

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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Committee:

President	Dick Wilkie
Vice President	Chris Liston
Secretary	Jason County
Treasurer/Welfare/M'ship	Barbara Birthisel
Property Officer	Vacant
Editor	Neil Leckie

richardwilkie@outlook.com

Committee Members:

Greg Code
Lindsay Govan
Bruce McKinnon
Ian Nunn
Les Taylor
Allan Wettenhall

87th2rvrassoc@gmail.com

Warrnambool:

Lyndon King

The Association's Newsletter Editor's email address is 87th2rvrassoc@gmail.com
For urgent newsletter matters please use nkaleckie@optusnet.com.au

REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP (Barbara Birthisel)

Thank you for the many prompt membership payments received in recent weeks. This year we tried something different, by sending out email invoices and again well received. We did, however, have a small glitch on the first release where one of the fields was incorrect and didn't identify the actual person to whom the email was addressed. So, if you forwarded a Direct Credit for \$20 on 17 October under the reference ACK001 (your surname not starting with ACK) would you mind advising me please so this can be rectified. More recently another Direct Credit \$40 on 13 November (ACK001) was received.

Welcome, to the following new members:

Dick Chapman, Mick Edge, Doug Heazlewood, Paul Jones and Alan Donovan.

Farewell, to the following members:

Lance Jennison, Keith Wallace, Alan Douglass and Bob Carmichael.

The Association thanks those members for their contribution and wishes them well for the future.

Missing in Action! We have a few members that we have not heard from in recent years and would like to know how they are and if they wish to continue their membership. There are many reasons why we lose contact: ill health, change of address/phone number/email address, etc. If you know someone on the list or even your own name is listed it would be very much appreciated if you could make contact.

Kaziu Burka, Andrew Douglas, Peter Honey, Max Humphrys,
Brian McInnes, Tony Melis, Philip Stewart and Arthur White.

Warrnambool Dinner:

Some 50 members and partners attended the Warrnambool dinner on 14 October 2023 at the Warrnambool RSL. The service and meal were good, the company was good, all had a great night and the subsidy from the association was welcome!



Left: Warrnambool Committee Members Lyndon King and Barb Birthisel with President Dick Wilkie
Right: Doug & Ken Heazlewood, Bernie O'Keefe, G. McKenzie & Murray Heazlewood



Left: Rear: Kay & Pat Dixon, Ella Baudinette, Front: Graham & J Hoare & Greg Code
Right: Rear: Mick Edge, Gordon & Mrs Stirling, Peter Malcolm. Front: Paul Jones, Dick & Glenys Chapman, Susie Malcolm

The Ballarat Dinner was attended by some thirty people. It was held this year at 'The Grand' Restaurant at The Ballarat Club, in Dana Street, Ballarat. The restaurant 'looked after us' on price, and like the Warrnambool dinner, the association provided a subsidy, which was welcomed. The meal was excellent as was the service!

Dick Wilkie requested that the battalion quick march be played at the dinner. The music was held on a CD by the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum and Neil Leckie gave a history of the tune before it was played. The version being played was recorded August 1959 under bandmaster Rasmussen.

The Regimental Quick March of 8/7 RVR: I'm 95

The Rifle Brigade was an infantry rifle regiment of the British Army formed in 1800 as the "Experimental Corps of Riflemen" to provide sharpshooters, scouts, and skirmishers. They were soon renamed the "Rifle Corps". In 1803, they became an established regular regiment and were titled the 95th Regiment of Foot (Rifles). In 1816, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, they were again renamed, this time as the "Rifle Brigade". The unit was distinguished by its use of green uniforms, just as the Ballarat Volunteer Rifle Regiment did when it was formed in 1858, in place of the traditional redcoat.

'I'm Ninety five' was the march or 'quickstep' of the Rifle Brigade. It became the march of the 8th/7th Battalion (The North Western Victorian Regiment) in 1953.

