

The North-Western Ranger



8th/7th BATTALION – 2RVR ASSOCIATION Inc.
VICTORIA'S OWN COUNTRY BATTALION
(Including the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum Newsletter)



Patron: The Commanding Officer, 8/7 RVR, Lieutenant Colonel Derek Sonogan

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Neil Leckie is now the Newsletter Editor. The normal Association's Newsletter Editor's email address is 87th2vrassoc@gmail.com For urgent newsletter matters please use nkaleckie@optusnet.com.au

UPCOMING EVENTS

Association AGM:

Ballarat: 19 November 2023 at 1000 hours for military people (or 10am for civilians)

Where: Alfredton Sports & Community Centre, Cuthberts Road, Alfredton (in Ballarat's West)

Lunch: Supplied

Drinks: At bar prices

Association Annual Dinners:

Warrnambool: Partners are most welcome.

Date: 14 October 2023

Time: 1800 hrs for 1900 hrs (6.00pm for 7.00pm)

Place: Warrnambool RSL

Cost: Menu price. A subsidy will be provided for all attendees.

RSVP: by 7 October to Lyndon King at

Dress: Neat casual.

Ballarat: Partners are most welcome.

Date: 18 November 2023

Time: 1800 hrs for 1900 hrs (6.00pm for 7.00pm)

Place: 'The Grand' Restaurant at The Ballarat Club, 203 Dana Street, Ballarat

Parking: Lydiard St Sth, Dana St or Armstrong St Sth.

Cost: \$30 per head (subsidized for all attendees) payable to the association by EFT, cheque or cash.

For EFT Payment: 8/7 - 2 RVR Commbank: 063 502 1035 4333. State your 'Surname' and 'Dinner'.

RSVP: by 11 November to Dick Wilkie or richardwilkie@outlook.com

Dress: Coat and tie with nametag. Miniature Medals may be worn.

REPORTS

Battalion Officer/NCO Dinner (Neil Leckie)

On 5 August 2023, 8/7 RVR celebrated the Battalion's 165th Birthday with an Officer/NCO Dinner at the Officers and Sergeants Mess at RAAF Williams, Laverton (below). The Past Officers of the battalion were invited to attend the dinner, and stay overnight at the Mess, in lieu of holding a Past Officers Dinner on that night. Nine Past Officers attended. Paul Riley, Daryl Clarke, Alan Donovan, Tony Watson, Chris Saultry, Rupert Dalley, Max Humphrys, John Skinner and Neil Leckie



In his role as the Museum Manager, Neil Leckie was given a few minutes to speak on the 165-year history of the battalion: 'Army records show that the battalion birthday for 8/7 RVR is 9th August. This is the date of the first 'parade' of the Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment. The date of the birthday was selected when in 1948 the Citizen Military Forces, the previous name of the Army Reserve, was reformed post-WW2.

The 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment) was amalgamated with Mildura's 7th Battalion (Murray River Borderers). Ballarat's 8th Battalion was larger than Mildura's 7th Battalion, so the Headquarters was to be in Ballarat and the name became 8th/7th Battalion (North-Western Victorian Regiment) and not 7th/8th!

Going back a bit, Victoria's Defence Force was raised just three years after the Colony of Victoria separated from New South Wales. 1st July was for many years referred to as 'Separation Day'. In 1854 England was at war with Russia: it was known as The Crimean War. At this time the only Army in Australia was the 40th of Foot, 2nd Somersetshire Regiment. The Regiment was spread throughout all the colonies of Australia.

On 3 November 1854 the Victorian Government passed the Volunteer Act and a Volunteer Corps of 2,000 men was authorised. The Melbourne Volunteer Rifle Regiment was raised a few months later. Artillery defence of Port Phillip Bay was considered essential and the Melbourne Regiment became the Victorian

Volunteer Artillery Regiment in 1856. However, Geelong actually had the first Volunteer unit in Victoria, raised in May 1854. In 1860 its role also changed to Artillery.

On 27 August 1858, less than three weeks after Ballarat, Bendigo raised a Volunteer Corps. It disbanded four months later but was re-raised in September 1860, The Warrnambool Volunteer Rifle Corps was raised in July 1859, and Shepparton's first unit was in 1889 and was a part the Victorian Mounted Rifles.

The Volunteers were disbanded at the end in 1883 and were replaced with a 'Part-paid' Militia in 1884. The 1st and 2nd Infantry Battalions were raised in Melbourne; the 3rd Battalion in Ballarat and the 4th Battalion in Castlemaine, which included Bendigo. There were minor name changes in the units until on 1 March 1903 the Australian Army was formed. The former colonial forces became a part of the Australian Army.

The Defence Act 1903 did not allow the Australian Army to serve overseas, so in 1914 when war broke out an Australian Imperial Force had to be raised. The 2nd Brigade of the original 'Australian' Division was raised in Victoria. The 5th Battalion was raised in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, the 6th Battalion in Melbourne and its western suburbs, the 7th Battalion from Essendon through to the Murray River and the 8th Battalion was raised based loosely on Ballarat's 70th Infantry.

Post The Great War, Ballarat's militia was renamed the 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment). The 7th Battalion was amalgamated with the Bendigo raised 38th Battalion to form the 38th/7th Battalion. In 1936 the 7th Battalion transferred to Mildura.

In World War Two, a 2nd AIF was raised. This included a 2/7th Battalion and a 2/8th Battalion. However, both the 7th and 8th Battalions of Militia fought firstly in the Northern Territory (during the bombing) and later overseas as AIF battalions.

In 1960 the Australian Army decided to follow the British and American 'Pentropic' system, where all levels within an infantry division was in multiples of five. Each of the states would have two battalions, one in the capitol city and the other in the regions. To the Victorian CMF it meant that the five company-strength city battalions would form the 1st Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment, while the five company-strength regional battalions would form the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment (with its HQ in Melbourne.)

The 'Pentropic' system did not work and was scrapped in early 1965. Headquarters of 2 RVR was moved to Ballarat, Geelong transferred to Artillery and Bendigo became Service Corps.

