

**Military Historical Society of Australia
Victorian Branch Inc.**
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Despatches



Quarterly Newsletter

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Victorian Branch Inc.
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Committee 2011-12
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Meetings

Branch Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month (except December) at the Oakleigh RSL, Drummond Street, Oakleigh starting at 8.00 pm. Visitors most welcome.



IN THE SHADOW OF WAR AUSTRALIA 1942
Melbourne, 21-22 April 2012 **MHHV CONFERENCE**



INVITATION

The Patrons, President and Council
of

Military History and Heritage Victoria Inc.

invite you to register for its 2012 Conference

The Conference will be held at the Grand Hyatt,
123 Collins Street, Melbourne
21-22 April 2012

For Registration Forms see www.mhhv.org.au

For further information, email info@mhhv.org.au
or call 0408 342 795

The Military Medal



11,038 Military Medals were awarded to Army personnel and 14 to Air Force members, including Australians. 478 first Bars were awarded, 15 second Bars and a unique third Bar to a stretcher bearer with the 55th Infantry Battalion AIF in World War 1, Private E. A. Corey, meaning he had won the Medal four times.

Created in 1916 by King George V for other ranks in the Army to correspond with the Military Cross instituted two years earlier, but eventually back dated in availability to 1914. Awarded for 'acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire'. In 1916, the Medal was extended to other ranks of the Navy serving in France, but only for actions in World War 1. In 1931, the Medal was extended to other ranks of the Air Force for gallant conduct on the ground. Recipients of the medal are entitled to use the post-nominal MM. The ribbon is principally of dark blue with three white and two crimson vertical stripes in the central third. Australians have won a very large number of Medals in the campaigns to 1972 when the last award to an Australian was made.

<http://www.anzacday.org.au/education/medals/general/other.html>

Objects of the MHSA

The objects of the Society are the encouragement and pursuit of study and research in military history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment and kindred matters; the promotion of public interest and knowledge in these subjects, and the preservation of historical military objects, with particular reference to the Armed Forces of Australia.

Our Branch - Update by the Editor

The 2nd Cobby Oration. On 23rd June we held our 2nd Cobby Oration in commemoration of Commodore Dacre Smyth in the context of 100 years of the RAN. There were 94 in attendance and it has proven to be a very attractive community event involving active service men and women, veterans, family and military history enthusiasts from a number of different historical societies.

Thank you to the Committee and other volunteers who put in a great job of putting the event together - and to our host Oakleigh-Carnegie RSL for their much appreciated support of the event. In 2012 we will conduct the 3rd Cobby Oration to commemorate a Victorian military figure - your suggestions to inform the Committee will be welcome.

The 2011/12 Committee. A positive step forward for the Branch. We again managed to attract new blood into the Committee, which can only auger well for the coming year. Thanks to Leigh Ryan and Daryl Moran for volunteering for a committee position and to Helen Gobbi for stepping up to the secretary role. Congratulations to George Ward as ongoing President. Of course new people cannot come in to the Committee without other members stepping down and this year it is our former President and Vice-President Robbie Dalton.

Robbie Dalton joined the MHSA in 1980, and the branch committee in 1982, serving as Treasurer and president for a total of 16 years. Highlights: a committee member for the Victorian Military Exhibition, the erection and unveiling of a VDC plaque at Caulfield RSL and hosting the branch's 50th anniversary dinner.

Members. We would like to welcome new members into the Branch John Wogan-Browne and Graham Hutchings. On the down-side we also regret the untimely death of Ashley Mison, who in a short time had already made a real contribution to the Branch. Overall, our membership at the start of this membership year starts at 64.

Recent speakers. Dr Pam Oliver from Monash University, author of several books on Australian-Japanese relations before WWII, revealed much unknown history about the extent of Japanese commercial and social interest in Australia before 1941.

Captain Mark Hill, RAN gave a highly personal account of Commodore Dacre Smyth at the 2nd Cobby Oration, relating both his own meetings with the Commodore as well as describing the Commodore's positive peace-time contributions to the professional RAN as well as highlights of his wartime careers.

Following the AGM on 28th July, member Don Davis presented on the Volunteer Air Observer Corps, lamenting the lack of recognition by successive governments for the volunteer efforts of tens of thousands of air observers during and immediately after WWII.

