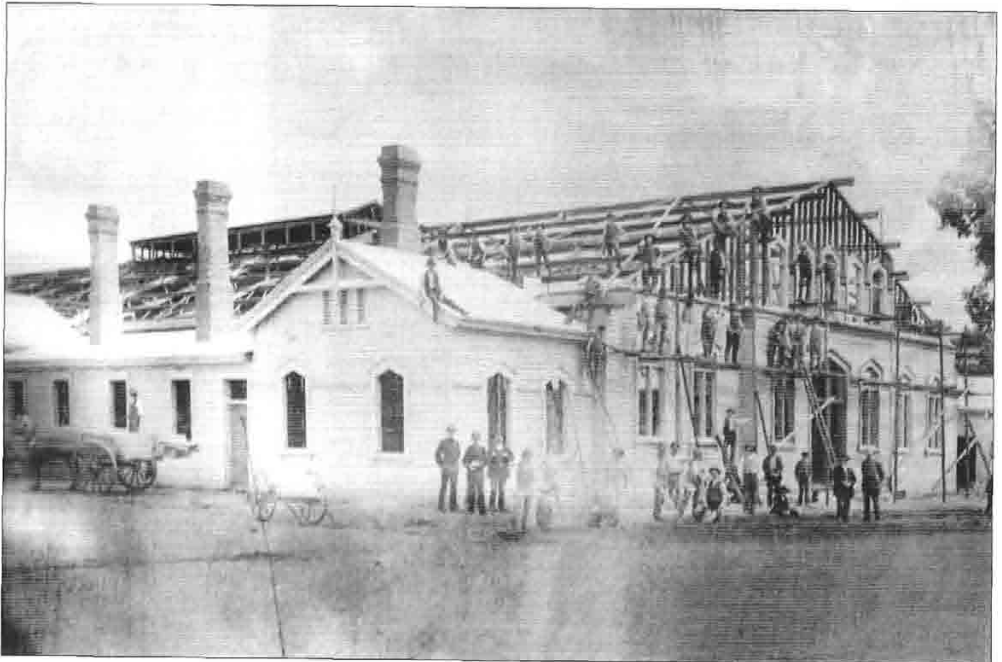
Between 1859 and 1865 an orderly room (later known as a drill hall or training depot) was provided in the government camp area. In 1865 the councils of Ballaarat and Ballarat East each provided £50 (\$100) towards the cost of a curved tin orderly room completed in 1867 behind the Alfred Hall, across Yarrowee Creek. This remained in use until 1886, by which time the old building had almost fallen down. Some facilities were shared with the light horse unit raised in Ballarat at the same time as the Rangers.³ In his 1936 speech, Williams described the old orderly room as a 'rickety old shed, the floor rising and falling to the tramp of the recruits. We thought it would fall down'. He recalled Corporal Dave Rae (from Scotland) saying it was 'not fit to put coos [cows] in!'⁴

The new orderly room was built in Curtis Street by Mr James Taylor and Mr Ellis. Of wooden construction, it was opened on 2 July 1886 in the presence of around 4000 people. A concert, bayonet and sword exercises and duels, a band recital and presentation of the Sargood Trophy for shooting followed the opening. The military in Ballarat had a permanent home.⁵



Above: Soldiers arriving at the Government Camp in Ballarat, 1854..
(National Library of Australia)

Below: The Ballarat Orderly Room under construction, 1885.
(8/7 RVR Ballarat)



The building cost £5234/14/10 (\$10,469.48), and at the time of completion, and for many years after, was the largest orderly room in the Australian colonies.⁶ It was unique in that it had an asphalt floor, later replaced with a polished wooden floor that stood the test of stamping feet and heavy vehicles.⁷ Williams recalled Colonel Sleep successfully resisting the attempts of the architects to run a series of internal pillars to support the roof. 'Fancy our enclosed one-third of an acre ruined with pillars.'⁸ The floor space inside measured 60 metres by 25 metres.⁹

The Ballarat drill hall was named Ranger Barracks at a commemorative service held on the battalion's 101st birthday on 9 August 1959. The service was attended by, among others, the honorary colonel, Brigadier Hurley, past COs Morton and Christophersen and the mayor of Ballarat, Councillor Roff, CBE, and Mrs Roff.¹⁰

After 115 years of continuous occupation by the Army, HQ 8/7 RVR and Administration and Support Companies marched out of Ranger Barracks on 24 July 2001 and moved into four portable huts in B Company's Broodseinde Barracks in Russell Street. The main Q store moved into a warehouse in Dowling Street in the suburb of Wendouree. The P1 style hut used as a Q store in the Ranger Barracks yard was relocated to Broodseinde Barracks for use as an office and Q store for the cadets. The old barracks and the car park were sold for a reported \$4 million, and a Big W variety store and smaller car park were built on the car park site, while the barracks building was converted into a Dan Murphy's Cellar.

After the introduction of national service in 1951, the Army built many new facilities. Ballarat received a new drill hall in Russell Street in 1955. The design was the same as drill halls built in Swan Hill, Echuca and Cobram, the only difference being the colour of the bricks. It was known as Tobruk Barracks until 1968, and was used by the 24th Company, RAASC until the company disbanded on 29 August 1957.¹¹ It then became a depot for the St Patrick's Cadets. B Company moved from Curtis Street to Russell Street in 1977.

The drill hall was renamed Broodseinde Barracks in the 1990s, after the battle fought in Belgium in 1917 by the 8th Battalion, alongside the 7th, 21st, 23rd, 38th and 39th Battalions. On 18 October 2003 8/7 RVR marched out of Broodseinde Barracks and into the new Ranger Barracks. Broodseinde Barracks was sold for a reported \$5.2 million, and in 2007 houses were built on the site.

Planning for the building of an MUD began in 1998, and construction started in November 2002, at a reported cost of \$5.6 million. The new depot has two buildings, the main office and lecture room building and the Q and transport building. A major change in the original design extended the roof of the Q building to give an undercover training area instead of a number of concrete pads for pitching tents.

This extension, sought by the CO, Bob Haughton, became known as Bob's shed. Some features from previous Ballarat depots were incorporated in the MUD. They included the two 32-pounder cannon which once stood outside Ranger Barracks

in Curtis Street. These came from HMVS *Nelson* (originally HMS *Nelson*) after it was decommissioned in the 1890s. They were donated to the people of Ballarat and held in trust by 8/7 RVR, and were refurbished by apprentices at the Maribyrnong Ordnance Factory in 1983.

When the completion date approached, 8/7 RVR asked for approval to name the depot 'Ranger Barracks'. Although technically not a barracks, as there is no accommodation, approval was given. The closure of Broodseinde Barracks commenced on 22 September 2003, and the first movement into the MUD occurred on 6 October.



Ranger Barracks Ballarat, 2007.
(Skyworks Aerial Photography)

On 18 October the battalion, with music provided by the 2nd/10th Field Regiment band, marched from the Arch of Victory into the new depot. Ranger Barracks was then opened by Senator McGauran. Guests included the Land Commander, Major General David Hurley, Brigadier Dunbar, commanding the 4th Brigade, the member for Ballarat, Ms King and the mayor, Councillor Vendy.¹²

The old Ranger Barracks had an officers mess, a sergeants mess, and a soldiers' club. Only the club had an official name, the Beatham, VC, Club. Its opening on 4 August 1973 was combined with an open day, which included a battalion weapons

display, cooking equipment and a RAEME mobile workshop. Robert Beatham was an 8th Battalion soldier awarded the VC for actions at Rosières, east of Amiens, on 9 August 1918. The club was opened and dedicated by another 8th Battalion man, Donovan Joynt, who was awarded the VC for actions on 23 August 1918.¹³

Guests at the opening included the mayor, Councillor McKay and Mrs McKay, and Brigadier Grant, commanding 4 TF, and Mrs Grant. There was insufficient patronage to run two soldiers' clubs in Ballarat, so when A Company moved into the Boswell Avenue factory in Geelong, the Beatham Club transferred there. Following the transfer, Ranger Barracks soldiers went to the B Company soldiers' club in the Russell Street depot after parade to socialise.

On 23 July 1989 the battalion honoured one of its most famous members when the B Company soldiers' club was named the Percy Lay, MC, DCM, MM, *Croix de Guerre*, Club. Lay, of Ballan, was the 8th Battalion's most decorated soldier in the First World War, and also served in the Second.¹⁴ The OC B Company, Captain Boucher (from Carisbrook), presided over the opening, and the president of the club was Corporal Darren Matthews. Guests included Colonel McAloney, commanding the 4th Brigade (formerly 4 TF), the honorary colonel, Major General Kevin Cooke, AO, RFD, ED, the CO of 8/7 RVR, Lieutenant Colonel Ball, the member for Ballarat, Mr John Mildren, the mayor, Councillor Wanda Chapman, and Mr and Mrs Ray Lay representing the Lay family. When the battalion moved to the new Ranger Barracks in 2003 the Lay club closed and the soldiers' club became the Ranger Club.

BENDIGO

The government camp in Bendigo was located along Bendigo Creek in the area now known as Rosalind Park. When the BVRC was formed in 1858, the government granted it use of a section of the old military barracks in the camp reserve as an orderly room.¹⁵ In 1865 the BVRC vacated the old orderly room and purchased a weatherboard building in View Street. A brick building costing £870 (\$1740), opened by Prince Alfred during his visit in December 1867, was the next home for the corps. It is now part of the Bendigo Art Gallery. In 1867 a brick building was also built in View Street for the mounted troops. It became a part of the ANA Hall, which has been demolished.¹⁶

The first drill hall in the commonwealth era was the Park Road Hall in the old showgrounds (known the Bendigo Sports Centre in 1988). It was built before federation and rented by the Commonwealth for £2 (\$4) per year.¹⁷ The 67th Infantry, raised in 1912, used this hall, which has also been demolished.

The second drill hall, in Allingham Street, Golden Square, was one of 43 built in Victoria between 1913 and 1918. They were a standard design with corrugated iron roof and walls, and no decorations. It was named Amiens Barracks after the

First World War battle, and was later used by the 17th LHR and the Army Survey Regiment. The third drill hall was completed in 1916 in Mollison Street. It was named Passchendaele Barracks after the battle in which the Bendigo-raised 38th Battalion, and the other country Victorian battalions, fought. Infantry, light horse, medical and service corps personnel have all served in that depot.¹⁸

On 20 July 2002 5 Platoon, B Company, moved into its new home at the Bendigo MUD, now Passchendaele Depot, locally known as Passchendaele Barracks. It is shared with the 15th Transport Squadron and the three services' cadet units. The CA, Lieutenant General Leahy, opened the depot, which became the joint HQ of C and Support Companies, but Support Company was later disbanded.

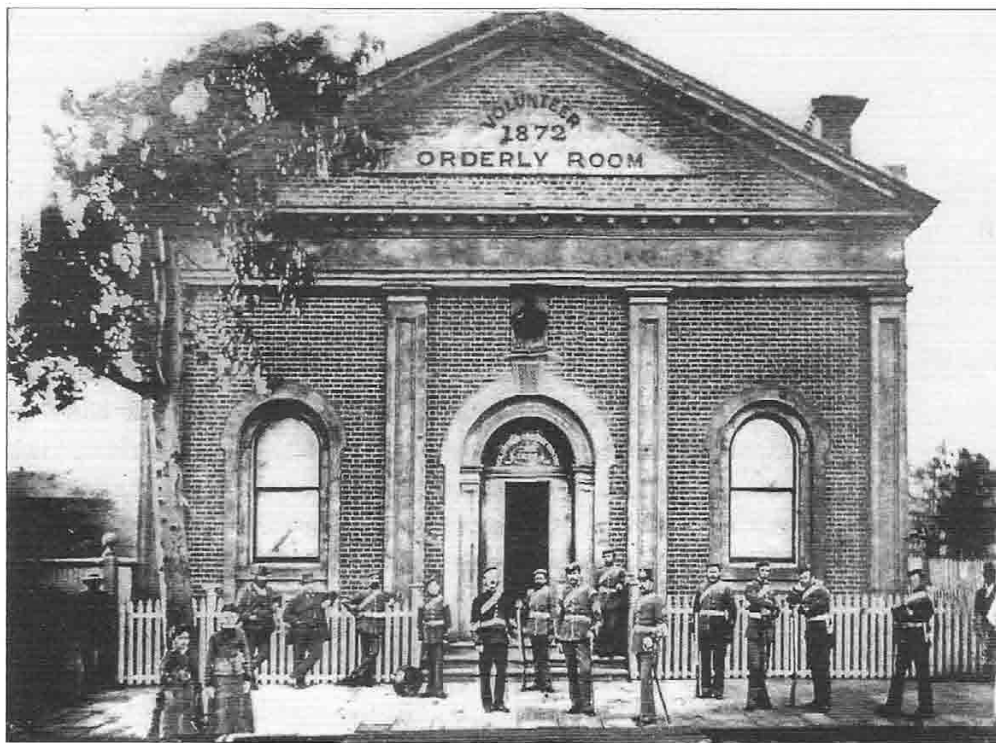


Former Allingham Street depot, Bendigo.
(Major Nigel Townsend)

CASTLEMAINE

Castlemaine, in the Mount Alexander district, became the first administrative centre for the goldfields. Gold Commissioner Wright, the administrator of the area, established his HQ in the centre of the Castlemaine gold field, near where Forest and Barkers Creeks join. This is now known as Camp Reserve, and in 1860 became the location for the CVRC's first drills, manoeuvres, band recitals and fund raising concerts.