'I'm 95 is sometimes known as "*Jean de Paree*" or "*JOHN OF PARIS*". It is a Scottish and English Jig and Morris Dance Tune. "*Jean de Paris*" is the title of a French comic opera first performed in Paris in 1812, and it is possible that this tune has some connection with the opera. The melody has been used for a single step dance in the North-West England Morris Dance tradition where it is popular under the title Ninety-Five. Revealing that alternate title, this is sung by Morris Dancers:

*The girls go by and they wink one eye,
It's will you marry me? No, not I;
I'm ninety-five, I'm ninety five,
And to stay single I'll contrive.*

In 1842, dressed as an old lady, Rifleman Goodall of the Rifles, sang "I'm Ninety Five". The tune, in the guise of 'John of Paris', had been known for over 20 years - but someone had put new words to it:

*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.ⁱ*



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.ⁱⁱ*



Past Officers Dinner, Ballarat Golf Club, 7 October 2023 (Neil Leckie)

For many years the past officers of the battalion have held a 'Past Officers Dinner' at a date somewhere near the Battalion's Birthday on 9 August each year. This year the battalion's officers and NCOs held a 165th Birthday Dinner at Laverton on Saturday 5 August 2023. The battalion's Past Officers were invited to attend. Nine took up the invitation. At that dinner it was decided to still hold a Past Officers Dinner this year. This occurred on Saturday 7 October 2023.



In past years the dinner was held at the barracks with Mark Broemmer undertaking the catering. With Mark's passing there isn't the availability of a Caterer to run such a dinner at the barracks, so the nearby Ballarat Gold Club was selected as the venue.

There were numerous apologies, but eight past officers took the opportunity to attend. The service and food provided by the Golf Club was excellent, and the prices competitive. A good night was had by all!

Attendees were Alan Donovan, Mark Harris, Bill Akell, Neil Leckie, Bob Prewett, Barb Birthisel, Rupert Dalley and Paul Riley.

RVR Association Members Visit Puckapunyal (RVR Association Website)

On Sunday 22 October 2023 the RVR-A were again invited by 5/6 RVR to attend and support the Military Skills Weekend. Garry McCluskey & Scott Hamilton travelled to Puckapunyal to represent the RVR-A at this event. They were welcomed, chauffeured and escorted by WO2 Alex Anderson for the day, visiting the WTSS, mixed with troops and observed two combat scenarios on the WTSS. The WTSS is a very helpful "tool" to assist with training and the development of soldiers and sections. Garry and Scott watched the scenarios from the tiered observation area at the rear of the WTSS facility. Being a simulation, they were able to gain a good vantage point, even though they found themselves within the BBDA of the simulated 84mm Carl Gustav. Garry and Scott were able to take the opportunity to stand up and get a clearer view of

the engagement, while the simulated tracer and shell fire was flying around them. Garry said: 'It would've been nice to have the ability to return fire to offer some additional fire support to the section!' The events simulated an urban engagement with infantry and AFV's and an engagement in open foothill country by infantry and MBT's. Garry and Scott were impressed with the scenarios as they unfolded and the response of the section involved. Sgt Lehman gave them a very informative and concise run-down on the scenarios and section response that were put to the soldiers on the events observed.

After this WO Anderson, out of courtesy, offered to organise some kit and packs for Garry and Scott to accompany the troops on the march to the NSL. At the NSL they mixed with the troops and Scott came across several soldiers he knew from his days with 5/6. He was pleasantly surprised by the number of them who recognised him and they mused over many a time they all recalled, enjoyable for those concerned and shows the enduring mateship that all gain from service.

After a relatively short period the companies started marching in from the WTSS for lunch. C Company CSM, WO Tim Steer piped each company in to the NSL for the last 200m or so. The Adjutant, Captain Adams, presented the course troops with a commemorative coin and congratulated each on achieving this goal. 5/6 RVR provided a BBQ lunch, complete with some salads and fruit, a balanced meal consisting of all food groups. The RVR-A supplied the liquid refreshments on this day (liquid logistics Supply Company).