On 25th August, Scott Bennett, author of 'Pozières' presented on that terrible battle on the Western Front- a joint night with the Australian Great War Forum and well-attended with several guests, re-enactors in uniform, and WWI display...

FUTURE WARFARE.

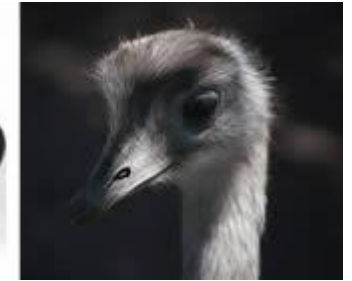
MELBOURNE, Tuesday.

"In the army of the future troops will be moved by tanks, aeroplanes will be used for surveys, gas attacks, and fighting over wide areas, and gas shells will be used in larger numbers," Major-General Sir Thomas Blamey said to-night in an address.

Sir Thomas Blamey said that Australian corps were not being trained in fighting operations because of the lack of equipment, experience, and time. The future war commander would send out organised squadrons protected by fighting machines, to make rapid and complete air surveys over a wide area. The commander would then send out his aeroplanes to drench the area with gas bombs. Any area within reasonable reach would thus be made untenable by the enemy. This would make an attacking army remain a long distance from its objective until the striking moment arrived. Then the army would have to be moved speedily, at the same time being protected from gas in its journey. For this purpose fighting tanks would precede the troop-carrying tanks. The range of the mechanical units would be about 200 miles, and the average rate of progress 20 miles an hour.

During the Great War, Major-General Sir Thomas Blamey was chief of staff to General Sir John Monash.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 April 1935, p.13



EMU WARS Cont.

Mr WHITE (Balaclava—Minister for Air and Minister for Civil Aviation) - The honorable member for Moore (Mr. Leslie) has referred to an invasion of emus in certain parts of Western Australia. It is certainly no laughing matter for the farmers concerned. History seems to be repeating itself.

Many years ago, when the Scullin Government was in office [1932], a similar complaint was made, and so eloquent was the honorable member who raised the matter that he prevailed on the Government to supply a detachment of soldiers in armoured vehicles to hunt the emus with machine guns. I know from experience that emus can run at 35 miles an hour, and apparently the vehicles were not capable of that speed. At any rate, after expending a great deal of ammunition, and wearing out the tyres of the vehicles, the party had to report that very little execution had been done amongst the emus.

The name of the officer in charge of the party appeared in the honors list that year. He was awarded the O.B.E., which someone suggested stood for one 'something' emu. I hope that the marksmanship of the local farmers will be better than that of the machine gunners.

I believe that, in spite of the advent of atom bombs, guided missiles and supersonic aircraft, the rifle is still a very useful weapon. I shall ask the Minister for the Army (Mr. Francis) to make supplies of .303 ammunition available if possible. Perhaps the honorable member for Moore will be a marker, and report the number of kills.

Thursday, 9 November 1950 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

What's On to the end of 2011...and beyond

Sunday 11th September: **Field Trip** to the Museum of HMAS Cerberus – BBQ and guided tour 11am for BBQ, 1 pm for tour

22nd September: **Annual Collectors Trading Night and Quiz** (questions based on *Despatches*)

27th October: **Restorations – A B24 and a Blitz.** Tony Muller from the B-24 project and Keith Webb, military vehicle restorer. AHSA to be invited. They will present on the challenges and tribulations of restoring aircraft and vehicles and their military history context. This is the Branch contribution to 'History Week'.

24th November: **Military Cemetery Tour Oakleigh Pioneer Park and Fund-raiser...**from Crimea to the Indian Mutiny to the Prussian Army to the Boer War to WWI, complete with ghosts! \$5 for members and \$10 for guests – this will not be your ordinary military cemetery tour, be warned.

8th December: **Xmas Dinner** at the Oakleigh-Carnegie RSL with monster raffle.

Saturday 10th December – Fund raiser - sausage sizzle at Bunnings, Notting Hill. Please volunteer to help and support the Branch to raise money for Branch projects.

Sunday 18th December – Branch BBQ at the Belgrave-Upway RSL in the Dandenongs and the Running Rabbits military museum.

25th January 2012 (*yes I know it's a Wednesday but the 26th is Australia Day*) **Members' own – Pre-Federation colonial and British military period** – a show and tell, people and objects...