In 1960 2 RVR had it Headquarters in Ballarat. B Company had depots in Ballarat and Maryborough. C Company had depots in Shepparton, Echuca and Cobram. Support Company was in Warrnambool. Mildura became an Independent Rifle Company of the RVR.

With the re-introduction of National Service in 1965, the option of serving in the Citizen Military Forces instead of two-years full-time saw 1 RVR grow and split into three battalions:

1 RVR in Moonee Ponds and later Footscray,
5 RVR in Hawthorn, Armadale and Surrey Hills, and
6 RVR in Melbourne city, Brunswick and Preston.

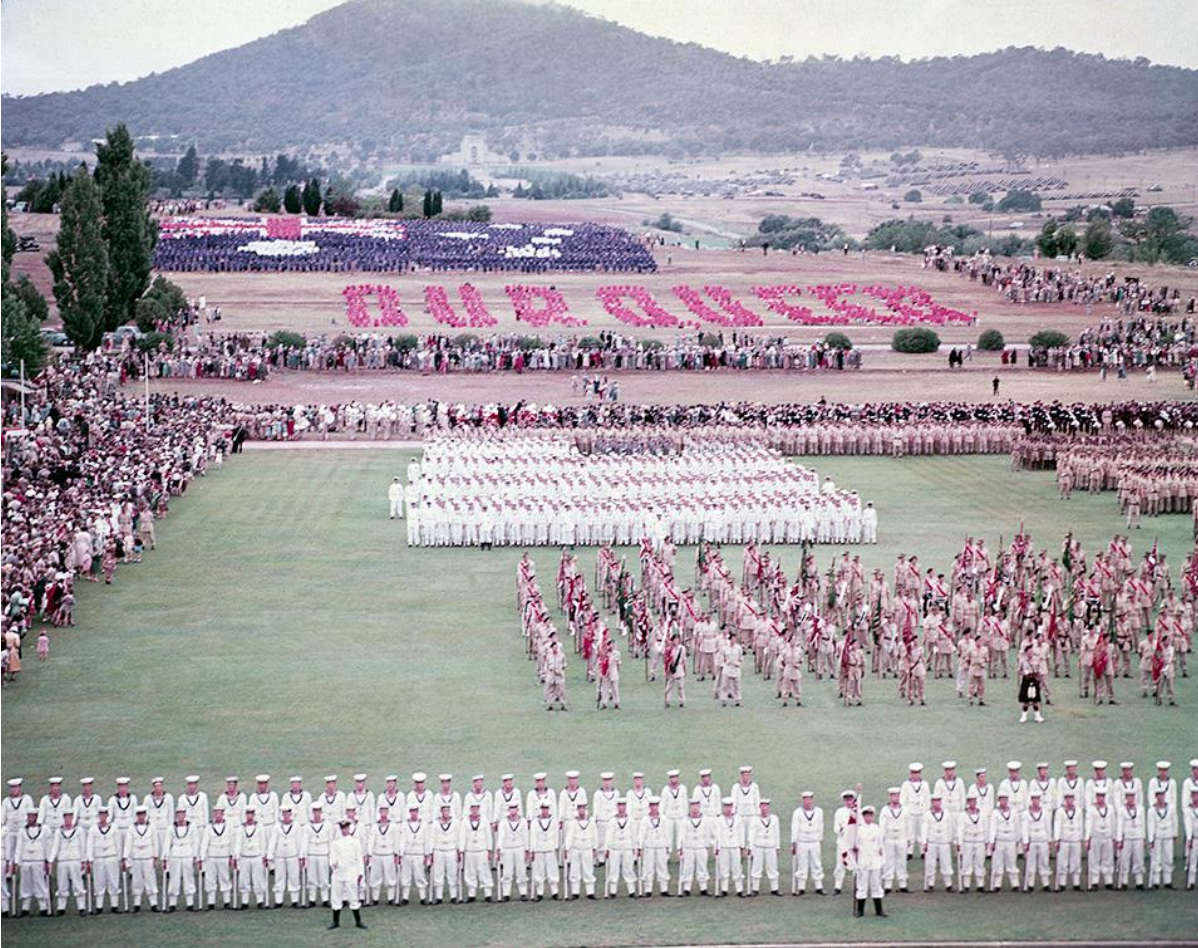
22 RVR was raised as a Special Conditions Battalion in Puckapunyal. It existed from 1966 to 1975. National Service ended in late 1972. In the 1980s the Melbourne battalions had amalgamated into 5/6 RVR.

In 1987 the then Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Geoff Skardon, decided that 2 RVR should be renumbered as 8/7 RVR. Consequently, on 14 November 1987 the battalion became 8/7 RVR.

Within the 165-year history of the battalion, the name 8/7 RVR is the longest serving name for the battalion – 36 years. This is followed by 2 RVR with 27 years.'

FIVE MINUTES WITH NOEL SMITH

Noel John Charles Smith was born on 8 March 1934 in Wentworth, NSW. Prior to his 18th Birthday he tried to enlist in the RAAF, but his educational level of the NSW Intermediate Certificate was not considered high enough, so he was not accepted. He then registered for National Service on his 18th Birthday and six weeks later, on 22 April 1952, Noel commenced his initial three months of Army Training at Puckapunyal as 3/743222. At the Victorian Railways Dysart Siding, just south of Seymour, Noel met the late E. C. 'Ted' Crane, who became a life-long friend. Later, in the CMF, Ted was became number 387640, while Noel was number 387641. The pair shared the same wardrobe for three months, were promoted to Corporal and Sergeant together and both commissioned into The 8th/7th Battalion, North-Western Victorian Regiment. Promoted to Corporal in 1952, Noel went to Canberra from 9 to 17 February 1954 for the Queen's visit, with the 1937 presented 7th Battalion Colours that were held in Mildura.



Left: The Queen's Review of the Australian Defence Force in front of Parliament House, 15 February 1954.

Noel was an Acting Sergeant during the Annual Camp from 11 – 24 May 1953.