In 1872 a brick hall was built in Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine, paid for by public subscription and assistance from the council.¹⁹ A 'Grand Bazaar' and a 'glittering' ball were held to celebrate the opening.²⁰ Quarters for the drill instructor were behind the hall. It was demolished in 1888, despite local protests, to make way for a larger building. The new wooden building was completed on 5 September 1889 by builder David J. Thompson at a cost of £2493/12/9 (\$4987.28). It still stands, but is no longer used by the military.²¹



The local drill hall provided the territorial basis for the development of the Australian military tradition of a citizen or militia army. The volunteer Rifle Company was raised in Castlemaine in 1860 and the magnificent Orderly Room was built in 1872 yet demolished in 1888.

Work on a replacement drill hall commenced in 1884.

(Warren Perry collection)



Castlemaine Orderly Room, 2007. Built in 1889.
(Neil Leckie)

COBRAM

A new depot, Salamaua Barracks, was opened in Cobram on 18 November 1955 by Brigadier Simpson.²² The depot transferred to the 8th/13th VMR in 1972, but saw little use in the following years. In 1992, 8/7 RVR reopened the depot, but it was finally closed in 1996.

ECHUCA

The first military parades in Echuca took place from 1889 in the Temperance Hall, followed by the State School. Before federation two other sites were used, the Old Customs House at the corner of Watson and Leslie Streets, and the drill hall at the corner of High and Anstruther Streets. The drill hall site was later sold to the Education Department, and shared with the Technical School. In November 1955, just before the move into newly completed barracks in Ogilvie Street, a fire razed the old building and destroyed arms, stores, equipment and personal documents there.²³ The new depot was opened on 21 April 1956 by Major General Risson. It was named Bobdubi Barracks in honour of the 58th/59th Battalion's major battle in the Second World War. The depot was closed to the ARes in 2000.



Former Bob Dubi Barracks Echuca, 2007 – now used by Army Cadets.
The same design was used at Swan Hill, Cobram and Russell Street, Ballarat
(Neil Leckie)

GEELONG

The GVRC was formed in 1854. At that time the British barracks was located at the site of the current barracks in Myers Street. However, in 1855 the GVRC was using Southey's Hotel in Yarra Street as its place of assembly. Whether the corps drilled there or at the British barracks is not recorded. However, with the introduction of artillery into the region in 1862, larger facilities were needed.²⁴

In 1879 the Congregational Church, currently the Wintergarden Cafe in McKillop Street, was purchased for use as a drill hall and orderly room. Some sheds from the British barracks were disassembled and rebuilt as gun bays there. By the late 1890s these facilities were too small, and an application for more land was made. The new orderly room was constructed at Myers Street and completed before 1884.²⁵ The new buildings were larger, and included quarters for the sergeant major.

The contract for construction of the third orderly room built on the Myers Street site was signed on 25 April 1900. It was completed that year at a cost of £3886/5/8 (\$7772.57).²⁶ For the opening on Saturday 17 November 1900, the gunners marched from the McKillop Street premises with their band playing. This orderly room has been used since then by the various Geelong units. During its construction a workman employed at the site found a tunic button from the 40th Regiment.²⁷

Under the Pentropic system, infantry returned to Geelong when A Company, 2 RVR paraded there between 1960 and 1963. The training depot, as drill halls or orderly rooms were then known, remained with the artillery. It was named Geelong Barracks in 1971. In 1985 a large five-bay brick gun shed was erected to house the M-198 medium howitzers.

Modernisation of the depot was first proposed in 1998 and completed in 2006. All of the old buildings were refurbished and a new facilities block and training sheds added to the site in preparation for the infantry. The main drill hall had modern orderly and lecture rooms added to its interior. In 2006, when the renovations were completed, A Company, 8/7 RVR moved there from Boswell Avenue.

The depot was renamed Newland Barracks on 9 December 2006. Captain James Newland served for five years with the Victorian artillery, and in South Africa during the Boer War. He was wounded at Gallipoli, and commissioned on 22 May 1915. Newland was MID for his actions at the battle of Pozières and was awarded his VC for actions between 7 and 9 April 1917 at the Bapaume-Cambrai Road, west of Boursies, and on 15 April at Lagnicourt while serving with the 12th Battalion. He is the only VC to have come from the Geelong district, and at 36, was one of the oldest members of the AIF to be awarded a VC.²⁸ The selection of his name was appropriate as infantry and artillery units share the depot.



Newland Barracks, Geelong, 2008. Home of A Company 8/7 RVR.
(Neil Leckie)



Above: Glastonbury, 2008. Former home for Deakin University Company.

Below: Boswell Avenue depot DUC and A Coy, 8/7 RVR.
(Both photographs Neil Leckie)



Both the main drill hall and the sergeant major's cottage are heritage listed as among the few examples of a drill hall with cottage remaining. The original plans for refurbishment proposed demolition of the cottage, however, additional funding was provided to retain it. The site now houses the 38th Field Battery, 2nd/10th Field Regiment, A Company, 8/7 RVR and the Geelong 32 RCU. On 19 January 1981, what became the DUC commenced training at the artillery depot. In March 1983 the DUC moved to Glastonbury off the Colac Road in Belmont, a suburb of Geelong, then in late 1995 into a former factory in Boswell Avenue in the suburb of Newtown.

In keeping with the all ranks nature of the new soldiers' club in the depot, approval was given for it to be named the Jock McNeill Club. Major General McNeill is the highest-ranking officer to have come from the Geelong area. He was an artilleryman in the 2nd AIF, and had service as a soldier, an NCO and as an officer, making his name fitting for an all ranks club. His final posting was as IG of the ARes in 1977. He died in November 2003. His son opened the club on 9 December 2006.

HAMILTON

The VMR first paraded in Hamilton in the town hall. However, this was not suitable, as it was also used for many other purposes. By September 1885 Hamilton urgently required an orderly room, which was completed in Milton Street by William Robinson in 1887, costing £580 (\$1160). There were stables and paddocks for horses, which were trained at the showgrounds nearby. Around 1900 the building was clad externally with corrugated iron, and the internal walls lined with vertical boards.²⁹ The depot was closed in 1965, but reopened in 1981 under 2 RVR. It was finally closed in 1997. In the early 1990s the Hamilton soldiers' club was named the Walter (Wally) Button, MM, Club at a function attended by over 80 members and guests, including Kenna, VC, the mayor, the R&SL president, members and partners.

KYNETON

The 1903 depot in Market Street Kyneton was one of many built in the early days of the Commonwealth. It was named Mont St Quentin Barracks for the 38th Battalion's involvement in the battle of Mont St Quentin in the First World War. It closed in 1962, after being transferred to the RAASC, but was reopened in 1976 by the 4th/19th PWLH. The depot finally closed in the mid-1990s.

LAVERTON

In 2000 8/7 RVR opened a platoon depot in the former airfield defence guard building in the RAAF Williams base at Laverton. By 2006 the platoon had outgrown that building, and moved into a former HQ building. It was also allocated a Second World War hangar as a training area.



Above: 8/7 RVR Depot at Laverton, 1999. Former Airfield Defence Guards building.

Below: Laverton Depot, 2006.
(Both photographs Neil Leckie)



MARYBOROUGH

In 1951 the first intake of national servicemen commenced training. A local CMF depot was needed for the trainees from Maryborough, so on 1 July 1952 A Company, 8th/7th Battalion was raised, and the Citizen's Brass Band hall was used as the depot. On 1 January 1953 the company moved into the RSS&AILA Hall. A small depot consisting of two joined Nissen style huts was built in Goldsmith Street in 1955, and named Bullecourt Barracks. A five-barrel Nordenfelt light machine gun (LMG) and a 25-pounder gun were features at the front of the building. The soldiers' club was named the Lock Club in 1988, after a local (Carisbrook) First World War 38th Battalion soldier, Francis Lock, DCM. The depot closed in 1999.

MILDURA

When the 7th Battalion was unlinked from the 38th Battalion in 1936, its HQ in Mildura was in a grain and chaff store in 7th Street, opposite the railway station. Training was held at the No. 1 Oval at the Mildura Recreation Ground. At the beginning of 1937 the battalion commenced training in a shed at 155 Seventh Street, which later became Ab Pike's motorcycle shop. The site is now a car park.

In February 1937 a works request was raised for £6,000 (\$12,000), for a new drill hall at the corner of Twelfth Street and San Mateo Avenue. The land was a gift from the citizens of Mildura on 14 December 1916. Building commenced on 15 September 1937, and the drill hall was completed on 14 June 1938 at a final cost of £7,829/15/4 (\$15,659.53). It was opened in mid-1938 by Major General Whitham, the 4th Division GOC. In 1962, when the Mildura depot was under 2 RVR, it was named Kiarivu Barracks after the 2/7th Battalion's last Second World War battle at Kabocbus-Kiarivu in New Guinea, on 8 August 1945.

In the early 1970s the depot in San Mateo Avenue was too small for 1 IRC. However, the Mildura council and the Department of the Interior (responsible for Army depots) clashed over the location for a new depot. The Department had allocated a 24-hectare site in Ettiwanda Avenue, between 13th and 14th Streets, sufficient for a modern training depot with a garden setting. The council objected, as this was residential area and would be contrary to its plans. Headquarters Southern Command had approved the new depot, but the plan was shelved when Australia's part in the Vietnam War concluded and the end of national service reduced CMF strength in the Mildura area.³⁰

On 28 September 1985 the soldiers' club at the Mildura depot was named the Pearse, VC, MM, Club. Samuel Pearse enlisted in the 7th Battalion. His records show that during the war he was wounded twice and was AWOL twice. He was awarded an MM in September 1917. In July 1919 he discharged from the AIF as a corporal while in London, and joined the Russian Relief Force with the 45th Battalion, Royal

Fusiliers, being raised there mainly from Australian volunteers. The battalion fought in Russia, where Pearse died while fighting outside Emptsa, in an action for which he was posthumously awarded a VC. The ceremony was conducted by the OC C Company, Captain Wescombe. Captain Graeme Williams (Retired) detailed Pearse's exploits. Mr Milton Whiting, MLA, unveiled the memorial, while Chaplain Ron Wood dedicated the plaque, donated by the Mildura Shire Council.



Kiarivu Barracks Mildura, 2007.
(Neil Leckie)

RED CLIFFS

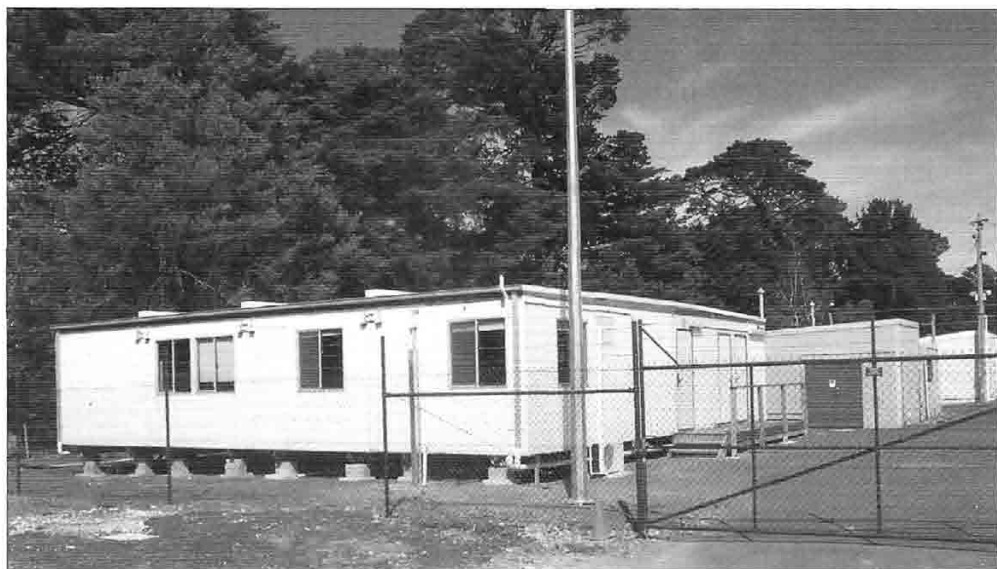
Originally the Red Cliffs soldiers trained in a packing shed on the west side of the railway. A depot was built in Fitzroy Street before the Second World War, but it was not used for training until the CMF was re-formed in 1948, when it was used by D Company, 8th/7th Battalion. By 1957 numbers at Red Cliffs had declined, and the company was re-tasked as the MMG platoon of Support Company. The depot was closed in 1962 and sold. The building was moved and became the Scout Hall.



Former Red Cliffs Drill Hall, 2008.
(Bill Burns)

MONEGETTA

In 2006 8/7 RVR opened a new depot in Monegetta, a growth corridor northwest of Melbourne. It is a portable building near the entrance to the Army Proving Ground, and has access to facilities including lecture rooms and a gymnasium.