Carnegie Room. The new Committee will now get down to the business of establishing the Carnegie room as our 'own', with your help. The RSL is considering placing its own display cases along the side-wall. One idea so far is that we theme the displays each year.

'fallen leaves' – our project book from 2010 telling the story of Oakleigh District WWI service deaths has been a winner, raising almost \$2000 for the Branch. There are copies still on sale and money goes into our funds so *please support your branch and buy a copy for just \$25* – contact any Committee member.

Branch Website. Keep engaged with and make contributions to our Branch website www.mhsavictoria.com Peter Beckett is on his way home from his Great Outback adventure and the site will be revamped with his return.

Projects.

Camp Pell Project. Planning is well advanced. A site visit with the City of Melbourne was held on 9th August, support from Geelong Branch for military vehicles and re-enactors is confirmed, and grant applications are underway. Anzac Hall/urban Camp Board is very supportive. This project, to conduct an historical re-enactment of the April 1942 naming of US Camp Pell in Royal Park will be held on Sunday 22nd April 2012 from 10am. More detail to come in the months ahead.



Military Books by David Jenner

NIPPON VERY SORRY - MANY MEN MUST DIE

Submission to the United Nations Commission of Human Rights
Economic and Social Council resolution 1503 - Authorised by the Queensland ex-P.O.W.
Reparation Committee. First published in 1990 by Boolarong Publications
12 Brookes St. Bowen Hills, Brisbane Qld.4006

The name of this book was taken from the very famous Australian, Ray Parkin's, memory of a senior Japanese officer's address to a group of P.O.W.s.

In a real sense, this is a legal document. The preface is written by Justice Marcus Einfeld; the report by Sir William Webb, then Chief Justice of Queensland, and subsequently Chief Justice of the Federal High Court. Appointed in 1943, the report was only released to the public in 1989. The purpose of the U.N. submission, in large part, was to endeavor to obtain from the Japanese Government financial reparation for the thousands of ex-P.O.W.s and their widows or next of kin.

A harrowing read of a number of individual and collective atrocities is included in the submission. A number of A.A.M.C. doctors made statements included in the submission. Lt.Col. Albert Coates produced an extremely damning number of statements.

Some of the individual stories are particularly horrendous, and when one considers these are only a few of the recorded and observed instances; the horrors unrecorded and unobserved must have been legion.

Finally there is an illuminating Japanese view of attitudes to P.O.W.s by Professor S. Adachi, of the National Defence Academy relating to treatment of prisoners in WWII. He notes that in Japanese military law it was a criminal offence to surrender to an enemy, and this was a major factor in the treatment and attitude towards enemy prisoners.

Digger left cooking to attack Red

Korea, Wednesday

AN Australian cook, disturbed at his duties by a sniper recently, grabbed a rifle and bayoneted the Communist to death after a chase into No-man's land. An officer with the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, said Private Tommy Watson was bending over his cooking utensils when the Communist fired and missed.

He said: "Tommy grabbed a rifle with a fixed bayonet. "He chased the Communist down a hill and about 100 yards into No-man's-land. "When he was about a yard from the Communist he started slashing with the bayonet and the stuffing flew out of the Communist's quilted uniform. "Then he caught up with the man and, in his own words, 'carved the cow up.' "

Watson said his home was "somewhere in the Queensland bush."

A.A.P.-Reuter's reported in The Argus 24 April 1952, page 4

Biographical - Biographies of interesting men and women with military interests; some permanent military, some militia, some Volunteers – who helped shape our military history.

The Tuckett family **by R. E. Cowley**

Francis John Tuckett (1875-1917) and Lewis Tuckett (1879-1960), soldiers, were brothers. Francis was born on 1 March 1875 at Beaufort, Victoria, fifth child of Alfred Curtis Tuckett, a brickmaker from Bristol, England, and his Irish wife Maria, née Bryans. About 1878 Alfred took up farming at Marraweeney, near Violet Town, where Lewis, his seventh child, was born on 1 April 1879. The children were educated locally.

A smallish, stocky man, Francis (or Jack as he was known) served in the militia with the Victorian Mounted Rifles for two years before going to Western Australia and becoming a telegraphist at Eucla in 1895. Moving to Kalgoorlie, he married Elspeth Maria Morrison on 9 June 1898 with Presbyterian forms; they were to have six children. In Perth in 1904 he joined the (Royal) Australian Engineers, serving first with the 8th Half Company and from 1909 with the 30th Signal Company. He was commissioned second lieutenant on 16 March 1913.