Noel was commissioned on 16 February 1956 and returned to the 8th/7th Battalion. He undertook an Officer Training Course at the Jungle Training Centre at Canungra, Queensland, from 9 to 20 June 1958. A few weeks later he participated in the presentation of the 8th Battalion Colours in Ballarat on 10 August 1958, the weekend of the Centenary of the Battalion's formation in Ballarat. On that weekend, the Ballarat Drill Hall was formally named 'Ranger Barracks'.

With the formation of the 'Royal Regiments' in Australia on 1 July 1960, Noel became a member of 2 RVR. He was attached to the Command and Staff Group from 1 October to 29 November 1960, before returning to 2 RVR. When the Army had another revamp in 1965, Noel was posted to 1st Independent Rifle Company at Mildura on 18 February 1965. He was awarded the Efficiency Decoration in 1966.

While at school completing his Intermediate Certificate, Noel had been introduced to Tom Seymour, Manager of the NSW Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission. Tom offered Noel a job to start on 22 November 1949, the day after he completed his examinations. He would be employed on the irrigation system being developed for the Soldier Settler blocks in the Coomealla Irrigation area at Dareton in NSW. Noel accepted the position. His first major promotion in the commission happened in 1966, being

transferred to Darlington Point. This would mean a transfer with the CMF. The nearest depot was at Leeton some thirty miles away over unmade roads. Noel made the decision to retire from the CMF. Other work moves were to Colleambally in 1978 and then to Griffith in 1986. Noel retired on 7 March 1994. He had been a Public Service Representative for 40 years and was a Staff Credit Union Representative for 30 years. One of his daughters was an early employee with the Credit Union and was a Manager with the Union for over 20 years.

Noel joined the RSL in 1973, the National Servicemen's Association, Australia in 1997, the 8/7 Bn – 2 RVR Association on 12 September 1997 and is still a member in 2023. He received the Anniversary of National Service Medal in 2003 and the Australian Defence Medal in 2007.

VALE

Creighton John Kaye was born in Carisbrook, Victoria, on 16 July 1935. He became a School Teacher and was commissioned into the 8th/7th Battalion, The North-Western Victorian Regiment, in the late 1950s. However, on 1 April 1959 he joined the Royal Australian Navy and commenced training at HMAS Cerberus. On 23 February 1960 he was released from the RAN having requested a transfer to the RAAF at Point Cook. Creighton went on to become a pilot with Ansett Airways. Later in his life Creighton lived in Williamstown. He was a regular attendee at the 8/7 RVR Past Officers Dinners, which were held on the weekend nearest the Battalion's birthday, 9 August. Creighton attended his last Past Officers Dinner in 2022.



Creighton's wife, Jennifer, died on 27 September 2022. Creighton passed away on 21 June 2023 in the Sunshine Hospital, aged 87. After a private service Creighton was interred in Williamstown with Jennifer.

Some of his flying mates wrote about Creighton on a pilot's website:

'Dora-9' wrote: 'What a character he was. Doubtless there'll be lots of Creighton stories to come, but the first time I met him stands out. It was a (Fokker) Friendship flight to Wynyard, I'd been told that the Captain had been called out off reserve, eventually Creighton turned up, introduced himself and "Jim", Creighton was in uniform but "Jim" was clad in overalls and covered in grass clippings! Jim was positioned in the jump seat - far be it for me, a lowly half stripe FO to query who he was/what he was doing there. Eventually the story came out - he was Creighton's neighbour, and had been mowing his lawn when Creighton appeared - as he was getting in his car, he'd called out: "Hey Jim, would you like to come to Wynyard and back"? Different days, but so typical of Creighton... RIP Captain.'



Dora-9 provided the photo at left with Creighton 2nd from the right.

'john_tullamarine' wrote: 'Certainly an interesting character. I think I flew with him once on the 72 ? All getting a bit hazy now. The senior cadre is dropping off the perch in rapidly increasing numbers'

'By George' added: Great bloke, great fun and always had a mischievous grin on his face. Last time I saw him he was deaf as a post and it was difficult to converse. Another of the old guard gone. Sad.

'john_tullmarine' agreed: 'He was deaf as a post!'

FEATURES:

90th Birthday of Keith Payne VC (Michael Darby, WA)

As an Officer Cadet in 1966, I had the privilege of being trained by WOII Keith Payne, and it has been a great pleasure to meet Keith Payne VC AM and Florence Payne OAM on more recent occasions. Keith is a Patron of Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, which for quarter of a century has enjoyed a close relationship with Queenslanders for Constitutional Monarchy, of which I am a Patron.

Keith Payne was born in Ingham, Queensland, on 30 August 1933. He attended Ingham State School and afterwards became an apprentice cabinet-maker. During this time he also served with the 31st Australian Infantry Battalion in the Citizens' Military Force. Seeking greater opportunities, Payne joined the Australian Regular Army in August 1951 and after his Recruit and Corps Training was posted to the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR) in December 1951. Payne was transferred to 1 RAR in July 1952 and later that month was sent to Japan as an infantry reinforcement.



On 22 September 1952 he was sent to Korea, where he joined his unit. He served with the battalion until they were rotated out of Korea on 24 April 1953. He returned to Korea on 2 June on strength of Headquarters, 28th British Commonwealth Brigade. He remained with this formation until the end of the Korean War returning to Australia on 19 August 1953.

In December 1954 Payne married Florence Plaw, a member of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps. He was promoted to Corporal the following year and spent much of the next five years attending various courses and schools of instruction to further his Army career.

In February 1960 Payne was posted to 3RAR, then based at Enoggera in Queensland. He was promoted to Sergeant in July 1961 and deployed to Malaysia in August 1963. During an operation on the Malay-Thai border in October 1964, Payne was slightly injured when he fell into a river as he was crossing. He remained on duty and returned to Australia with 3RAR in February 1965.

Later that month Payne was posted to the 5 RAR. However, the posting was only brief, and in June that year he was appointed as an Instructor to the National Service/Air Cadet Officer Training Unit (OTU) at Scheyville, New South Wales. After OTU, in February 1967 he joined the 2nd Pacific Islands Regiment in Papua New Guinea. He was promoted to Warrant Officer Class 2 in May that year and returned to Brisbane at the conclusion of his posting in March 1968.