Monegetta portable depot, 2007.
(Neil Leckie)

SHEPPARTON

In the early days of the militia in Shepparton, training was held in the public hall in Welsford Street (opposite the police station). In 1912 the cadets trained at the Shepparton Agricultural School. The drill hall was built in 1915-16. It was initially used by the 7th LH and senior cadets of the 60th, 58th and 57th Infantry. It was named Somme Barracks after the battles of the Somme, in which all country Victorian battalions fought. The drill hall has been used by infantry in Shepparton under the 60th Infantry, 58th Infantry (Essendon Rifles), 57th Infantry (Merri Regiment), the 58th Battalion and the 59th Battalion. Since the Second World War it has been used by the 59th Battalion (Hume Regiment), 2 RVR, 22 RVR and 8/7 RVR.

On 28 July 1989 the soldiers' club was named the Gordon Ayre, MM, Club after Sergeant Gordon Ayre, a stretcher bearer in the 58th/59th Battalion during the Second World War. It was opened by his widow Norma and Wally Johnson, the man being helped across a river by Ayre in Parer's famous photograph.



Somme Barracks Shepparton, 2006.
(Neil Leckie)

SWAN HILL

With the introduction of national service in 1951, a CMF depot was needed in Swan Hill. A Company, 38th Battalion was raised with two platoons there and one in Kerang. The Swan Hill members paraded in the scout hall at the showgrounds before moving to a hall at the racecourse. On 30 November 1956 the new training depot in Grey Street was opened. It was later named Messines Barracks. The depot was closed at the end of national service in 1959, until a platoon of A Company, 2 RVR was raised there in 1981.

Staff from the 3rd Division inspected the building to assess the repairs needed so that it could be used by the platoon. The depot had been vacant for some years, and there had been vandalism. Most windows were without glass. After waiting for repairs to commence, members who were qualified tradesmen decided to start the work themselves. Soon after they had completed the soldiers' club and some of the other main repairs, the long awaited repair program started.

The depot was completely refurbished in 1998, at a cost of \$250,000. This included installing a mezzanine floor inside the main hall and constructing a lecture room under it. A new shed, capable of holding seven M113 APCs and originally planned for the 8th/13th VMR's Cobram depot, was erected in Swan Hill after the Cobram depot closed.

WARRNAMBOOL

The first orderly room in Warrnambool was opened in 1868 in Kepler Street. Its walls remain, and are now a part of the TAFE College. In 1960 the CMF moved into a factory in Pertobe Road, the current depot. It was named Tel el Eisa Barracks in the 1990s, after the battle in North Africa involving members of the 2/23rd Battalion, many of whom came from Warrnambool and district.

In July 1991 the soldiers' club at the Warrnambool depot was named the J.W.H. Atkinson, MC, Club after Lieutenant John (Jack) Atkinson, a local soldier who served in North Africa as one of the Rats of Tobruk with the 2/23rd Battalion and in New Guinea, where he was awarded the MC for actions at Singau Plantation. He was born at Port Campbell, enlisted when living at Timboon and retired to Warrnambool.



Old Orderly Rooms, Kepler Street Warrnambool, 2007.
(Neil Leckie)



Tel el Eisa Barracks, Pertobe Road, Warrnambool, 2008.
(Neil Leckie)

Endnotes

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- 2 where2walk.com.au/38.0.
- 3 *The Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment*, p10.
- 4 Williams, *The Old Third*, p5.
- 5 Broemmer, Ranger Barracks summary.
- 6 Morton, *The Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment, The Ballarat Rangers, The Old 3rd, The 7th*, np, Span, *Castlemaine Orderly Room*.
- 7 Broemmer.
- 8 Williams, p5.
- 9 Broemmer.
- 10 *Ballarat Courier*, 10 August 1959.
- 11 Vazenry, *Military Forces of Victoria*, p17-4.
- 12 *Ranger* 2003, p6.
- 13 *Ballarat Courier*, 6 August 1973.
- 14 Brochure, Opening of Percy Lay Club, 23 July 1989.
- 15 Ward, *Victorian Land Forces 1853-1883*, p96.
- 16 Ward, p96.
- 17 Vazenry, p17-4.
- 18 Thomason, *Marching On*, p34.
- 19 *Castlemaine Orderly Room*, p173.
- 20 *Mount Alexander Mail*, 24 April 1872.
- 21 Span.
- 22 59th Infantry Battalion, *The History of the 59th Infantry Battalion*, p77.
- 23 Waters, *Military history of Echuca*.
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- 26 Span.
- 27 Interview, Barnes, 26 February 2008.
- 28 AWM Website, Honours and Awards.
- 29 Hamilton military history summary.
- 30 Mildura RSL history.

APPENDIX 6

Colours

*A moth-eaten rag on a worm eaten pole,
It does not look likely to stir a man's soul,
'Tis the deeds that were done 'neath the moth-eaten rag'
When the pole was a staff and the rag was a flag.*

Sir Edward Hamley's verse describes the importance of Colours as symbols of the morale and *esprit de corps* of a battalion or regiment. They bear the battle honours granted for heroic deeds to the unit that carries them. The Colours instil a feeling of pride in the battalion for its soldiers and ex-soldiers. The last time that Colours were carried into battle was on 26 January 1881 when the 58th Foot (later the 2nd Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment) fought at Laing's Nek during the 1st Boer War in South Africa.¹ Australian battalions follow the British tradition of carrying Colours, but these have only been used on ceremonial occasions.

The first Colour for a volunteer force in Australia, a white Standard, was presented by the governor, Sir Henry Barkly, in Melbourne on 3 July 1858 to Lieutenant Colonel Ross, CO of the Royal Victoria Yeomanry Cavalry (Volunteers), formerly the VVYC. The fate of this Colour is unknown.²

The first presentation of Colours to a country Victorian infantry unit took place at the Camp Reserve in Castlemaine on 22 November 1861. They were purchased by public subscription and presented to the 1st Castlemaine Victorian Volunteer Rifle Corps by Mrs. Bull, the wife of the CO. The Regimental Colour is laid up in Christ Church, Castlemaine. The fate of the Queen's Colour is unknown.³ Around this time the Imperial authorities decreed that rifle corps (as opposed to regiments of foot) would no longer carry Colours. Consequently, no further Colours were presented in Victoria until after federation.⁴

In September 1903 the Secretary of State for the Colonies informed the Australian government that 35 Banners would be allocated to each overseas contingent in South Africa. In November Hutton recommended that the first 20 Banners be allocated to the 18 light horse regiments, the RAA and the AAMC. These were presented on 14 November 1904, the birthday of King Edward VII.⁵ On 14 November 1905 Northcote, the governor general, presented a King's Banner to the Victorian Rangers, from which 273 of the establishment of 850 had served in South Africa. This Banner was laid up at Christ Church, Warrnambool, on 26 April 1926.

At the suggestion of the Australian government, the number of remaining Banners was increased to 23 and distributed to infantry battalions that had at least 5 percent of

their establishment fight in South Africa. The MO released on 6 April 1909 allocated five of these to Victoria:

- 1st Battalion, 5th AIR (Melbourne East);
- 1st Battalion, 6th AIR (Melbourne West);
- 1st Battalion, 7th AIR (Ballarat);
- 1st Battalion, 8th AIR (Castlemaine); and
- 2nd Battalion, 5th AIR (Bendigo).⁶

The Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian infantry Banners were presented in Melbourne by Lord Dudley, the governor general, on 13 December 1911.⁷

Munro Ferguson, as governor general, presented Morton, the CO of the 71st (City of Ballarat) Infantry, with the first Ballarat Colours at the City Oval there on 17 October 1914. The officers of the battalion paid for the King's Colour, while the Regimental Colour was a gift from the council of Ballarat and its citizens. The Colours were secured in the City Hall.

The 70th Infantry (Ballarat Regiment) expected to receive its Colours around the same time, but as the unit was mobilised and sent to Queenscliff after the declaration of war, this was postponed to Foundation Day (now Australia Day) in 1915. As Bolton had left the 70th Infantry to raise the 8th Battalion, Major Lazarus, the 2 IC, received the Colours, which were paid for by the citizens of Ballarat East. They were paraded on 9 June 1916 in Melbourne, when the 7th Battalion's Lieutenant William Dunstan received his VC from Munro Ferguson. Dunstan had served in the 70th Infantry before joining the 7th Battalion.⁸

As neither unit had received the 'Royal' title, their Regimental Colours were dark green rather than royal blue. Both sets of Colours and the King's Banner of the 1st Battalion, 7th AIR were laid up in Christ Church, Ballarat, by the 8th Battalion on 19 April 1925. In the late 1980s the two Regimental Colours, along with a King's Banner, were recovered when the church wanted them removed. The two Regimental Colours were restored over 1994-95 for the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum by Mrs Val d'Angri of Ballarat. The two King's Colours were removed from Christ Church at an unknown time, and may have been converted into King's Colours for the 8th or other battalions. Their fate is unknown.

When the AIF was raised in 1914, several communities requested permission to present their local battalion with Colours. These requests were not approved. However, on 7 December 1914 the minister for Defence approved the acceptance by the 14th Battalion of Colours from the citizens of St Kilda, in view of (unspecified) special circumstances. These were presented by Munro Ferguson on 17 December 1914.⁹ The only AIF units to receive Colours during the First World War were the 14th, 38th and 42nd Infantry Battalions and the 3rd Pioneer Battalion.¹⁰



William Dunstan being presented with his VC in Melbourne in 1916 with the 70th Battalion Colours. At the time Dunstan's sight was still recovering from the effects of being gassed and the man to his right rear was guiding him during the ceremony.
(Ballarat Ranger Military Museum)

Late in 1918 the British government invited the Australian government to advise the number of units it considered eligible for the award of a silk Union Flag which the King intended to present to non-Colour-bearing infantry battalions. On 5 May 1919 the Australian government recommended that the award be made to the 60 infantry, five pioneer and five MG battalions. The Army Council refused the award to the MG battalions, but extended it to the 13 light horse regiments that fought as infantry on Gallipoli. In all, 78 Colours were presented.

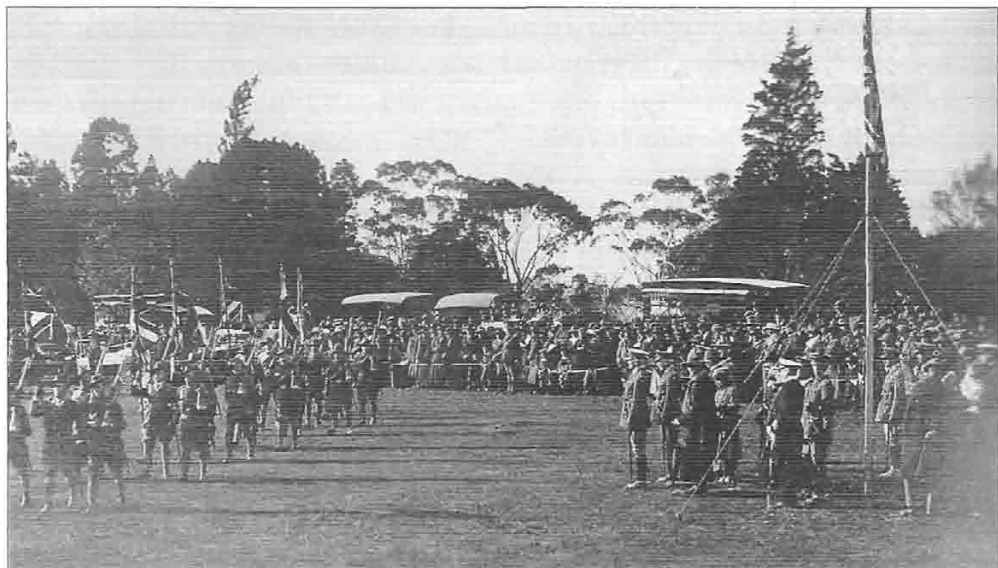
In Melbourne on 7 August 1920, Munro Ferguson presented these King's Colours to the Victorian CMF units associated with AIF units. Three light horse regiments, a pioneer battalion, and eighteen infantry battalions, were presented with their King's Colour. Included in the parade were the last COs of the 7th, 8th, 21st, 23rd, 38th, 39th, 59th and 60th Battalions AIF. They handed the Colour to the CMF CO, who in turn handed it to the governor

general. He then presented the Colour. The 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Brigades each provided a guard of honour of two officers and 60 senior cadets for the parade, which was commanded by the 3rd MD commandant, Brigadier General Brand, CB, CMG, DSO, a CO of the 8th Battalion during the War.¹¹

Most Regimental Colours were provided by public subscription. In 1927 approval was received for the Battle Honours of the AIF battalions to be awarded to the equivalent CMF battalions.¹² In 1928 the AG's report showed that the Victorian country 7th, 8th, 21st and 38th Battalions all held King's and Regimental Colours, while the 23rd Battalion had a Regimental Colour only.¹³

The 7th Battalion was raised in Castlemaine in the 1921 reorganisation. As with the 1861 Colour, the Regimental Colour was purchased by public subscription from the citizens of Castlemaine and Maryborough and the shire of Kyneton, and presented to the battalion. The 1st Battalion, 8th AIR South Africa Banner was laid