Jack Tuckett was appointed to the 3rd Divisional Signal Company, Australian Imperial Force, on 3 March 1916; his eldest son Francis Curtis (1899-1953) was allotted to the company six days later as a sapper. Born at Coolgardie on 28 July 1899 and educated at Victoria Park, young Francis was a bank clerk when he managed to enlist in the A.I.F. on 28 December 1915. Father and son embarked in May 1916 for training in England; Jack was promoted lieutenant in September. They proceeded to France in November where their company was responsible for providing and maintaining communications with forward units in the war zone. Lieutenant

Tuckett was recommended for the Military Cross for his work in the Ypres sector in September and early October 1917; he was killed in the 2nd battle of Passchendaele on 14 October before his award was promulgated. His mates wrote to his wife that he had died while 'seeking to alleviate the distress of others'. A keen cricketer, he had been presented with the bat used when a side from his company was successful against a 10th Australian Infantry Brigade team: his family later gave it to the Western Australian Cricket Association.

Sapper Tuckett attended his father's funeral at Ypres Reservoir North cemetery. For his gallantry in operations prior to and on 12 October, Francis Curtis Tuckett was awarded the Military Medal. He was transferred to Headquarters in April 1917 and his appointment was terminated in November, after his return to Australia on compassionate grounds. Later, as a 'gun' shearer, he roamed the country. On 8 November 1953 he died in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, and was buried in the Field of Mars cemetery.

Lewis Tuckett, like his elder brother, joined the Western Australian Postmaster-General's Department as a letter carrier in 1900 and became a telegraphist. He served in the citizen forces from 1909. Two weeks after marrying Edith Emma Keedwell at St George's Anglican Cathedral, Perth, on 11 August 1914, he enlisted in the A.I.F. Promoted sergeant, he embarked for Egypt with the 1st Divisional Signal Company in October.

Tuckett's company was attached to the 2nd Australian Infantry Brigade and landed on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. He was awarded the Military Medal for his work in maintaining communications during the consolidation of the front line and at Cape Helles when the brigade attacked Krithia. Transferred to the 8th Battalion, he was commissioned second lieutenant on 1 December.

In Egypt in February 1916 Tuckett was promoted lieutenant. He was transferred to the 4th Divisional Signal Company next month and went in June to France where, as signals officer for the 13th Australian Infantry Brigade, he was responsible for communications with the forward battalions. He was mentioned in dispatches three times during operations at Mouquet Farm, Fleurbaix, Somme, Ypres and Flers. Disregarding his own safety at the attack and seizure of Noreuil in April 1917, he kept communications in working order with every unit. For this action he was awarded the Military Cross.

Later that month Lewis Tuckett was transferred to the 3rd Divisional Signal Company; promoted captain, he was second-in-command. Following the death of his brothers, Jack and Philip, he was granted two months compassionate leave early in 1918 to visit his family in Australia. Back in France in August, he served with the 4th Divisional Signal Company; he returned to Australia in July 1919 and his A.I.F. appointment terminated in September. He continued in the Australian Military Forces until December 1931 when he was placed on the retired list.

After the war Tuckett had resumed his job as a postal employee and later became a supervisor at the General Post Office, Perth. He died at the Repatriation General Hospital, Hollywood, Perth, on 12 February 1960.

The Tucketts' youngest brother, Philip Samuel (1884-1916), was the fourth member of the family involved in providing communications at the battle front. Born on 1 November 1884 at Violet Town, he was a survey hand on the construction of the transcontinental railway before enlisting in the A.I.F. in Perth on 3 January 1916. Promoted sergeant, he embarked with the 3rd Pioneer Battalion in June for training in England. Arriving in France, he was allotted to the 49th Battalion; two days after being commissioned second lieutenant, he was killed by shell-fire while

inspecting telephone lines at Flers on 24 November 1916. His brother Lewis witnessed his burial at Bull's Road Military cemetery.

Cowley, R. E., 'Tuckett, Philip Samuel (1884–1916)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/tuckett-philip-samuel-9262/text15577>, accessed 31 July 2011.