On 24 February 1969 he was appointed to the Australian Army Training Team in Vietnam. In May that year he was commanding the 212th Company of the 1st Mobile Strike Force Battalion when it was attacked by a strong North Vietnamese force. His company was isolated and, surrounded on three sides, Payne's Vietnamese troops began to fall back. Payne, by now wounded in the hands and arms and under heavy fire, covered the withdrawal before organising his troops into a defensive perimeter. He then spent three hours scouring the scene of the day's fight for isolated and wounded soldiers, all the while evading enemy troops, who kept up harassing fire. He found some 40 wounded men, brought some in himself and organised for the rescue of the others, leading the party back to base through enemy-dominated terrain. Years later, asked whether he was afraid, Payne replied, "My God yes, yes, I was." Payne's actions that night earned him the Victoria Cross.



Keith Payne in 2015

Payne was evacuated to Brisbane on 24 September suffering from an illness, receiving a warm reception at the Brisbane airport before entering hospital. He had recovered by November, and in January 1970 was posted as an Instructor to the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

Payne received his VC from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on board the Royal Yacht, Britannia in Brisbane on 13 April 1970. He was made a 'Freeman of the City' and of the Shire in which his hometown was located. A park in Stafford, Brisbane, where Payne lived, was also named after him. He received the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star from the United States, and the Republic of Vietnam awarded him the Cross of Gallantry with Bronze Star. He retired from the Army in 1975 but saw further action as a Captain with the Army of the Sultan of Oman during the Dhofar War.

Payne returned to Australia and became active in the veteran community, particularly in counselling sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Death of Harry Smith (ABC)

An extraordinary military "leader who never stopped fighting for his men" is being remembered as one of the "most significant men of Australia's war history." Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith SG MC, who led his men through Australia's bloodiest battle of the Vietnam War, has died aged 90 on Queensland's Sunshine Coast on 20 August 2023, just two days after the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.

As commander of Delta Company, 6 RAR, it was his 108 men who on 18 August 1966, fought off Viet Cong (VC) forces as they advanced on the Task Force base at Nui Dat. Through mist, monsoonal rain, and rubber trees, the men held their ground against a three-sided attack from an estimated 2,500 VC and North Vietnamese Army troops. When it ended, 18 Australians were dead and 24 had been wounded. As the battlefield was cleared, the bodies of 245 enemy fighters were revealed along with 800 wounded.



In January of the following year on Luscombe Field at Nui Dat, then-Major Harry Smith was awarded a Military Cross for leadership and command during the battle. The Australian Prime Minister presented the United States Presidential Unit Citation to Delta Company for Extraordinary Gallantry at a ceremony in Townsville two years after the battle.

'We did not have time for fear.' The war stayed with Smith. Author Toni McRae wrote that even 47 years after the battle — as they wrote *Long Tan: The Start of the Lifelong Battle* — he could still hear the gunfire and smell the blood spilled at Long Tan. In 2006, Lt Col Smith described the battle for Australian War Memorial's *Wartime* magazine. He remarked that in the years since, he had often been asked how frightened the soldiers were as they risked being overwhelmed by the enemy. "I reply: 'Not that I recall. We were all so busy methodically doing what we had to do we did not have time for fear — until it was over.'" "Outnumbered, we just got on with what we had trained for — killing the enemy — to survive."

In 2017, the Long Tan Cross memorial was installed in the Australian War Memorial after being gifted by the Vietnamese government. At the ceremony, Smith described how his troops had no idea they were overcoming the enemy until the battle was won. "We were the victors although we didn't know it until we went back in the next morning. Luckily, we were on a slight reverse slope ... and unless they got right up close to us, like 50 metres away from us, they couldn't actually fire at us, and most of their shots went over our heads, thank goodness. "My soldiers fired over 10,500 rounds out of their rifles and machine guns, which certainly took a toll. "The enemy decided to leave because it suffered so many casualties. It was an extraordinary battle ... and an amazing victory for the Australian Army."

Smith kept fighting for his men. Kerry White, from the Vietnam Veterans Association of the Sunshine Coast, said: "Lt Col Smith was a well-known character and not just for his courage in battle. It was also for the enduring loyalty he showed to those who served with him. It was how he fought for his troops to get more recognition for them almost right up until he died," Mr White said. "He was most upset that some higher-up people in Vietnam received awards — they weren't even in the battle. "He did succeed a little but not as much as he would have liked to. "He did actually get an extra award himself, the Star of Gallantry, and he would have preferred that have gone to one of his men, I'm sure."

Lt Col Smith's long-time friend and journalist Bruce Atkinson expressed condolences on social media. "In my opinion, you were the most significant living figure in Australian military history and now in death you rank right up there with the great figures of our war history," Atkinson said. "I messaged one of his soldiers and said how he could now rest in peace. He replied, 'Nah. He'll just start making life hell for his next Commanding Officer', sums him up quite a lot."

Atkinson said the career military man was a "strong character" who did not suffer fools. "He butted heads with authority, whether it be his superiors in the Army or Prime Ministers who wouldn't review the awarding of the Long Tan Medals," he wrote on social media. "I sometimes thought he wished he could leave Long Tan in the past and simply get on with his life and go sailing, which he did plenty of. "However, his sense of duty to his men — both living and those who died in Vietnam — didn't allow him to do so."

Smith 'embarrassed' because his men deserved more: Lt Col Smith fully uncovered why his men were not given their proper recognition after 1996 when the Official Secrets Act expired after 30 years, and details of the event were revealed. Multiple reviews led to him and two of his soldiers receiving upgrades, but it was not a satisfying result. "I am bitter about what happened to my soldiers," Lt Col Smith told ABC in 2015. "I'm embarrassed that I was decorated with the Star of Gallantry, which in the current system is second to the Victoria Cross, but it didn't flow on to my soldiers. "Sure, I was a commander, I called the snap, as we say at the time, but the soldiers who were up front, eyeball-to-eyeball with the enemy ... they got nothing. It's a sad situation."



Lt Col Smith said he refused to withdraw at Long Tan, and he would never withdraw from the fight to have his men properly recognised.