It was an intense and hard weekend event for all participants and sleep time was certainly at the minimum. One would think that many of the boys would've dozed off on the journey back to their depots later that day.

Garry and Scott had a very interesting and stimulating discussion with WO1 Darren Christopher about such topics as small arms, equipment and various bits of kit. This was a most stimulating, educating and enlightening discussion. WO Christopher was certainly 'full bottle' on all the equipment at hand: eg EF88's NVG, side arms, SAW's, boots, Vests and so on.

Garry and Scott considered it a great opportunity for the RVR-A to promote itself to the soldiers in such events and keep the association members up-to-date and in contact with the battalions' officers, WO's NCO's etc.

RVR Association Update (RVR Association Website)

The RVR Association is a sister organisation that takes its membership from those who have served, or are serving in, the Royal Victoria Regiment or any predecessor infantry units.

The President and Committee hope you are all well. We welcome our new members and welcome back those who have renewed their membership. A brief summary of the Association activities this year is:

- A. The 5 BN AIF Bardia flag presentation in February at HMAS Cerberus.
- B. Participate in planning and conduct of the 5/6 RVR Dinner.
- C. ANZAC Day march as reunion.
- D. Attend Government House to mark the Coronation of the King in May.
- E. Support to various Bn and company functions in Melbourne & country Victoria including the PMA over the year.
- F. Approved DVA Grant to replace vandalised plaque at Darwin's Centennial Park.
- G. Planning for Infantry Dinner in Mar 24 to be held at the RACV Club.
- H. The Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, agrees to become the Representative Colonel of the RVR.
- I. Attendance at 5/6 RVR Hails and Farewells, which included several members of the Battalion & Pipes & Drums being promoted.
- J. Committee meetings in both Bn HQ's and various Sub-Unit locations.

Our last committee meeting for the year was held at Altona RSL. At the meeting we thanked Paul Riley for his service to the Association and presented him with a certificate of Appreciation. The meeting was held at Altona RSL as they support the 'Pompey Elliott' Scholarship and the Pipes and Drums. We thank the President G. Williams and his team for making us welcome on the night and thank them for their support to the Association.

The Association would like to thank both CO's, LTCOL Allen and LTCOL Sonogan and RSM's WO1 Percy & WO1 Vermey and command group members for their support to the association during the year. We wish all Battalion members being posted or moving on, all the best in the next phase of their careers and welcome all marching into the Battalions all the best.

The President and committee wish all our members, all Battalion members and their families a safe, happy and healthy Christmas, and wonderful New Year.

Battalion news

Both Battalions supported numerous ceremonial activities during the year, including ANZAC and Remembrance Day Services. Both Battalions are also preparing for any task of supporting the community over the Christmas period. Congratulations to all members of the battalions who have been promoted during the year or received commendations for their efforts.

A yearly wrap up from the Battalions:

In 2023, 5/6 RVR activities included:

- Conducted first Mortar Course since 2011,
- Participated in Ex Talisman-Sabre and provided solders for RCB rotation,
- Mounting unit for TSE111.

- Battalion Ball,

- Raised motorisation training cell,

- Continued with warfighter training,

- Conducted Battalion Mil-Skills event, results were:

- Section Competition Results: In a close contest:

- 1st C COY, 2nd A COY 3rd D COY, 4th B COY

- Champion Shot: PTE Basile.

- Champion Soldier: PTE McLeod.

- Champion Section Commander: LCPL Lincoln (D COY)

- Well done to all who participated.

- Participated in 4 Brigade Shooting Competition.

- Congratulations to the 5/6 RVR team who won the 4th Brigade shooting competition.

- The team consisted of: CPL Cook (Team Captain), CAPT Fintelman, LT Grech,

- CPL Rutherford, PTE Basile, supported by: WO2 Worner and PTE Saleh

- The team won best overall shooting team, as well as the following.

- Best pistol team, Best long range shooting match, Best Combat shooting team aggregate,

- Fastest time for 2.2km in combat order plus shoot.

- Outstanding effort for a team on limited preparation.