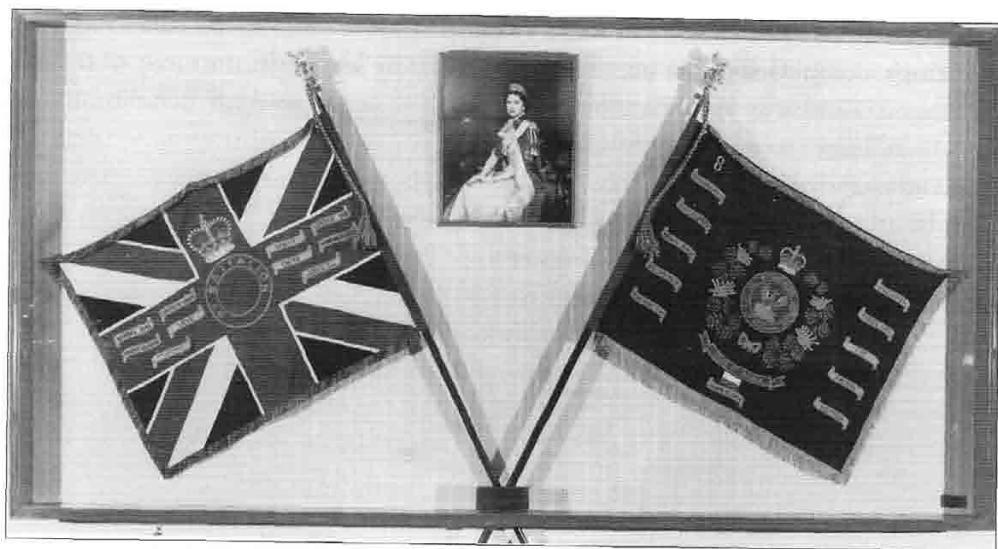
up in Christ Church, Castlemaine, on 11 August 1927. The 7th Battalion Colours, the King's Colour being that presented in 1920, were laid up in the same church on 11 August 1929 after the 7th Battalion was linked with the 38th Battalion as the 38th/7th Battalion from 31 July 1929.¹⁴



Presentation of King's Colours to militia battalions associated with
AIF Battalions, Melbourne, 1920.
(Ron Austin)

The 7th Battalion was unlinked from the 38th in 1936, and in February 1937 the soldiers agreed to donate half a day's pay each (4/-, 40 cents) toward a fund to purchase Colours, which would cost approximately £150 (\$300).¹⁵ Sir Carl Jess, the honorary colonel, presented the new Colours at the Recreation Ground in Mildura on 15 August 1937. A military tattoo was held following the presentation, attended by 3000 people. The King's Colour Ensign was Lieutenant H. Robinson and the Regimental Colour Ensign Lieutenant Alan Pitts.¹⁶

When the 7th Battalion departed on service during the Second World War, the Colours were placed for safe keeping in St Margaret's Church, Mildura. Following the formation of the 8th/7th Battalion in 1948, the 7th Battalion Colours were recovered in 1951. They were laid up at the Civic Centre in Mildura on 6 December 1969 by 1 IRC, RVR. On 23 June 2003 the Colours were relocated to the Carnegie Centre of the Historical Society in Mildura by members of C Company, 8/7 RVR. As well as the actual Colours being in Mildura, a replica set is located above the entry to the Mildura R&SL, and a miniature set is on display at the barracks.



8th Battalion Colours (presented to 8th/7th Battalion North Western
Victorian Regiment in 1958).
(Ted Lynes)



8/7 RVR Colours after Freedom of
Entry to Bendigo outside the former
Passchendaele Barracks, 2006.
(Alan Barry, Southern Cross, WA)

The 8th Battalion King's and Regimental Colours were laid up at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne on 22 February 1959 by Joynt, VC, formerly of the 8th Battalion AIF. The 8th/7th Battalion was presented with the 8th Battalion Queen's and Regimental Colours at the City Oval, Ballarat, on 10 August 1958, during the weekend of the battalion's centenary, by the Maryborough-born lieutenant governor, Sir Edmund Herring. These were laid up in the Ballarat Town Hall on 2 November 1969 by 2 RVR under Lieutenant Colonel Colbert, shortly after 2 RVR had received its own Colours.

The 2nd/21st Infantry received a King's Colour in 1920. The 21st Battalion (formed from the Victorian Rangers) was presented with Colours on 7 September 1924 at Warrnambool, and they were consecrated at the Seymour camp in April 1925, with the 7th, 8th and 38th Battalions participating. These Colours were not laid up when the 21st Battalion was linked with the 23rd Battalion in 1929, but were later laid up with the 23rd Battalion Colours.¹⁷

The 2nd/23rd Infantry received a King's Colour in 1920. The 21st and 23rd Infantry Battalion Colours were locked in the Sergeants Mess during World War 2.¹⁸ Both sets of Colours were laid up by the Geelong 2nd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment on 8 October 1950 in St Matthew's Church, East Geelong, with the CO Lieutenant Colonel Roy Smith, MC, present. On 12 May 1966 the 21st Battalion Colours were removed from St Matthew's and transferred to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. At the same time the 23rd Battalion Colours were removed and transferred to the AWM.¹⁹

A King's Banner was presented on 13 December 1911 to Bendigo's 2nd Battalion, 8th AIR for services in South Africa. On 10 October 1915 the 67th (Bendigo) Infantry was presented with Colours by the governor, Sir Arthur Stanley.²⁰ When the 67th (Bendigo) Infantry Colours were no longer required, they were laid up by Colonel Hurry in St Paul's Church, Bendigo, on 25 October 1925. On the same day the 1911 King's Banner was laid up in the presence of Newland, VC.²¹ By 2007 the Colours and Banner were deteriorating. They were removed from St Paul's and some preservation work undertaken. On 17 April 2007 they were blessed at their resting place under glass in the Bendigo R&SL Museum.²²

In Bendigo on 14 June 1916, Munro Ferguson presented the 38th Battalion with its King's and Regimental Colours on behalf of the citizens of Bendigo. The King's Colour was received by Lieutenant Francis Fairweather, formerly of the 54th (Merri) Infantry. The Regimental Colour was received by Lieutenant James Moore.²³ The battalion departed overseas soon after. Prior to sailing the Colours were placed in All Saints Cathedral, Bendigo, for safe keeping.

On 7 August 1920 the 2nd/38th Infantry was presented with a King's Colour by Munro Ferguson. Its location is unknown. In 1921 the 38th Battalion Colours held in All Saints Cathedral were received back by the CO, Lieutenant Colonel Blezard.

On 27 April 1941, before the battalion left Bendigo, the Colours were returned to All Saints Cathedral. After the 38th Battalion was formed in 1948, they were recovered on 15 May 1949.²⁴ These Colours were held in trust by the 6th Company RAASC from 1960 until they were laid up in All Saints Cathedral by 2 RVR, commanded by Colbert, on 17 November 1968.²⁵



38th Battalion Colours outside Passchendaele Barracks on the
Centenary of the Bendigo Battalion, 1958.
(Bendigo R&SL Museum)

In 1982 a 38th Infantry Battalion Queen's Colour was located in Melbourne. It was assumed that this was manufactured as a replacement for a King's Colour. Bendigo no longer had an infantry unit and Shepparton had become the HQ for the 59th Battalion, so Swan Hill, which once had a 38th Battalion depot, was the logical location for it.²⁶ The Colour was handed to 2 RVR for safe keeping, and placed in the then sergeants mess at Messines Barracks, Swan Hill, where it remains.

On 25 February 1934 a crowd of 6000 witnessed the 6th Brigade, which then comprised the 8th (Ballarat), 23rd/21st (Geelong) and 38th/7th (Bendigo) Battalions, Troop their Colours at Kardinia Park in Geelong. The salute was taken by the 4th Division GOC, Brigadier McColl, the 6th Brigade commander, Colonel Neil Freeman, DSO, and the mayor of Geelong, Councillor Edward McDonald.²⁷ The 38th/7th Battalion again trooped the Colours on the Upper Reserve (now Queen Elizabeth Oval) in Bendigo on 28 October. The salute was taken by Jess, the honorary colonel. On 17 November 1935 the battalion once again trooped the Colours at the Upper Reserve, the salute again being taken by Jess.

On 15 May 1937 Lieutenant Colonel Godfrey and the 23rd/21st Battalion Trooped the Colours at Kardinia Park, with the parade being reviewed by Freeman. The trooping was conducted again on 30 October 1938, the reviewing officer being the 4th Division GOC, Major General Whitham.²⁸

The 39th Battalion was raised for service in the First World War on 21 February 1916 at the Ballarat Showgrounds. The 2nd/39th Infantry received a King's Colour in 1920. The Second World War battalion, based on the 39th Battalion (Hawthorn-Kew Regiment), was raised at Darley Camp, north of Bacchus Marsh, in November 1941.

As the original battalion was raised in Ballarat, its Colours were laid up in Christ Church, Ballarat, on 15 June 1952 by the 8th/7th Battalion, commanded by Stuart McDonald.²⁹ In later years, it was felt that as more of the 39th Battalion's members had come from Melbourne, the Colours should be moved there. They were transferred from Ballarat on 30 May 1965 and laid up in the Shrine of Remembrance on 5 September.³⁰

The 59th Battalion received a King's Banner from King George V in France in January 1919. This was laid up in the then sergeants mess at Somme Barracks, Shepparton, on 12 August 1939.³¹ It is now located in the soldiers club.

On 9 April 1939 the 59th Battalion AIF Association handed a set of Colours to the CMF 59th Battalion. It is probable that the King's Colour was that presented in 1920 and the Regimental Colour was provided by public subscription. Before the battalion deployed to New Guinea, the Colours were placed in Holy Trinity Cathedral, Wangaratta. On 28 June 1953 the 59th Battalion recovered them. They were then transferred to St Augustine's, Shepparton, where the recovery ceremony continued. The battalion provided the guard of honour and the Colour party.³² These

Colours were laid up at the Shrine of Remembrance by Lieutenant General Geoffrey Edgar, CBE, on 10 April 1960.

The 59th Battalion received new Colours from Edgar on 5 November 1958. These were laid up in the Shepparton Civic Centre on 26 October 1969, Colbert handing them to the mayor, Councillor John Coates.³³

Along with 5 RVR and 6 RVR, 2 RVR received new Colours at the Melbourne Showgrounds on 19 October 1969. C Company provided one full guard, a half guard and a few members for a third guard.³⁴ The Colours were presented by the governor, Major General Sir Rohan Delacombe, KCMG, KBE, CB, DSO, KStJ.³⁵ Shortly after, the old 8th Battalion Colours were laid up in the town hall at Ballarat. When the battalion title changed to 8/7 RVR on 14 November 1987, the Colours were modified to display those numbers.



The Old Colours are marched off after the presentation of new Colours on the Battalion's 100th Birthday at the City Oval on 10 August 1958.

(8/7 RVR depot, Ballarat)

In 1966 22 RVR was raised as a special conditions battalion to give country Victorian men a CMF option to national service. The battalion was presented with its Colours by the governor general, Sir Paul Hasluck, at Puckapunyal on 27 February 1972. From 1973 C Company 2 RVR was first attached, then transferred, to 22 RVR, while many members of 22 RVR came from 2 RVR. When 22 RVR disbanded on 30 June 1975, its Colours were held by 2 RVR until they were transferred to the HQ 3rd Division officers mess in 1983.³⁶ The 22 RVR Colours are the only Victorian infantry Colours to have an Australian flag as the Queen's Colour. They were laid up at the Shrine of Remembrance on ANZAC Day 1988.

In March 1977, with the Colours of all Army units, the 2 RVR Colours were paraded on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra for the Silver Jubilee of the Queen's Coronation. The Colour ensigns were Lieutenants Close and Ball, while the senior escort was Sergeant Denis Scott. Unfortunately, the Colours got wet during training for this activity, and some damage occurred. This still shows, particularly on the Queen's Colour.³⁷

On the centenary of the Army in March 2001, every current Colour and Guidon in the Australian Army was paraded in Canberra. The 8/7 RVR Colour party consisted of Lieutenants Stapleton and Adrian Whitehead, the RSM, WO 1 Croft and Sergeants Mirko Brandich and Steven Cox.³⁸

Over the period 29 and 31 July 2006, the battalion's Colours were paraded at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, on the 90th Anniversary of the formation of the 2nd Division. The Colour ensigns were Lieutenants Doherty and Warfe. The escorts were the RSM, WO 1 Sean O'Connor and Sergeants Baulch and David McHenry.

Endnotes

- 1 A Guide to Customs of the Army, Australian Army, undated.
- 2 Festberg, *The Lineage of the Australian Army*, p7.
- 3 Festberg, p7, Whitten, *Save the Colours*, p3, Ward, *Victorian Land Forces 1853-1883*, p98.
- 4 Festberg, p7.
- 5 Festberg, p15.
- 6 Festberg, p22.
- 7 Festberg, p25.
- 8 Whitten, p6.
- 9 Festberg, p43.
- 10 Festberg, p43.
- 11 Military Forces of the Commonwealth, 3rd Military District, District Orders, Friday 23 July 1920, Festberg, p47.
- 12 Kuring, *Redcoats to Cams*, p93.
- 13 Festberg, p38.
- 14 Whitten, p5 and Pedder, *The 7th Battalion*, p1.
- 15 Mildura Depot, Property Register, no file reference.