Lt Col Smith's role in the battle was featured in the award-winning Battle of Long Tan documentary and in the feature film [Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan in 2019](#).

Left: Brigadier Jackson presenting Harry Smith with his MC in 1967

Harry Smith's funeral was held in Buderim on 30 August 2023. Some 40 Long Tan Veterans attended the funeral. Among them was Bill 'Yank' Akell who had, two weeks earlier, attended the Townsville Vietnam Veterans Day service held by 6 RAR. Bill visited Harry Smith in hospital, being one of the last visitors to see Harry before his passing.



The 'Wake' was held at the Maroochydore RSL.



(Photos: Bill Akell)

Above left: Harry Smith is carried to the Gun Carriage by SNCOs from D Company, 6 RAR, to the tune of 'These Boots are Made for Walking'. Above right: Bill Akell 2nd from right and Graham Smith, his fellow D Company Signaller (in wheelchair). Harry Smith's widow, Felicia, is far at the left in the front seat.

The Malone Military Dynasty (Neil Leckie)

The Editor was called up for National Service in 1968 and undertook officer training at the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville in NSW. After graduating as a 2Lt he saw out his time at the 1st Recruit Training Battalion at Kapooka in NSW. He then transferred to the CMF, opting to serve in the 'Special Conditions' Battalion, 22 RVR, 'The Bushmens Rifles'. It was there, in 1970, that he met Major James 'Jim' Malone, a former 2 RVR officer, then the 22 RVR Battalion 2IC. Jim was a PMG Technical Officer in Ballarat and as the Editor was an Electrical Engineer, Jim had him posted as the Regimental Signals Officer. It was in 1972 that the Editor met the oldest of Jim and Margaret's six children, Marion. The Editor moved to the Ballarat district in 1981 and there served with Jim's two youngest children, Terry and Donna, in B Company, 2 RVR. The Editor was a Blood Donor and the Blood Bank was located in St John of God Hospital in Ballarat for some years. Marion worked at St John's and the two would often 'cross paths' when the Editor went to donate blood. Fast forward to 2018 when the Blood Bank was now in Redan and Marion was the Manager of the independent living Lodge Homes in Canadian. It was there that the two met up again and Marion spoke of her grandfather serving in WW1 in the 8th Battalion. This led to research and the writing of the Malone Military Dynasty story for the Malone family. Part One is centered on Jim's father Victor and Victor's brother Percy. The other parts will be in future newsletters. Enjoy the read!

Part 1 - Victor And Percy Malone

John Hardcastle Malone, the son of John and Annie (nee Boyle) Malone was born in 1859. In 1882 he married Sarah Hannah Goad. The couple would have five sons and three daughters: Marion Bertha (1883), Percival John Andrew (1885), Elsie Jane (1887), Francis Thomas Stanley (1889), William Hardcastle (1892), Victor Harold (1894), Henry Garfield (1896), Annie Adelaide (1900) and Gordon James (1909). At the beginning of The Great War, the Church of England family lived at Eastern Hill, Creswick. Two of Malone's six sons served in the Great War, both in Ballarat's first unit, the 8th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, Australian Division (later known as the 1st Australian Division).

In 1914 Victor Malone was a 20-year-old single, Labourer when on 19 August he signed his enlistment form, was medically examined and was attested into the Australian Imperial Force. 5 days later, at Broadmeadows, he was allocated as Regimental Number 336 to C Company, 8th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, Australian Division. On 18 October he and his fellow members of the 8th Battalion embarked on the

Troopship A20 *Benalla*, at Station Pier in Melbourne. The following day his ship sailed for Albany in Western Australia where the ships from Melbourne were to join the 1st Australian and New Zealand Convoy. Their destination, it was thought, would be England. However, accommodation for the fledgling Australian Division was not yet available, and with a northern winter if full flight, the Australians and New Zealanders were diverted to Egypt, with the *Benalla* arriving at Alexandria on 8 December. The following day the division arrived at Mena Camp near The Pyramids. It was while the Australian Division was there with the New Zealanders that the name ANZAC (Australian & New Zealand Army Corps) was 'coined'. The 8th Battalion spent the next four months training in the sands of Egypt, but on 5 April 1915 it embarked on the Troopship *Geleka* for the Island of Lemnos, arriving 6 days later at Mudros Harbour. The next 12 days were spent in training including disembarkation from the ship, rowing to shore and landing, followed by returning to and embarking on their ship. On 24 April the convoy taking the ANZACs to Gallipoli left Mudros Harbour and early on 25 April, the Australian Division landed at what became known as ANZAC Cove.

The 3rd Brigade (9th, 10th, 11th & 12th Battalions) were the first wave to land, followed by the 2nd Brigade (5th, 6th, 7th & 8th Battalions). Then came the 1st Brigade (1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Battalions). The New Zealand and Australian Division, which included the Australian 4th Brigade (13th, 14th, 15th & 16th Battalions) followed. Victor survived the landing with no reported wounds or injuries. Later, on 25 April, the British forces landed at Cape Helles, on the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsular with the French Forces landing across the opening of the Dardanelles at Kum Kale. While the ANZAC landing had not gone exactly according to plan, with most troops being landed a little north of their expected landing point, the British landing was a disaster. Consequently, on 6 May, the 2nd Australian Brigade, considered to be the best Australian Brigade, along with the New Zealand Brigade, were transferred to Cape Helles. Late on the afternoon of 8 May the brigades launched a poorly conceived attack under British command. On 10 May Victor received a 'serious' gunshot wound in the throat. However, a telegram to his father stated 'slight'! Victor was admitted to the 88th British Field Ambulance at 'W' Beach on the south-west of Cape Helles. Over the period 11/12 May the ANZACs were relieved by the British and on 16 May returned to ANZAC Cove. Meanwhile on 14 May Victor had boarded the Hospital Ship *Royal George* and was transported to St Andrew's Hospital in Malta, disembarking four days later. On 22 June Victor embarked in Malta on the Hospital Ship *Massilia* and transferred to Alexandria, disembarking on 27 June. Finally, on 10 July Victor re-joined his battalion on Gallipoli 'ex wounded'.