- Individual results for the members were:

- Pistol overall standings: 2nd place – CPL Cook, 3rd Place - CAPT Fintelman

- Highest RP3A overall, CPL Cook

- Combat Shooting: 3rd place – CPL Cook

- Rifle shooting overall: 3rd place - CAPT Fintelman

- Long range shooting: 2nd place – PTE Basile, 3rd place – CPL Rutherford

From 5/6 RVR RSM: 8/7 RVR also competed well in the Brigade setting, and one of their Sniper CPL's picked up a couple of awards.

Main 8/7 RVR BN Activities for 2023:

Land Capability Combat Review

Developed unit Motorisation,

Completed Recon courses for unit members and developed unit Recon capability,

Sniper training and qualification,

Trained unit PMV (Protected Mobility Vehicle) drivers,

Trained drivers on 40M (MAN) Trucks, and

Trained G-Wagon (Mercedes) drivers

Received 40M transport trucks.

Exercise Able Dieman with 8/7 RVR providing the O5 HQ for a trans-Tasman Ex involving 4/19 PWLH, 5/6 RVR and 12/40 RTR.

Supported Ex Talisman-Sabre and RCB Rotations.

Completed BCSC (Basic Combat Shooting Courses) and ECSC, including integration with RAAF Air Defence Guards.

Battalion 165th Birthday and Dining-In.

PMV TTP and Tactics development and crew commander development,

Established new indoor close combat range in the unit,.

Undertaken several regular weekend training exercises for skills and Soldier Pay and Trade development, and

The year concluded with 8/7 RVR Battalion Warfighter that integrated flanking units into exercise including motorisation, CSSB, 5/6 RVR and Sigs.

A Date for the diary:

The Infantry Dinner, 3 March 2024 at the RACV Club Melbourne. \$120 members/\$140 Non Members.

The association is always on the look-out for articles and news events, images of RVR events and members or pieces of interest to our members. Reminder, visit our website and Facebook page for additional information. Merchandise and membership forms are available on the web site. If you know the people in the pictures on the web site, please inform us so they can be named.

Stay Safe and Healthy, Stay in contact with family and friends. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

FIVE MINUTES WITH DAVID BENT (with David Bent)

A brief outline of David Bent's service was given in newsletter 1 of 2021. Dick Wilkie suggested that there was more to the story, so David was contacted, and he provided a short history of the AATTV and expanded a little on his own military service. – Ed

Could there have been a Junior CMF Officer in 'The Team'?

It is hard to believe that a man who had only graduated as a CMF officer on 1 September 1965, at just 20 years of age, would be selected as a member of the Australian Army Training Team – Vietnam (AATTV of 'The Team') arriving in Vietnam on 1 October 1968. But it happened:

The AATTV, affectionately known as 'The Team', was raised and sent to Vietnam in 1962 initially under the command of Colonel F. P. Serong. The unit at this time consisted of 30 Officers and Warrant Officers who were originally to be employed in the training roles of Vietnamese Units. As the war escalated, in 1965 'The Team' was increased to 100 members (including some Staff Sergeants, Sergeants and Corporals) and were employed from the Delta areas in the far South to the northern border of the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Vietnam.

'The Team' was both elite and unique. Its members were specially selected, it was small, and for its size it was one of the most highly decorated units in the history of the Australian Army. Its claim to uniqueness springs from a number of factors: it existed only in Vietnam where members joined it from Australia, singly or in drafts; it consisted mostly of Officers and Warrant Officers who operated

individually, in pairs, or occasionally in groups of normally not more than ten; and its task was unique - training, advising, or commanding a variety of Vietnamese forces. The first Australian unit into Vietnam and the last out, it was operational for ten years, four months, and sixteen days, achieving the distinction of being the longest serving unit of any service in any theatre of war. Even if only because of its name, it is not likely to exist again.