- 16 Parade brochure, 15 August 1937.
- 17 Festberg, p22, Whitten, p9.
- 18 Interview, Barnes, 22 Apr 2008.
- 19 *Annex F to Chapter 3, Army Ceremonial Manual.*
- 20 *Army Ceremonial Manual.*
- 21 Thomason, *Marching On*, p37.
- 22 Bendigo R&SL brochure.
- 23 Fairey, *The 38th Battalion*, p2.
- 24 *38th Battalion Peacetime History*, p6.
- 25 3rd Division file 274/S51/3, 8 November 1968, Whitten, p16, and Parade brochure 17 November 1968.
- 26 Whitten, p17.
- 27 *Geelong Advertiser*, 26 February 1934.
- 28 *Geelong Advertiser* cuttings, Interview, Barnes, 23 April 2008.
- 29 *Ballarat Courier*, 16 June 1952.
- 30 *Ballarat Courier*, 31 May 1965, Whitten, p16.
- 31 *Army Ceremonial Manual, Volume 2, Annex 3*, p3F-9.
- 32 *History of the 59th Battalion*, p17.
- 33 3rd Division file R274-3-20.
- 34 Interview, Earl, 22 October 2007.
- 35 Parade Brochure 19 October 1969.
- 36 Whitten, p17.
- 37 Interview, Ball, 11 August 2007.
- 38 *Army*, 21 February 2008, p18.

APPENDIX 7

Battle Honours

The first Battle Honour awarded to Victorian units was for South Africa 1899-1902. The country units awarded the honour were:

Victorian Rangers;
1st Battalion, 7th AIR (Ballarat);
1st Battalion, 8th AIR (Castlemaine); and
2nd Battalion, 8th AIR (Bendigo).

The Victorian Rangers was presented its King's Banner in 1905, while the AIR battalions received theirs in 1911. At that time none had a Regimental Colour, therefore there was nowhere for the Battle Honour to be displayed. In 1914 the 71st Infantry received its King's and Regimental Colours. The South Africa Battle Honour was emblazoned on the Regimental Colour, as it was for the 70th Infantry's Regimental Colour presented in 1915. Other units followed.

After the First World War, CMF battalions were permitted to display on their Regimental Colour a selection of ten Battle Honours awarded to their AIF counterpart. The Battle Honours awarded to country Victorian battalions were:

Honour	Units Awarded
Somme 1916-18:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;
Pozières:	7, 8, 21 and 23;
Bapaume 1917:	21 and 23;
Bullecourt:	7, 8, 21, 23, 59 and 60;
Messines 1917:	38 and 39;
Ypres 1917:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;
Menin Road:	7, 8, 21, 23, 59 and 60;
Polygon Wood:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;
Broodseinde:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38 and 39;
Poelcappelle:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;
Passchendaele:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;
Ancre 1918:	38 and 39;
Avre:	59 and 60;
Villers-Brettonneux:	59 and 60;
Lys:	7 and 8;
Hazebrouck:	7 and 8;
Amiens:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;
Passchendaele:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;

COUNTRY VICTORIA'S OWN

Albert 1918:	8, 21, 23, 39, 59 and 60;
Albert 1918 (Chuignes):	7;
Mont St Quentin:	21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;
Hindenburg Line:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;
Epéhy:	7 and 8;
Hamel:	21 and 23;
Beaurevoir:	21 and 23;
St Quentin Canal:	38, 39 and 59;
France and Flanders 1916-18:	7, 8, 21, 23, 38, 39, 59 and 60;
Helles:	7 and 8;
Krithia:	7 and 8;
ANZAC:	7 and 8;
Landing at ANZAC:	7 and 8;
Defence of ANZAC:	7 and 8;
Suvla:	7 and 8;
Sari Bair – Lone Pine:	7;
Sari Bair:	8;
Gallipoli 1915:	7, 8, 21 and 23;
Suez Canal:	7 and 8; and
Egypt 1915-16:	7, 8, 21, 23, 59 and 60.

It would have been impossible to place all of the Battle Honours earned by a battalion on a single Regimental Colour. When the RVR was raised in 1960, a selection of First World War Battle Honours was made for the Regimental Colour, along with South Africa 1899-1902. These were:

Pozières;
Ypres 1917;
Amiens;
Mont St Quentin;
Somme 1916-18;
Bullecourt;
Polygon Wood;
Albert 1918;
Hindenburg Line; and
Landing at ANZAC.

After the Second World War, the Battle Honours awarded to country Victorian battalions were:

North Africa 1940-42:	2/7 and 2/8;
Bardia:	2/7 and 2/8;
Capture of Tobruk:	2/7 and 2/8;

APPENDICES

Derna:	2/8;
Greece 1941:	2/7 and 2/8;
Mount Olympus:	2/8;
Vevi:	2/8;
Middle East 1941:	2/7 and 2/8;
Crete:	2/7 and 2/8;
Canea:	2/7 and 2/8;
42nd Street:	2/7 and 2/8;
Withdrawal to Sphakia:	2/7 and 2/8;
South West Pacific 1942-45:	2/7, 2/8, 7, 8 and 58/59;
Wau:	2/7;
Mubo I:	2/7;
Bobdubi II:	2/7 and 58/59;
Komiatum:	2/7 and 58/59;
Liberation of New Guinea:	2/7, 2/8, 7, 8 and 58/59;
Finisterres:	58/59;
Barum:	58/59;
Abau-Malin:	2/8;
Maprik:	2/7;
Mount Shiburangu-Mount Tazaki:	2/8;
Yamil-Ulupu:	2/7;
Kaboibus-Kiarivu:	2/7;
Hongori River:	58/59;
Egans Ridge-Hongori Ford:	58/59;
Hari River:	58/59;
Ogorata River:	58/59;
Mobiai River:	58/59; and
Mivo River:	58/59.

Again it would have been impossible to place all Battle Honours on a single Colour. When the RVR was raised a selection of Second World War Battle Honours was made for the Queen's Colour. These were:

Bardia 1941;
 Capture of Tobruk;
 El Alamein;
 Greece 1941;
 South West Pacific 1942-1945;
 Bobdubi II;
 Lae-Nadzab;
 Finisterres;
 Hari River; and
 Borneo.

The 21 Battle Honours on the Colours of 5/6 RVR and 8/7 RVR are a selection of Battle Honours awarded to all Victorian Battalions, and do not indicate that any individual battalion actually participated in all of those battles.¹

Endnote

1 *RVR Standing Orders*, Vazenry, *History of the RVR*, Annex A.

APPENDIX 8

Freedom of Entry to Victorian Country Cities

The military tradition of Freedom of Entry to a city or shire stems from a custom observed by British regiments marching through the streets of London. The fathers of the City of London claimed the right to forbid bodies of the armed forces from marching through the city with bayonets fixed, Colours flying and music playing, basing this claim on 'ancient privileges' which appear to have originated shortly after Charles II became King in 1660.

Many Australian cities and shires have adopted the custom. The privilege is usually extended to a unit that has a close association with the city or shire.¹ Granting Freedom of Entry allows a military unit to march through the streets with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and Colours flying. Freedom of Entry to six cities in Victoria has been granted to 8/7 RVR (including when it was known as 2 RVR). Two of the predecessor battalions of 8/7 RVR were also granted this privilege.

Shepparton (59th Battalion)

After a visit to Britain, where he learned about the ceremony of Freedom of Entry to London, the mayor of Shepparton, Councillor Lloyd Trevaskis, JP, suggested that the council offer Freedom of Entry to the local CMF infantry battalion. In an Australian first, on 23 March 1958 the 59th Battalion (Hume Regiment) became the first infantry battalion in Australia to be granted Freedom of Entry to a city when it was granted Freedom of Entry to Shepparton.² The CO was then Lieutenant Colonel Trainor and the RSM WO 1 Bolitho. A large crowd, including many from Melbourne, gathered for the parade. At the time the battalion had detachments in Shepparton, Cobram, Echuca, Deniliquin, Euroa and the surrounding districts, and a company in the Melbourne suburb of Camberwell.

The presentation was made at Deakin Reserve, Shepparton. The battalion then marched past the dais where the salute was taken by Councillor Trevaskis, the GOC Southern Command, Lieutenant General Edgar and the honorary colonel of the Hume Regiment and former CO of the 59th Battalion, Colonel Hill. The battalion marched off the reserve and was challenged by a Police superintendent mounted on a horse, before entering the streets of Shepparton. After the challenge the battalion marched to Somme Barracks.³



Lieutenant General Hector Edgar CBE (GOC Southern Command), the Honorary Colonel of the Hume Regiment Colonel Ernest Hill, MM, ED and the Mayor of the City of Shepparton, Counciller LLOYD Trevaskis with the Freedom of Entry to the City of Shepparton scroll.
(8/7 RVR depot, Shepparton)

Bendigo (38th Battalion)

On 24 August 1958, the centenary of the formation of the BRR, the 38th Battalion (Northern Victorian Regiment) became the second Australian battalion to receive the Freedom of Entry to an Australian city, when it was granted Freedom of Entry to Bendigo. The CO was Lieutenant Colonel Scholes. At the time the battalion had detachments at Bendigo, Swan Hill, Kerang and Kyneton. The presentation was made at Bendigo.⁴ As had occurred at the Shepparton parade, the unit band provided music, dress was 'Battle Dress Ceremonial', and Lee-Enfield .303 rifles were carried.

Maryborough (2 RVR)

On 30 August 1980, as part of the Golden Wattle Festival, 2 RVR was granted Freedom of Entry to Maryborough. The CO was Lieutenant Colonel Lynes, and the ARes RSM WO 1 Brian Driscoll. About 150 members participated in the ceremony. At the time the battalion had detachments at Ballarat, Bacchus Marsh, Maryborough, Mildura, Robinvale, Shepparton, Echuca, Warrnambool and Portland.

The presentation was made at Princes Park, Maryborough, after which the battalion marched into Park Road and was challenged near Nightingale Street. After the challenge the battalion marched past the town hall, where the salute was taken by the mayor, Councillor Brian O'Halloran, and the honorary colonel of the RVR, Brigadier Grant. Other guests were Mr James Short, MHR, (representing the minister for Defence), Brigadier James Kendall, commanding the 3rd MD, and Brigadier Neale Bavington, ED, commanding the 3rd Field Force Group.

After the parade, an open day was held at the 6 Platoon depot in Goldsmith Street, and the battalion Beat the Retreat outside the town hall.⁵ Weapons having changed since Shepparton and Bendigo granted their Freedoms of Entry, the L1A1 SLR was carried on this parade. The battalion band provided music.



With the CO, Lieutenant Colonel Lynes, the Mayor of Maryborough, Councillor Brian O'Halloran, inspects the 2 RVR Guards during the Presentation of the Freedom of Entry to the City of Maryborough.

(Ted Lynes)

Ballarat (2 RVR)

To celebrate 125 years of citizen soldiering in Ballarat, 2 RVR was granted Freedom of Entry to Ballarat on 26 November 1983. The CO was Lieutenant Colonel James Mack, ED, and the RSM WO 1 Ken Scaysbrook. At the time the battalion had detachments at Ballarat, Bacchus Marsh, Maryborough, Mildura, Robinvale, Shepparton, Echuca, Swan Hill, Deniliquin, Numurkah, Warrnambool, Hamilton and Portland.

The presentation was made at the St Patrick's College Oval in Ballarat. Mack received the scroll from the mayor, Councillor Foo, after which the battalion marched into the Russell Street Depot. From there it was bussed to Lyons Street South, then marched down Sturt Street and was challenged near Armstrong Street. After the challenge the battalion marched past the town hall, where the salute was taken by Councillor Foo and Grant. Other guests were Mr Gordon Scholes, MHR (minister for Defence), Mr Mildren, MHR (Ballarat), Brigadier Geoffrey Cohen, commanding the 3rd MD, and Major General Cooke, commanding the 3rd Field Force Group.⁶ The battalion band provided music.



The Battalion marches past the Town Hall in Sturt Street, Ballarat after being granted the Freedom of Entry to the City, 1983.

(Ted Lynes)

The battalion's birthday celebrations in 1992 included exercising the Freedom of Entry to Ballarat on 8 August. After a ceremony at Broodseinde Barracks, the B Company depot, the battalion marched down Sturt Street. The parade included the mascot, Private Lazer Ranger. As the parade neared the Town Hall it was challenged by the chief superintendent of Police. The CO claimed the right to march and the mayor took the salute. The parade was followed by a unit ball.