On 13 October Victor (right) fell ill and two days later was back on Lemnos Island and was admitted to No. 3 Australian General Hospital, Mudros, with Enteric (or Typhoid), a Salmonella infection. With winter setting in, on 23 November Victor was 'Transferred to Base' embarking two days later for England on the Troopship *Aquitania*. On 4 December he was admitted to the London War Hospital at Epsom, still suffering with Enteric. Victor spent many months recovering and was posted to the 2nd Brigade Training Battalion at Perham Downs, Salisbury, south-west of London.



While Victor was recovering, on 7 February 1916 an older brother, 31-year-old **Percy**, enlisted in Ballarat. He was medically examined and attested on 15 March and 15 days later, at Broadmeadows, was allocated to the 16th Reinforcements for the 8th Battalion and given Regimental Number 5149. Percy embarked in Melbourne on the troopships HMAT A23 *Suffolk*. He disembarked at Suez on 15 May. He then embarked at Alexandria, Egypt, on the troopships HMAT *Huntsgreen* and disembarked at Plymouth, England before being transferred to the 2nd Training Battalion at Perham Downs. As the brothers were both now at Perham Downs, it is highly likely that they met there. On 25 July Victor 'proceeded overseas' to join the British Expeditionary Force in France, and 'Marched In' to 1st Australian Division Base Depot, at Etaples, France, the following day. However, he was then 'Marched Out' on 7 August to the Machine Gun Base at Camiers. Victor then returned to England at the Monte Video Camp at Weymouth and on 1 September returned to the 1st Australian Division Base Depot in France. From there, on 26 September Victor transferred to the 2nd Australian Machine Gun Company, finally being 'Taken on Strength' there on 5 November 1916.



On 8 May 1917 Percy (left) was 'Wounded in Action' when he was buried by a nearby artillery shell explosion. He suffered concussion and admitted to the 5th Australian Field Ambulance. That day he was transferred to the Divisional Rest Station where he stayed until 21 May when he rejoined the 8th Battalion. On 5 September 1917 Victor was appointed as a Lance Corporal. He had leave from 13 to 26 October and either returned to England, or visited Paris, during this period. On returning from leave Victor found that he had been promoted to Temporary Corporal, a position confirmed on 25 November.

Meanwhile, on 23 December Percy went on leave. He would return on 9 January 1918. On 30 December Victor returned to England to the Machine Gun Training Depot at Grantham, 'Marching In' on 3 January 1918. Percy was detached to the British 177th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers on 13 January. 7 March saw Victor admitted to Belton Park Hospital with influenza. Five days later he was discharged, 'Marching In' to Grantham on 13 March. Percy rejoined the 8th Battalion on 31 March and the following day was attached to the 1st Division Salvage Company. On 15 April Victor 'proceeded overseas' again this time from Folkestone and 'Marched In' to the Machine Gun Base Depot at Camiers. Eleven days later he rejoined the 1st Machine Gun Battalion. On 5 May Percy's transfer to the Salvage Company was confirmed.

On 10 August Victor was 'Wounded in Action' (2nd Occasion). He was admitted to the 8th Australian Field Ambulance with a gunshot wound, left shoulder. He was transferred to the 55th (British) Casualty Clearing Station and the following day was on the Hospital Train 23 and was admitted to No. 3 General Hospital, Le Treport the following day. Twelve days later he was transferred to the Australian Convalescent Depot, Le Havre. On 29 August he 'Marched In' to Australian General Base Depot, Le Havre, and three days later 'Marched Out' to the Machine Gun Base Depot. On 8 September he proceeded to re-join the 1st MG Battalion, 'Marching In' four days later. On the other hand, Percy had a 14-day change on 13 September where he was 'Detached for Duty' with 1st Division Headquarters. On return he was then detached to the 1st Division Assistant Provost Marshall until 24 December. Two days later he was detached to the 1st Company, Australian Army Service Corps.

In October 1918, many of the '1914 enlistees' commenced returning to Australia. Victor's turn came on 13 October when he embarked at Le Havre to commence his 'Return to Australia' as a part of 'B' Draft. He disembarked Southampton and 'Marched In' to St Budeaux, Devon, the following day. On 23 October Victor left England on His Majesty's Troopship *Durham*, disembarking in Melbourne on 23 December.

On 8 January 1919, Percy's latest detachment ended and two days later he proceeded on leave to England for a 10-day leave break. Back in Australia, on 27 February 1919, after leave and four-and-a-half years of 'War Service', Victor was discharged from the AIF at his 'Termination of Period of Enlistment'. He was awarded the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Back in France Percy 'Marched Out' from the Salvage Company on 2 April for 'Return to Australia', arriving in England and disembarking at Southampton, he 'Marched In' to the Overseas Training Brigade two days later. On 20 May he embarked on the troopship *Nester* and commenced his return to Australia. Percy disembarked Melbourne and was discharged on 16 August at his 'Termination of Period of Enlistment'. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Victor returned to Creswick and returned to work as a Labourer. In 1920 he married Thelma Ellen Aston in Ballarat. They would have four children: John (Jack) (born 1921), Jean (born 1923), Molly (born 1926) and James (Jim) (born 1928). Percy returned to Eastern Hill, Creswick. He never married. In 1942 his postal address was the American Hotel at Creswick. He died in 1966.

In the next edition will be Part 2, focusing on James Francis (Jim) Malone.

Kokoda Track Tour Leaders:

It is well-known by military history readers that the Militia 39th Infantry Battalion, was the first Australian unit to fight the Japanese in WW2. The first contact was made on 24 July 1942. The original 39th Battalion was formed on 21 February 1916 at the Ballarat Showgrounds and drew most of its Recruits from the state's Western District. It became part of the 10th Brigade , 3rd Australian Division. Sailing from Melbourne on 27 May, the battalion arrived in Britain on 18 July and commenced four months of further 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 front line and the rear areas. When the German Army launched its last great offensive in March 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.