The members of 'The Team' were so spread across South Vietnam that they met as a unit only on ANZAC Day, and once when they paraded in Vung Tau in 1970 to receive a Unit Citation from the Commander of the American Forces, General Abrams. Collectively the unit can claim to have built up a special knowledge of the war as it was fought over the whole of South Vietnam. Early in the conflict the unit was referred to by a Federal MP as "the expendables".

The AATTV identification shoulder patch is green shield with gold lettering, a boomerang with 'AATTV' across the top of the shield, a crossbow depiction the unit's involvement with the Montagnard tribes of the mountain regions who played a large part in "The Team's" operations and below this, a scroll with the word 'Persevere' entered within.



British and Australian military awards received by all ranks during the period 1962 - 1972 were:

Victoria Cross (VC)	4
Distinguished Service Order (DSO)	2
Order of the British Empire (OBE)	3
Member of the British Empire (MBE)	6
Military Cross (MC)	6
Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM)	20
Military Medal (MM)	16
British Empire Medal (BEM)	4
Mentioned in Dispatches (MID)	49
Queens Commendation	4

A total of 114 decorations in all. Add to this the unit decorations of the United States Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Unit Citation of the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm and individual awards from both US and Vietnamese Governments.

A Total of 1,006 men served in 'The Team'. Sadly, 34 members died in the service.

A CMF Officer in 'The Team'

David George Bent was born on 28 October 1944. He was an Army Cadet at Geelong College. In 1963, he was employed by Shell at the Geelong refinery. Not having shown enough skill to be listed by the Geelong Football Club, he fell back on the great times he had while serving in the Cadets and on 15 June 1963 he enlisted in the CMF with A Company, 2 RVR, at Geelong (in the Pentropic Division days). David said that he 'loved every minute of it, however the only problem was that those in control decided that A Coy, 2RVR would become an Artillery Regiment and members would change corps to Artillery. Given my training so far had been all Infantry, no thanks.' This meant that David would need to transfer to B Coy, 2 RVR, Ballarat. This occurred on 29 January 1964.

David continued 'This was massive and meant numerous trips after work and weekends up and down the Geelong/Ballarat Road. This travelling went on for four years, however, at no time was there any regret. A guy by the name of Mal Waterhouse, a member of 2 RVR, was a Highway Patrol Officer living at Sebastopol. After every training night, I would call into his house for a coffee and relax before the trip back home in Geelong.'

By December 1964 David realised with upcoming Conscription, and men being given the opportunity to serve in the CMF rather than be conscripted, that 2 RVR was going to get busier.

David undertook officer training with the 3rd Division Officer Training Unit at Prahran. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant on 1 September 1965 and returned to Ballarat as a Platoon Commander with 5 Platoon, B Coy. While there David decided to gain more Army experience and applied for Full-time Duty (FTD).

On 5 March 1968, after four interviews at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne David was accepted for FTD and service in Vietnam. 'The plan was to carry out a bit of training and transfer to a Regular Army Battalion as a Lieutenant Platoon Commander. WELL, THAT PLAN DID NOT WORK!! After a number of courses including two trips to the Infantry Training Centre at Ingleburn and two trips to the Jungle Warfare Centre at Canungra, Queensland, my papers were marked OK as a Platoon Commander, (but definitely not the AATTV. Seems I was too inexperienced and young (plus was a CMF officer).'

On 19 July 1968 David attended a briefing on Vietnam for members of 'The Team'. 'Well, there you go and there I went!' On 1 October 1968, David was promoted to Temporary Captain and arrived in Vietnam posted as the Adjutant, AATTV, in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). He was transferred on 1 May 1969 to the 1st Battalion, 51st Independent Regiment, Army Republic of Vietnam, based at Mieu Bong, just south of Da Nang, as a Senior Advisor.



At left: With Dai Uy (Captain) Ba - Battalion Commander 1st Bn 51st Regt ARVN. Dai Uy Ba was David's counterpart.