The right of Freedom of Entry to Ballarat was again exercised as part of the battalion's 140th birthday on 6 August 1998, under Lieutenant Colonel Barnes and WO 1 Ashley. The challenge was given on behalf of the council by the Police superintendent, Lindsay Florence, while the salute was taken by the mayor, Councillor Judy Verlin. The battalion held a ball at Ranger Barracks that evening, with over 200 in attendance. A 4th Brigade capability display was held at Ranger Barracks the next day. Dress for the parade was DPCU and, with the Colours, a complete range of weapons and equipment, such as chain saws, paving breakers and mortars was carried. The Pipes and Drums of 5/6 RVR provided music.⁷

During the farewell parade from Ranger Barracks, 8/7 RVR exercised its right of Freedom of Entry to Ballarat on the evening of 24 July 2001. The battalion, with the Colours and now wearing DPCU and carrying the Austeyr rifle, marched from Ranger Barracks along Curtis Street and into Peel Street before being bussed to Russell Street. It then marched through the Sturt Street gates to the temporary HQ in Broodseinde Barracks.⁸

A further exercise of the right of Freedom of Entry was conducted on 18 October 2003, when the battalion marched through the Arch of Victory and along Sturt Street and the Ring Road into the new Ranger Barracks. The CO was Lieutenant Colonel Haughton and the RSM WO 1 Glover. The band of the 2nd/10th Field Regiment provided music.⁹

Swan Hill (8/7 RVR)

On 17 September 1988 8/7 RVR was granted Freedom of Entry to Swan Hill. The CO was Lieutenant Colonel Ball and the RSM WO 1 Payne. At the time the battalion had detachments at Ballarat, Bacchus Marsh, Maryborough, Shepparton, Echuca, Mildura, Swan Hill, Warrnambool, Hamilton and Portland. The presentation was made in Swan Hill Showgrounds, after which the battalion marched to the challenge point near the water tower in McCallum Street. After the challenge the battalion marched past the dais outside the post office, where the salute was taken by the deputy mayor, Councillor Alf Heslop, and Cooke, the honorary colonel of the RVR. Guests included Brigadier Perry, commanding the 4th Brigade. The battalion then marched to the Showgrounds.¹⁰

The right of entry to Swan Hill was also exercised on 7 August 1999 under Lieutenant Colonel Paterson and WO 1 Ashley. The battalion marched from the Swan Hill depot into the city centre before being challenged by the Police superintendent. The parade was followed by a 4th Brigade capability display in Riverside Park on the banks of the Murray River, including improvised crossings of the river.¹¹

Echuca (8/7 RVR)

On 21 October 1989 Freedom of Entry to Echuca was granted to 8/7 RVR as part of the annual Rich River Festival. The presentation was made in Victoria Park Oval in Echuca North, after which the battalion marched to Hare Street, where it was challenged outside St Mary's Catholic Church. There had been no change to the battalion's locations, CO or RSM since Swan Hill in 1988.

After the challenge the battalion marched past the dais near the old State Bank, where the salute was taken by the mayor, Councillor Janina Gawler, and Cooke. Other guests included Major General Nunn, the 3rd Division GOC, and Colonel McAloney, commanding the 4th Brigade. The battalion then marched back to Victoria Park via Pakenham and High Streets.¹² As with the Swan Hill presentation, the Echuca parade was in 'Polyester Ceremonial' uniform. The Pipes and Drums of 5/6 RVR provided music for the ceremonies at Swan Hill and Echuca.

Hamilton (8/7 RVR)

On 27 October 1990 Hamilton granted 8/7 RVR Freedom of Entry. The depot locations, CO and RSM were unchanged. The presentation was made on Melville Oval, then the battalion marched to the challenge point outside the town hall. After the challenge it marched past the dais outside the civic centre, where the salute was taken by the mayor, Councillor Tom Trimnell, JP, and Cooke. Guests included Major General Warren Glenny, RFD, ED, the 3rd Division GOC, Brigadier Phillip Davies, AM, commanding the 3rd MD, McAloney, Mr David Hawker, MHR (Wannon) and Kenna, VC. The mayor presented the scroll, which was produced by Mrs Jill Millard of Macarthur. The battalion then marched back to Melville Oval.¹³ The battalion band provided music.

As a part of the battalion's 142nd birthday celebrations the Freedom of Entry to Hamilton was exercised on 5 August 2000 under Lieutenant Colonel Paterson and WO 1 Tyrrell. The salute was taken by the mayor, Councillor Howard Templeton, and Brigadier Ball, commanding the 4th Brigade. The parade was followed by a capability display. The Pipes and Drums of 5/6 RVR provided music.¹⁴ As with the 1999 march in Swan Hill, dress was DPCU and webbing, and battalion weapons, including mortars, were carried. A static display was provided after the parade, with the support of other 4th Brigade units.

Bendigo (8/7 RVR)

On 11 November 2006, Remembrance Day, 8/7 RVR was granted Freedom of Entry to Greater Bendigo. The CO was Lieutenant Colonel Marsh and the RSM was WO 2 Shane Armstrong. At the time the battalion had depots in Ballarat, Geelong, Laverton, Warrnambool, Mildura, Swan Hill, Shepparton and Bendigo.

The presentation was made outside the Shamrock Hotel in Williamson Street, Bendigo, after which the battalion marched to the challenge point outside the library. After the challenge the battalion marched past the dais outside the town hall, where Councillor David Jones and the honorary colonel of the RVR, Colonel Riley, took the salute. Guests included Brigadier Steven Aird, commanding the 4th Brigade. The battalion then participated in the Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph outside the R&SL Museum.¹⁵ Dress was the same as for the march into Ranger Barracks in 2003, 'Polyester Ceremonial' with Austeyr rifles. The Pipes and Drums of 5/6 RVR provided music.

Endnotes

- 1 *Customs and Traditions 1996*, paras 1315-1317, p13-3.
- 2 Interview, Earl, 22 October 2007.
- 3 Parade Brochure 23 March 1958, Earl.
- 4 In 1942 a cartographic company was raised and based in Bendigo at *Fortuna Villa*, once the home of the gold mine magnate, George Lansell, whose son George served with the 38th Battalion AIF and commanded the 38th Battalion in 1927-28. The survey unit remained there until the disbandment of the Survey Corps in 1996, becoming the AHQ Survey Regiment in 1955 and the Army Survey Regiment in 1973. Following disbandment, it became the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation as a civilian establishment (<http://rasurvey.org/>). In 1970 the AHQ Survey Regiment was granted Freedom of Entry to Bendigo. (Photographs and AWM website).
- 5 *Ballarat Courier*, undated, Parade Brochure 30 August 1980, 2 RVR R379-1-1, 19 August 1980.
- 6 Parade Brochure 26 November 1983, 2 RVR R379-1-1, 9 November 1983.
- 7 *Ranger* 1998.
- 8 *Ranger* 2001.
- 9 *Ranger* 2003.
- 10 Parade Brochure 17 September 1988, 8/7 RVR Brochure R379-1-3, 31 August 1988.
- 11 *Ranger* 1999.
- 12 Photographs, Parade Brochure 21 October 1989, Rich River Festival Brochure 1989.
- 13 Parade Brochure 27 October 1990, 8/7 RVR Instruction R379-1-5, 17 July 1990.
- 14 *Ranger* 2000.
- 15 8/7 RVR Instruction R379-1-2, 31 October 2006.

APPENDIX 9

Mottos, Marches, Mascots and Badges

MOTTOS

The first recorded motto of a country Victorian infantry unit was that of the 1st Castlemaine Company, Victoria Volunteer Rifle Corps, which on its 1862 Colour has the motto *Fidus et Audax*.

The AIRs were raised in 1903 from previous colonial battalions. The mottos for the country battalions, as listed in the RVR Standing Orders, are:

1st Battalion, 7th AIR (Ballarat): *Celer et Audax*;
1st Battalion, 8th AIR (Castlemaine): *Cede Nullis*;
2nd Battalion, 8th AIR (Bendigo): *Cede Nullis*;
Victorian Rangers: *Pro Deo et Patria*; and
Victorian Rifles (raised 1906): *Mori Quam Foedari*.

Following the First World War, the mottos were approved or reconfirmed from time to time.

7th Battalion: The territorial title Mount Alexander Regiment and motto *Cede Nullis* (*Yield to None*) were approved under AAO 132/1927. With the move to Mildura the territorial title North West Murray Borderers and motto *Cede Nullis* were approved under AAO 175/1937.

8th Battalion: The territorial title City of Ballarat Regiment and motto *Celer et Audax* (*Swift and Bold*) were approved under AAO 132/1927 and were reconfirmed under AAO 175/1937. *Celer et Audax* was the motto of the British 60th Regiment, in which Major Wallace, the first adjutant, and in reality the first CO of the Rangers, is believed to have served. The 8th/7th Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment) maintained the 8th Battalion motto.

21st Battalion: The territorial title Victorian Rangers and motto *Pro Deo et Patria* (*For God and Country*) were approved under AAO 132/1927 and reconfirmed under AAO 175/1937.

23rd Battalion: The territorial title City of Geelong Regiment and motto *Nulli Secundus* (*Second to None*) were approved under AAO 132/1927 and reconfirmed under AAO 175/1937.

38th Battalion: The territorial title Bendigo Regiment and motto *Honorem Custodite* (*Guard your Honour*) were approved under AAO 132/1927 and reconfirmed under AAO 175/1937.

59th Battalion: The territorial title Coburg-Brunswick Regiment and motto *Fidelis et Audax* (*Faithfull and Bold*) were approved under AAO 132/1927 and reconfirmed under AAO 175/1937. The territorial title Hume Regiment was approved under AAO 237/1939.

8th/7th Battalion RVR: Maintains the two mottos *Celer et Audax* (*Swift and Bold*) and *Cede Nullis* (*Yield to None*).

1st Independent Rifle Company, RVR: No motto is recorded.

REGIMENTAL MARCHES

The song 'I'm Ninety-five' was popular with the 1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade, when it was serving in Malta in 1842. It was adapted into a Regimental March in 1852. There have been several versions of the words, but one version is:

*I'm ninety-five, and I'm ninety-five,
And to keep single I'll contrive,
I'll not get married, no not I,
To have five brats to squall and cry,
A fortune teller told me so, but I'll resist her tale of woe.
I'm ninety-five and I'm ninety-five,
And to keep single I'll contrive,
I'll not be bound to be for life
Some man's mere toy and wedded wife,
To bake and brew, to screw and save,
And to be my husband's humble slave.
I'm ninety-five and I'm ninety-five,
And to keep single I'll contrive,
And I will let the fellows see
That none can make a fool of me,
To darn their socks and mend their clothes,
To suit their whims and take their blows.¹*

Other versions include the words:

*Its needles and pins, its needles and pins,
And when a man marries the trouble begins.
Higgledy, piggledy, needles and pins,
Matrimony – and sorrow begins;
A maid I'll live and a maid I'll die.
For love to me is all my eye,
I'm ninety-five and I'm ninety-five,
And to keep single I'll contrive,
I'll contrive.²*

In a speech to the officers of the 8th Battalion in 1936, the then honorary colonel, Major General Williams, spoke of the regimental quick march of Ballarat battalions 'The Old Third' and 'The New Seventh' (3rd Battalion, Infantry Brigade and 7th AIR). He questioned whether 'any member of the regiment ever heard the old London song right through'.

The march 'I'm Ninety-five' was approved under AAO 91/1953 for the 8th/7th Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment). Under the same order the 38th Battalion (Bendigo Regiment) received approval for 'Sussex by the Sea' and the 59th Battalion (Hume Regiment) for 'Marine Artillery'. However, the preferred march for the 59th was 'Moray Firth'. The Australian Army Ceremonial Manual 1967 approved 'I'm Ninety Five' for 2 RVR and 'Men of Harlech' for 1 IRC, RVR. This has led to the regimental march of 8/7 RVR being 'I'm Ninety-five'.

MASCOTS

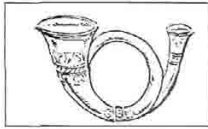
In March 1991 moves were made for 8/7 RVR to have an official mascot. It was suggested that the mascot selected should display the attributes of the fighting soldier: speed, strength, tenacity, stamina, stealth, cunning and intelligence.

The American Mountain Lion, or Puma (*Felix Concolor*), was an ideal choice, as it has those attributes, yet is friendly enough to be handled in public. A further connection for 8/7 RVR was that a Puma or Pumas are reputedly at large in the Grampians area. It is believed that the Puma was brought to Ballarat by the USAAF during the Second World War and released into the wild when the Americans returned home.

A suitable Puma was found at the mobile zoo in Maryborough, where there was an 8/7 RVR depot at the time. His owner, Geoff Woess, was happy for him to be used as the battalion mascot. Approval was received on 1 August 1991 for VX87 Private Lazer Ranger, a six-year-old, one-metre tall (shoulder height), 50-kilogram, champagne grey, hazel eyed Puma, with a liking for whole chickens, to become the 8/7 RVR mascot. Lazer paraded with 8/7 RVR on ANZAC Day 1991, much to the delight of the watching crowd. He paraded with the battalion four or five times during the 1990s. During a survey on Army mascots in 2001, Mr Woess advised that Lazer had died in 1997.³

BADGES

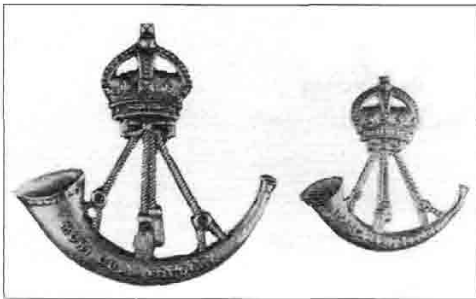
Shown is a selection of badges used by some of the units in the 150 years of 8/7 RVR and its predecessors.