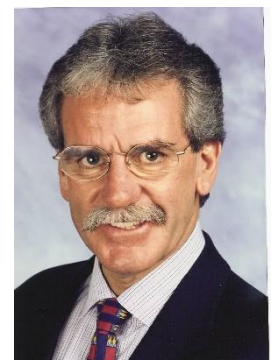
The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August 1918, but the 10th Brigade was the 3rd Division's Reserve on this day so the 39th did not play an active role. It was involved, however, in an ill-conceived attack that failed to capture the village of Proyart on 10 August. Not daunted by this experience, 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.

Around this time the AIF battalions were renamed to connect them with the Militia Battalions from the area in which they were raised. The 8th Battalion AIF became the 1st Battalion, 8th Australian Infantry Regiment while Ballarat East's 70th Infantry (Militia) became the 2nd Battalion 8th AIR. The Senior Cadets attached to the 70th Infantry became the 3rd Battalion, 8th AIR. Similarly, the 39th Battalion AIF became the 1st Battalion, 39th Australian Infantry Regiment while Ballarat West's 71st Infantry (Militia) became the 2nd Battalion 39th AIR. The Senior Cadets attached to the 71st Infantry became the 3rd Battalion, 39th AIR. When 'The Great War' ended in November 1918, along with much of the AIF, the 39th Battalion was resting out of the line. The battalion was disbanded in March 1919.

In the 1921 post-war restructure of the Army, the 39th Battalion was transferred to Melbourne and retitled the 'Hawthorn-Kew Regiment'. In 1937 it was amalgamated with the 37th Battalion as the 37th/39th Infantry Battalion. Shortly afterwards the 39th amalgamated with the 24th Battalion as the 24th/39th Battalion. Following Japan's sudden entry into WW2, in October 1941 the 39th was re-raised as a separate battalion, a part of the 30th Brigade which was to garrison Port Moresby. The 39th joined the Queensland raised 49th Infantry Battalion, already in Port Moresby, and the 53rd Infantry Battalion, which had been quickly formed in Sydney. The 39th arrived in Port Moresby at the start of January 1942, with little military training. Most of the men in those three battalions were 'Conscripts'. The 39th Australian Infantry Battalion carried out an amazing fighting withdrawal along the Kokoda Track, causing the Japanese advance to 'grind to a halt' before it was pushed back by other Australian battalions.

Charlie Lynn: Tour Leader

One of the best-known Tour Leaders on the Kokoda Track is Charlie Lynn. 'Charlie' John Stuart Lynn was born in Orbost, Victoria, on 20 January 1945 to Melva and Keith Lynn, the eldest of eight siblings, He grew up in a small timber home on the banks of the Snowy River in East Gippsland. Leaving school at 15, he later worked in



a Country Roads Board Camp at Nowa Nowa. Charlie joined the CMF as 3411965. However, in 1965 he was 'Called Up' for National Service. Charlie entered the Army with the first intake of Nashos at 2 RTB, Puckapunyal, on 30 June 1965. After Recruit Training, he was allocated to Engineers and trained as a Plant Operator, serving in Vietnam with 17 Construction Squadron from 9 January to 28 May 1967. In July 1967 Charlie commenced officer training at OCS, Portsea, graduating on 8 June 1968. He was allocated to the Service Corps and posted to the RAASC Centre for Corps Training. He remained at the Centre as an Instructor.

On 2 February 1971 Charlie transferred to 112 ST Company as 2IC Supply Platoon, but on 15 August that year he was posted to the ANZUK Supply Depot in Singapore, Malaysia. He had an Exchange Instructor posting in Airborne Logistics with the United States Army from 1977-78 where he qualified as a High-Altitude Low Opening Military Parachutist. Charlie attended the Army Staff College at Fort Queenscliff, Victoria. Remaining in the Army until 1986, and reaching the rank of Major, he represented the Army in Australian Rules football, tennis, squash and marathon running. After leaving the Army Charlie worked with the Australian Rural Leadership Program in the Kimberley running outback leadership survival programs in remote areas.

Following his discharge from the Army, Charlie became a Special Events Organiser. He has organised the Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon, the ANZAC Day Marathon, the 18,000 kilometres (11,000 mi) Round Australia Relay for the Australian Cancer Foundation, the Great Australian Caravan Safari, the Darwin-Cairns-Melbourne Relay for the Melbourne Olympic Committee, and the international George Street Mile footrace. Charlie was a Consultant to Australian Rural Leadership Foundation and also a Facilitator for Adventure West Leadership and Survival Training activities. He was a Trek Leader for Adventure Kokoda and a developer of the Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge. Since 1991, Charlie has led over 100 expeditions across the Kokoda Track. He funded the establishment of Network Kokoda as a not-for-profit company to honour the legacy of the PNG wartime carriers and our veterans through the provision of educational, health and agricultural programs in Central and Oro Provinces.

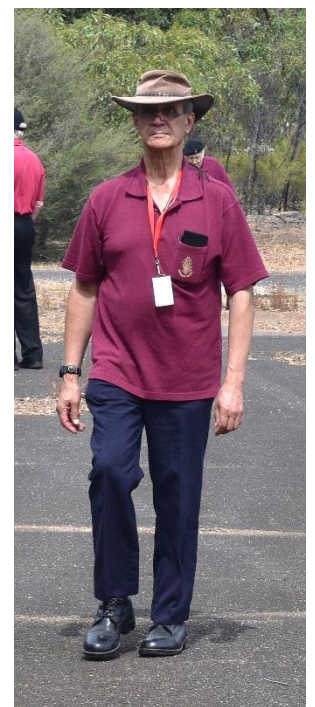
A keen fun-runner, Lynn was placed second in the Bathurst Centenary 100-kilometre ultramarathon in 1986, with a time of 8 hours 26 minutes. He held the New South Wales 24-hour Ultra Marathon record in 1985-86, with a distance of 213 kilometres. Charlie completed the first Triple M Ironman Triathlon in a time of 13 hours and 12 minutes.

Charlie was Chairman of the Campbelltown Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1993-94. He has also served as the Vice-President of Camden Branch (1994-95), President Macarthur FEC (1998-2000) for the Liberal Party, Patron of the Vietnam Veterans Reconstitution Group, Patron of Communities for Communities, NSW, and Corrective and Emergency Services Committee (1995). Lynn's first attempt at parliament was at the 1991 NSW election. Charlie Lynn was awarded the OAM in 2018 having served as a Liberal Party member of the New South Wales Legislative Council between 1995 and 2015.

In 2015 Charlie was inducted as an Officer of the Logohu by the PNG government in their New Years Honours and Awards list *for service to the bilateral relations between Papua New Guinea and Australia and especially in the development of the Kokoda Track and its honoured place in the history of both nations over the past 25 years*.

Another, less well-known, 'Tour Leader' is **Reg Yates**, who leads tours for Charlie. Reg served in 2 RVR for a few years in the 1970s. Neil Leckie had served with Reg in 22 RVR and he and Kaye were on one of Reg's 'Treks' in 2006. Reg is still actively engaged in activities in New Guinea and on Rabaul.

On 27 February 2022, Reg (at right, standing on a former 'S' Block road at Puckapunyal) wearing his 22 RVR Association Polo Shirt, attended the 50th Anniversary of the Presentation of the Colours made on 27 February 1972.



THE BALLARAT RANGER MILITARY MUSEUM

In the previous newsletter it was announced that the two containers were delivered to the museum. Fit-out of the containers is progressing, albeit slowly. The far ends of the containers are now joined by a covered walk through and the framework to hold the ceiling insulation is progressing. Once that is completed the walls will be covered in a special 'velcro' gripping carpet and the floor carpeted. New display cases are about to be ordered. An exciting time for the museum volunteers lays ahead.

There is a new Battalion Executive Officer, Major Matt Ford, who has visited the museum and is looking into all the legal aspects of the 'Unit Historical Collection'. The battalion has put out a call for volunteers to help out in the museum and this has already had some responses. The Army Cadets visited over two 'Parade' nights in August and two Cadets expressed interest in 'coming on board'. One member of the battalion and one Army Cadet have already attended the museum.

It would be nice to think that the new 'container' display will be available for viewing before Christmas, but early in the New Year is more likely.

Were You There? (Jarrad Heighway photos)



Jarrad found these photographs in his father's collection. They were placed on the Bravo Company Diggers Facebook Page. I would suggest that these were the 8th Battalion Colours, which were presented to the 8th/7th Bn (North-Western Victorian Regiment) on the Battalion's Centenary Weekend 9/10 August 1958.

In 1969, the by then named 2 RVR, were presented with their new 2 RVR Colours on 19 October and the 8th Battalion Colours were Laid Up in the Ballarat Town Hall on 2 November 1969. They are still there! This info is available in the 150th Book: Country Victoria's Own!!!

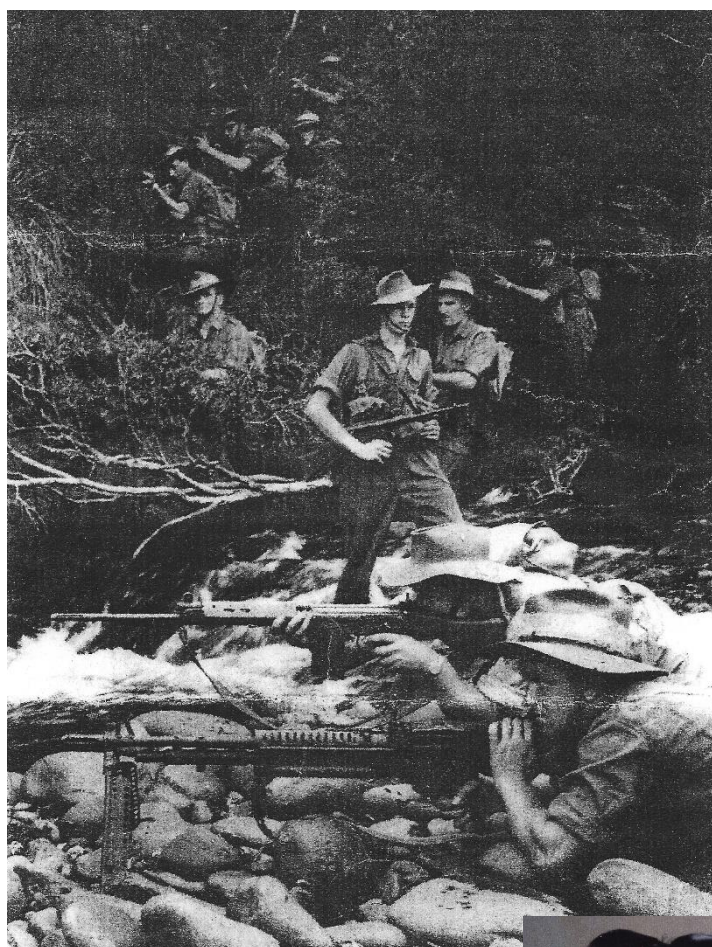
Does anyone have any other photos?

Some Old Photos:

Ian Nunn handed over some old photos to the association's newsletter Editor. Were you there in 1964?



1963 Jamieson Camp.
Major Brian Colbert,
Sgt (Cook) Arthur Hems and
Lt Ken Loveridge
at the B Company 'Cookhouse'



1964 Jamieson Camp.
Identified:
Noel Denman standing (SMG),
Ian Nunn (SLR) and
Brian Bennetts (GPMG)

Does anyone identify themselves in this photo?
I remember that photos, I am

.....
Looking at this photograph you
can understand why when training
for Vietnam it was 'sleeves down'
and take the puggaree of your slouch hat'

Right: Warrnambool
Reunion 1 October 2020.
The Editor would like names
and the location.
Our Warrnambool committee
members, Lyndon King, is second
from the right.



The North-Western Ranger



8th/7th BATTALION – 2RVR ASSOCIATION Inc.
VICTORIA'S OWN COUNTRY BATTALION
(Including the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum Newsletter)



Left: The existing Federation and (part) WW1 exhibition in the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum.

If undeliverable, please return to:
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c/- 3/519 Peel St North
Ballarat, Vic, 3350

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This newsletter was printed by the office of:

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