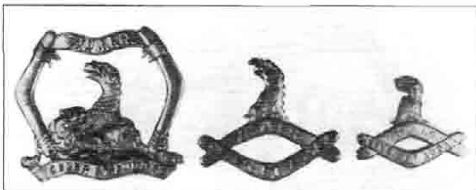
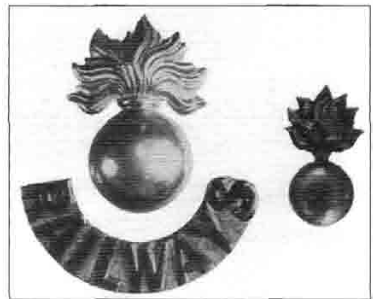
Shoulder belt badge and Busby badge for
Ballarat Volunteer Rangers.
(*Australian Military Uniforms*⁴)



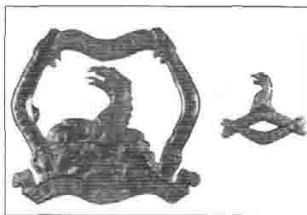
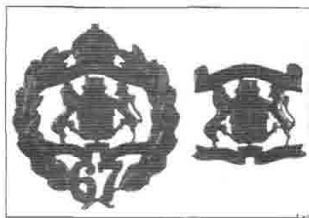
Victorian Rangers Infantry badge.
(*Australian Army Badges*⁵)



Victorian Rifles and Victorian Railways Infantry badges.
(*Australian Army Badges*)



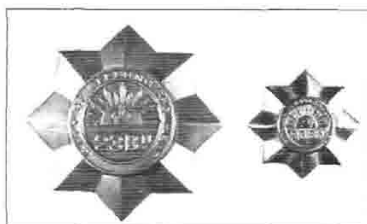
7th and 8th Australian Infantry Regiment badges.
(*Australian Army Badges*)



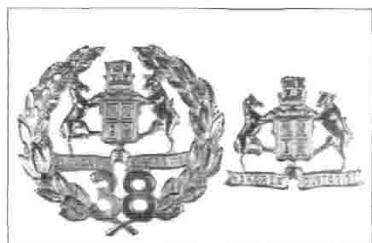
67th (Bendigo), 70th (Ballarat Regiment) and 73rd (Victorian Rangers) Infantry.
(*Australian Army Badges*)



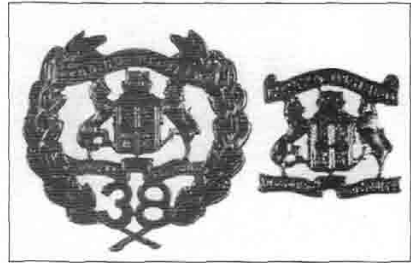
7th Infantry Battalion (North West Murray Borderers) and 8th Battalion
(City of Ballarat Regiment) badges.
(*Australian Army Badges*)



21st Battalion (used the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces general service rising sun badge) and 23rd Infantry Battalion (City of Geelong) and also 23rd/21st Battalion badge.
(*Australian Army Badges*)



38th Infantry Battalion (Bendigo Regiment) and 59th Infantry Battalion
(The Hume Regiment) badges.
(*Australian Army Badges*)



8th/7th Battalion (The North Western Victorian Regiment) and 38th Battalion
(The Northern Victorian Regiment) badges.
(*Australian Army Badges*)



Deakin University Regiment and Deakin University Company badges.

Lieutenant Colonel Lloyd asked Major Ian Barnes RAA about what design the DUR badge should be. Major Barnes looked into the design and came up with a circular background based on the Long and Efficient Service Medal, with the Deakin family crest superimposed on the centre with a scroll underneath with the words Deakin University Regiment. The badge was made in brass. When the unit was redesignated as a Company, a similar plastic badge was used.

(Neil Leckie)



The Royal Victoria Regiment badge,
designed by Lieutenant Colonel
Mike Bacon, circa 1964.
(8/7 RVR)

Endnotes

- 1 *The Rifle Brigade Chronicle*, pp248 and 311.
- 2 *The Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment*.
- 3 8/7 RVR 537-1-1, 5 December 2001.
- 4 Wedd, *Australian Military Uniforms*.
- 5 Cossum, *Australian Army Badges*.

APPENDIX 10

Alliances of Predecessor Battalions of 8/7 RVR

8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment):

Alliance to The King's Own Royal Regiment (Liverpool), 1937.

8th/7th Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment):

Alliance to The King's Own Royal Regiment (Liverpool), AAO 47/1951;

Alliance to the Royal Regiment of Canada, AAO 19/1957.

Amend King's Own to read The King's Regiment (Manchester and Liverpool), AAO 48/1959.

21st Battalion (Victorian Rangers) and 23rd Battalion (City of Geelong Regiment):

Alliance of 23rd/21st Battalion to the Royal Scots Fusiliers, AAO 220/1935.

Alliance terminated, AAO 47/11/1951.

38th Battalion (Northern Victorian Regiment):

Alliance to the South Staffordshire Regiment, AAO 35/1955.

Amend to Staffordshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's), AAO 48/1959.

59th Battalion (Hume Regiment):

Alliance to the East Lancashire Regiment, AAO 645/1926.

Alliance terminated, AAO 47/11/1951.

Alliance re-instated, AAO 102/1956.

Amend East Lancashire Regiment to the Lancashire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Volunteers), AAO 48/1959.¹

Like the Australian Army, the British Army has had many reorganisations. Of the previous alliances only that to the Staffordshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's) and the Royal Regiment of Canada remain with 8/7 RVR.

The alliance between the East Lancashire Regiment, the 2nd Battalion of which was previously the 59th Regiment of Foot, and the 59th Battalion (Hume Regiment) was formed in 1926 and terminated in 1951, as the 59th Battalion was disbanded in 1946 following the Second World War. In February 1956, Major General W.H. Lambert, colonel of the East Lancashire Regiment, suggested re-establishing the alliance. This was approved by the Queen in October. The 59th had been re-raised in 1953, and the alliance was reinstated in 1956, but after the East Lancashire Regiment amalgamated with the South Lancashire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's Volunteers) in 1958 to form the Lancashire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's Volunteers), it lapsed.

In 1935 the 23rd/21st Battalion was allied with the Royal Scots Fusiliers, formerly the 21st Regiment of Foot. With the 23rd/21st Battalion having disbanded in 1943, the alliance was terminated in 1951.

In 1937 an alliance was formed between the 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment) and the King's Own Royal Regiment (Liverpool), formerly the 8th Regiment of Foot. In 1958 the King's Own amalgamated with the Manchester Regiment to become The King's Regiment (Manchester and Liverpool). The alliance was transferred to the 8th/7th Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment) in 1958. It lapsed in 1960 when the RVR was formed.

In 1955 the 38th Battalion formed an alliance with the South Staffordshire Regiment, the 1st Battalion of which was originally the 38th Regiment of Foot. An amalgamation of the South Staffordshire Regiment and the North Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's) formed the Staffordshire Regiment in 1959. In 1960, when the 38th Battalion became a company of 2 RVR, the alliance transferred to 2 RVR, and later to 8/7 RVR.

While the connection between the British and Australian regiments had been a numerical one, the connection with the Royal Regiment of Canada is less clear. The Toronto Regiment was allied to the King's Own Royal Regiment (Liverpool) in 1927. The Royal Regiment of Toronto Grenadiers was formed in 1936 by amalgamation of the Toronto Regiment and the Royal Grenadiers. At the same time the 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment) was allied with the King's Own. In 1939 the Royal Regiment of Toronto Grenadiers was renamed the Royal Regiment of Canada, and the alliance was transferred to that regiment.

The alliance of the King's Regiment with the 8th/7th Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment) was approved in 1951 and lapsed in 1958. An alliance between the Royal Regiment of Canada and the 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment) was given Royal Assent in 1959. The alliance to the RVR was approved in 1969. It is maintained on behalf of the RVR by 8/7 RVR.²

Endnotes

- 1 Festberg, *The Lineage of the Australian Army, RVR Standing Orders*.
- 2 Land Forces of Britain, the Empire and Commonwealth website www.regiments.org, Wikipedia Staffordshire-Regiment.

APPENDIX 11

Awards and Decorations

During the Crimean War of 1853-56, the *Times* (London) condemned the identification for official commendation of high-ranking officers who had not engaged in battle, and the British press in general were concerned that the deeds of the ordinary soldier should be publicly recognised. After debate in the House of Commons and Royal consultation, it was decided to establish a new decoration for bravery named after the Queen – the Victoria Cross or VC, the highest decoration awarded for conspicuous bravery to members of British and Commonwealth armed forces.

The Royal Warrant signed by Queen Victoria in 1856 was made retrospective to 1854, the year that British troops first participated in the Crimea. The medal is cast from metal from guns captured during the Crimean War. Australians have been awarded 96 VCs:

Boer War:	6
First World War:	66
Second World War:	20
South Vietnam:	4

There are eight VCs linked to the 8/7 RVR battalion numbers from the First and Second World Wars. With the 21st and 23rd Battalion connections, 8/7 RVR is directly linked to ten VCs.

At Lone Pine over 8 and 9 August 1915 (co-incidentally the 9th is the battalion's birthday), the 7th Battalion was awarded four VCs. On 9 September 1916 an 8th Battalion member was awarded the battalion's first VC. On 9 August 1918 (again the battalion's birthday) a second VC was awarded to an 8th Battalion soldier, while a third was awarded a VC on 23 August 1918. In the Second World War an 8th Battalion member became the only militia soldier to be awarded the VC. He was also the youngest, and the last, Australian awarded the VC during that war.

In addition to the ten VCs awarded to members of the 7th, 8th, 21st and 23rd Battalions, a further eleven VCs were awarded to country Victorian soldiers in the First World War. They came from Bacchus Marsh, Bendigo, Borung (Wedderburn), Castlemaine, Drysdale, Geelong, Mildura, Myrtleford, Rushworth, Tatura and Winchelsea. Another country soldier, born in Hamilton, was awarded the VC in the Second World War.

VC Recipients from the 7th, 8th, 21st and 23rd Battalions¹

Lieutenant William John Symons, 7th Battalion, was born on 28 November 1881 at Eaglehawk, Bendigo, Victoria. He died on 24 June 1948, and is commemorated by a plaque at the Garden of Remembrance, Melbourne. His VC is held by the AWM.

Over 8-9 August 1915 at Lone Pine trenches, Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey, Symons was in command of the right section of the newly captured trenches held by his battalion and repelled several counter-attacks with great coolness. At about 5am on 9 August the Turks made a series of determined attacks on an isolated sap known as Jacob's trench. Six officers were, in succession, killed or severely wounded in the sap and a portion of it was lost. Symons was then instructed by Lieutenant Colonel Elliott to retake the sap. Symons organised and led a charge, which drove the Turks out. He then rebuilt the barricade. He killed two of the enemy with his revolver. Then, when the sap was attacked from the front and two flanks, he obtained permission from Elliott to withdraw to adjacent overhead cover, leaving fifteen metres of open trench to the enemy, so that another barricade could be erected. The Turks persisted in the attack and twice fired the barricade woodwork, but Symons led rushes that drove them back and the fires were extinguished.

Captain Frederick Harold Tubb, 7th Battalion, was born on 10 July 1888 at Longwood, Victoria. He died of wounds on 21 September 1917 and is buried in the Lijessenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinghe, Belgium. His VC is held by the AWM.

On 9 August 1915 at the Lone Pine trenches, Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey, during a Turkish counter-attack Tubb was in command of a section of trench, which was the scene of some intense fighting. When the enemy blew in a sandbag barricade Tubb led his men back, repulsed the enemy and had the barricade rebuilt. The enemy attacked and again twice blew in the barricades, but Tubb, bleeding from bomb wounds in the arm and scalp, continued to fight. Supported by Corporals Dunstan (also awarded a VC) and Burton (also awarded a VC), he succeeded in rebuilding the barricade. A bomb blast killed Burton and wounded Dunstan. Tubb obtained further men from the next post, Tubb's Corner. The enemy attack had weakened, however, and although heavy bombing continued the position was held. He later wrote:

It is miraculous that I am alive. Three different times I was thrown yards away from bombs. Our trenches were filled with the dead, mostly ours. Burton ... deserved the highest reward for his action for three times filling a breach in the parapet till they killed him. Dunstan (and others) also did magnificent work. I cannot write of details but many of our brave boys were blown to pieces.²

Corporal William Dunstan, 7th Battalion, was born on 8 March 1895 at Ballarat East, Victoria. After the war he joined the staff of the *Herald* and *Weekly Times* as an accountant. He rose to the position of general manager in 1934. He died on 2 March 1957 and was cremated at the Springvale Crematorium, Melbourne. His VC is held by the AWM. A soldiers' club in Puckapunyal is named after him.³

Early on 9 August 1915 at the Lone Pine Trenches, Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey, the Turks made a determined counter-attack on a newly captured trench held by Lieutenant Tubb, Corporals Burton and Dunstan, and a few others. The Turks advanced up a sap and blew in the sandbag barricade but Dunstan, Tubb and Burton repulsed them and rebuilt it. Supported by two strong bombing parties, the enemy twice more destroyed the barricade but were driven off and the barricade was rebuilt. A bomb burst between Dunstan and Burton, killing Burton and temporarily blinding Dunstan.

Corporal Alexander Stewart Burton, 7th Battalion, was born on 20 January 1893 at Kyneton, Victoria. He was killed on 9 August 1915 and is commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli. A bridge over Seven Creeks near Echuca was renamed Burton Bridge in his honour. His VC is held by the AWM.

On 9 August 1915 at the Lone Pine trenches, Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey, during the Turkish counter-attack on the Lone Pine trenches Burton performed the actions for which he was posthumously awarded the VC. The Turks advanced up a sap and blew in a sandbag barricade which Burton, Tubb and Dunstan quickly re-erected after they had repulsed the attackers. The enemy attacked twice more and destroyed the barricade. This was rebuilt when the enemy were driven off. Burton was killed by one of several bombs which exploded as he was attempting to rebuild the parapet. His body was never recovered.

Private Thomas Cooke, 8th Battalion, was born on 5 July 1881 at Kaikoura, New Zealand. He migrated to Australia in 1912. He was killed on 25 July 1916 and is buried in Villers-Bretonneux Cemetery, France. His VC is held by the Queen Elizabeth II Army Memorial Museum, Waiouru, New Zealand.

On 24-25 July 1916 at Pozières, France during an attack Cooke was ordered, with his Lewis gun team, to a dangerous part of the line. Heavy enemy fire killed all his companions, but Cooke remained at his post firing his Lewis gun. When assistance finally reached this post Cooke was found dead beside his gun. He was one of eighty-one members of the battalion killed during this action.

Private Robert Matthew Beatham, 8th Battalion, was born on 16 June 1894 at Glassonby, Cumberland, England. While still in his teens he migrated alone to Australia. He was killed on 9 August 1918 and is buried in Heath Cemetery, Harbonnières, France. His VC is lodged with the United Service Club, Brisbane. It sold in 1999 for a then record price for an Australian VC of \$178,500.

On 9 August 1918 at Rosières, near Villers-Bretonneux, France, when the 8th Battalion was held up during an action Beatham, assisted by Lance Corporal Nottingham, rushed forward and bombed and fought the crews of four guns, killing ten and capturing ten others, thus allowing the advance to continue and saving many casualties. On 11 August Beatham, though wounded, rushed another machine gun and bombed and silenced it. In doing so he was riddled with bullets and killed.

Lieutenant William Donovan Joynt, 8th Battalion, was born on 19 March 1889 at Elsternwick, Victoria. He died on 5 May 1986 and is buried in Brighton Cemetery, Melbourne. His VC is privately held.

On 23 August 1918 at Herleville Wood, near Chuignes, France, during an action Joynt went forward and found a company of the 6th Battalion that was disorganised after losing its officers. He re-formed the men and urged them forward but they were again halted by intense fire from Plateau Wood. Joynt, who was then joined by a platoon from his own battalion, decided to seize Plateau Wood. A German post and fifty prisoners were quickly taken. Joynt then led his men along a trench across the plateau, capturing prisoners as they went, to within fifty metres of the machine guns holding up the advance. At one stage twenty enemy advanced towards him with their rifles poised, so Joynt covered their leader with a revolver and they surrendered. Finding another trench, Joynt was able to lead his men without casualties into the German position and so force them out of the wood. He returned to his battalion to find that his company commander had been wounded and that he was to assume command. From then until he was wounded in another attack three days later, he was always in the fight as the advance continued.

Private Robert Mactier, 23rd Battalion, was born on 17 May 1890 at Tatura, Victoria. He was killed on 1 September 1918 and is buried in Hem Farm Cemetery, Hem-Monacu, France. His VC is held by the AWM. A soldiers' club in Watsonia, in Melbourne, is named after him.

On 1 September 1918 at Mont St Quentin, near Péronne, France, during an engagement with the enemy Mactier, who had been sent forward as a runner to investigate, ran to a barricade. He threw a bomb, climbed over the wire, closed with and killed the machine-gun garrison of eight men with revolver and bombs, and threw the enemy gun over the parapet. He rushed forward another twenty metres and jumped into the middle of another garrison of six men who surrendered immediately. He charged at a third post, bombing and killing the garrison. He was attacking a fourth enemy position when a machine-gun swung round and killed him instantly.

Sergeant Albert David Lowerson, 21st Battalion, was born on 2 August 1896 at Myrtleford, Victoria. He died on 15 December 1945 and is buried in Myrtleford Cemetery. His VC is held by the AWM. A soldiers' club in Bandiana is named after him.

On 1 September 1918 at Mont St Quentin, near Péronne, France, during an action Lowerson was with a company which advanced on the right of the village, where it encountered extremely heavy fire. Several small strong points were overcome, but the troops on the left of the advance were pinned down by a heavily manned post, which contained twelve machine guns. Lowerson then organised a storming party of seven men and led a charge against the strong point, which succeeded in capturing twelve machine guns and thirty men. Although he was wounded in the right thigh, Lowerson organised the consolidation of the post and disposal of prisoners.

Private Frank John Partridge, 8th Battalion, was born on 29 November 1924 at Grafton, New South Wales. He died on 23 March 1964 and is buried in Macksville Cemetery, New South Wales. His VC is privately held. A soldier's club in Moorebank is named after him.

On 24 July 1945 at Bonis Peninsula, Bougainville (now Papua New Guinea), during an engagement with the enemy Partridge's section came under particularly heavy fire and he was hit twice, in the left arm and the left thigh. Despite his wounds, and disregarding the heavy fire, he retrieved a Bren gun from a dead gunner and passed it on to another man and told him to give covering fire. He then rushed the enemy bunker, silenced it with a grenade, and killed the only living occupant with his knife. He cleared the dead from the entrance to the bunker and rushed another bunker but loss of blood caused him to halt and call for aid. His platoon moved forward but overwhelming enemy fire caused it to withdraw. His was the first and only VC awarded to a militiaman.

Country Victorian born or enlisted men awarded the VC⁴

Lieutenant Leslie Cecil Maygar, 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles, was born on 26 May 1872 at Dean Station, Kilmore, Victoria. He was awarded the VC for actions on 23 November 1901 at Geelhoutboom, Natal. His VC is held by the AWM. A soldiers' club in Palmerston, Northern Territory, is named after him, while the Broadmeadows, Victoria, base is named Maygar Barracks.

Lance Corporal Albert Jacka, 14th Battalion, was born on 10 January 1893 at Winchelsea, Victoria. He was awarded the VC for actions on 19 May 1915 at Courtney's Post, Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey. His VC is held by the AWM. A soldiers' club in Puckapunyal is named after him.

Captain Percy Herbert Cherry, 26th Battalion, was born on 4 June 1895 at Drysdale, Victoria. He was awarded the VC for actions on 26 March 1917 at Lagnicourt, France. His VC is held by the AWM. A soldiers' club in Queenscliff is named after him.

Lieutenant Frank Hubert McNamara, No. 1 Squadron Australian Flying Corps, was born on 4 April 1894 at Rushworth, Victoria. He was awarded the VC for actions on 20 March 1917 during a raid on Tel el Hesi, Palestine (Israel). His VC is held by the AWM.

Lieutenant Rupert Vance Moon, 58th Battalion, was born on 14 August 1892 at Bacchus Marsh, Victoria. He was awarded the VC for actions on 12 May 1917 near Bullecourt, France. His VC is held by the AWM. A soldiers' club in Sunshine, Victoria, is named after him.

Captain James Ernest Newland, 12th Battalion, was born on 22 August 1881 at Highton, Geelong. He was awarded the VC for actions on 7-9 and 15 April 1917 at Boursies and Lagnicourt, France. His VC is held by the AWM.

Lance Corporal Walter Peeler, 3rd Pioneer Battalion, was born on 9 August 1887 at Castlemaine, Victoria. He was awarded the VC for actions on 4 October 1917 at Broodseinde near Ieper, Belgium. His VC is held by the AWM. A soldiers' club in Casula, NSW, is named after him.

Lieutenant Albert Chalmers Borella, 26th Battalion, was born on 7 August 1881 at Borung (near Wedderburn), Victoria. He was awarded the VC for actions on 17-18 July 1918 at Villers-Bretonneux, France. His VC is privately held. A soldiers' club in Bandiana is named after him.

Lieutenant George Morby Ingram, 24th Battalion, was born on 18 March 1889 at Bendigo, Victoria. He was awarded the VC for actions on 5 October 1918 at Montbrehain, near Péronne, France. His VC is privately held. A soldiers' club in Bendigo is named after him.

Sergeant Samuel George Pearse, a former AIF member serving with the 45th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, Sadler-Jackson's Brigade, was born on 16 July 1897 at Penarth, Glamorganshire, Wales. His family moved to Mildura, Victoria. He died on 29 August 1919 in north Russia, during an action north of Emptsa for which he was awarded the VC.⁵ His VC is privately held.

Private Edward Kenna, 2/4th Battalion, was born on 6 July 1919 at Hamilton, Victoria. He was awarded the VC for actions on 15 May 1945 near Wewak, New Guinea (now Papua New Guinea). His VC is privately held.

The most decorated soldier of the 8th Battalion

Percy Lay, acknowledged as the 8th Battalion's most decorated soldier, was born on 8 February 1882 at Ballan, near Ballarat. He served through the Gallipoli campaign as a private, reached France with the battalion early in 1916, and fought on the Western Front until the end of 1917. He was awarded the MM and was wounded at Bullecourt. The following September he was awarded the DCM for actions in the Battle of the Menin Road. Lay was awarded the French *Croix de Guerre* in 1917. He was commissioned, and in October was awarded the MC for gallantry and leadership in the attack on Broodseinde Ridge. Early in 1918 he was selected as a member of Dunsterforce, a small group from the British and dominion forces that operated in north-west Persia.

During the Second World War, Lay served as a major in garrison units in Australia, and was discharged from the 1st Australian Works Company. He died in the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital on 28 August 1955.

SUMMARY OF DECORATIONS⁶

The following is a summary of decorations awarded to country Victorian battalions in both World Wars.

7th Battalion	8th Battalion	21st Battalion	23rd Battalion
4 VC	3 VC	1 VC	1 VC 1 CBE
1 CMG			
2 DSO	10 DSO, 1 Bar	5 DSO, 1 Bar 1 OBE	4 DSO, 1 Bar 2 MBE
20 MC, 2 Bars	33 MC, 6 Bars	22 MC, 7 Bars	25 MC, 3 Bars
31 DCM, 1 Bar	43 DCM	29 DCM	21 DCM
100 MM, 5 Bars	32 MM, 1 Bar	117 MM, 7 Bars	147 MM, 11 Bars
6 MSM	4 MSM	7 MSM	6 MSM
37 MID	45 MID	24 MID	35 MID
6 foreign awards	9 foreign awards	8 foreign awards	5 foreign awards

38th Battalion	39th Battalion	59th Battalion	60th Battalion
2 DSO	2 DSO	2 DSO, 1 Bar	1 CMG 1 Bar to DSO
21 MC, 3 Bars	1 MBE 14 MC	17 MC	10 MC, 1 Bar
9 DCM	14 DCM	14 DCM	10 DCM
76 MM, 4 Bars	78 MM, 3 Bars	51 MM, 4 Bars	47 MM, 2 Bars
5 MSM	5 MSM	8 MSM	3 MSM
28 MID	22 MID	24 MID	20 MID
9 foreign awards	8 foreign awards	8 foreign awards	4 foreign awards
2/7th Battalion	2/8th Battalion	7th Battalion	8th Battalion
6 DSO	1 DSO	1 DSO	1 VC
2 MBE	1 MBE		
11 MC	11 MC	1 MC	
5 DCM	6 DCM		
26 MM	11 MM	1 MM	2 MM
60 MID	53 MID	16 MID	8 MID
58/59th Battalion			
1 DSO			
1 MBE			
12 MC, 1 Bar			
16 MM			
30 MID			

Endnotes

- 1 www.anzacday.org.au/education/medals/vc/details/.
- 2 Reid, *For Valour*, p14.
- 3 Defence Instruction (Army) ADMIN 26-1 is the source for all references to soldiers' clubs and Army installations.
- 4 www.anzacday.org.au/.
- 5 NAA Service Record, S.G. Pearse, *Mildura Weekly*, 12 October 2007, p25.
- 6 AWM Website, Australian Military Units.

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3rd Division R174-1-7
3rd Division 211-1-16
3rd Division R274-3-20
3rd Division 274/S51/3
3rd Division R373-2-4
3rd Division R810-6-3
HQ 4 TF R875-1-26
4 TF R142-4-2
4 TF R373-2-4
4 TF R810-6-4
2 RVR R145-1-2
2 RVR R211-1-5
2 RVR 219/1/1
2 RVR R379-1-1
2 RVR 875-1-6
2 RVR 875-1-7
8/7 RVR R379-1-2
8/7 RVR R379-1-3
8/7 RVR R379-1-5
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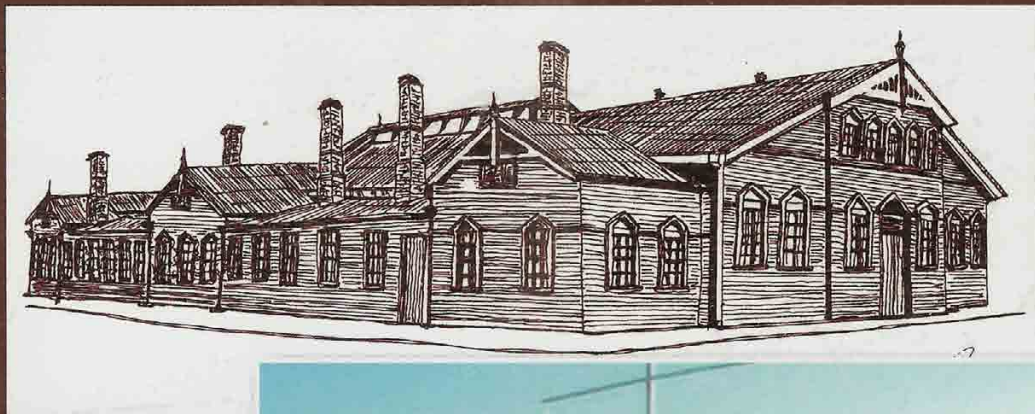
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ISBN: 978-0-9804753-6-4



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