'The whole time I was on FTD I was detached from 2RVR and wore the RVR badge (photo at left), which confused some.' David returned to Australia on 1 October 1969. 'Through the whole time of FTD my employer, Shell, had been totally supportive and on return offered me a marketing position in Melbourne with a plan to move to Albury/Wodonga. On 1 July 1970 David was posted to HQ 4 Task Force as a GSO3. This was an interim position, until he moved to Albury/Wodonga.

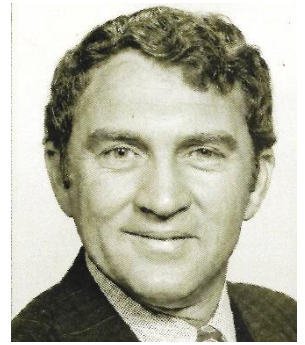
In Albury/Wodonga, while still a 2 RVR member, but serving with 8/13 Victorian Mounted Rifles, two things happened:

1. David had the opportunity to purchase a Shell wholesale business, and
2. 'Those who must be obeyed, made it very clear that I should transfer from Infantry to Armored Corps and leave 2 RVR.'

David Transferred to the Reserve of Officers, 'a place where retired officers go to tell war stories, on 16 July 1974.' David concludes: 'Post Army, in 1973 my wife, Cheryl and I acquired a business, North Eastern Petroleum, a wholesale (depots) and retail (service stations) business eventually covering northeastern Victoria and the Southern Riverina of NSW. Selling the business in 2001, and looking around for interests I became very involved, as a volunteer, with the NSW Rural Fire Service. This activity and its disciplines fell back upon my Army training, ensuring that my involvement has been worthwhile.' David and Cheryl now live in Glenroy, a suburb of Albury, in NSW. Their son lives in Melbourne.

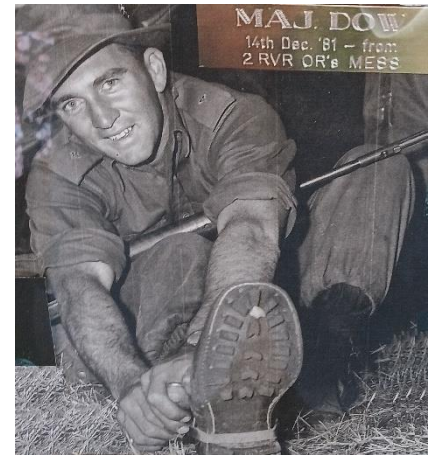
VALE

Donald Charles Norman John Dow was born in France on 24 September 1937. He arrived in Australia with his family in 1939. The family settled in Ballarat and lived in Hickman Street. Don attended the Dana Street State School and then the Ballarat Technical School (now a part of the School of Mines Campus of Federation Uni). He found work with the State Electricity Commission and stayed for 37 years. That was followed by over 22 years with McCann's Plumbing.



Don joined the Citizen Military Forces in the Pentropic era as 387983. He is seen at left as a Sergeant, with Sergeant (later Captain) Tom Laffey. Don was commissioned into the Infantry (2 RVR) on 4 December 1964, in the same group of new officers as Frank Norton (Arty, later 2 RVR), Jim Mack (Arty, later CO 2 RVR) and Geoff Green (Inf, who transferred to 5 RVR some six months after commissioning). As a

Captain, Don undertook two visits to Vietnam: attached to 2 RAR, 10 – 26 November 1970 and attached to 3 RAR, 14 April – 1 May 1971. Don was farewelled from 2 RVR on 14 December 1981.



In 1965 Don married Joyce and they eventually moved from Ballarat to Melbourne for two years, Norlane and then Leopold in 1969. The couple would have two children and later six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Don loved fishing (passing this love onto his grandchildren), sailing and drumming with jazz bands. He was also a big fan of singer Frank Sinatra!

In his later years Don was struck down with Parkinson's Disease and with dementia, needing a walking frame and later a wheelchair. Don died at 86 years of age on 6 December 2023. His funeral was held in Leopold on 15 December and was attended by five association members (Dick Wilkie, Bob Prewett, Tom Harding, Ron Joseph and Neil Leckie) along with Ballarat Ranger Military Museum members Keith and Jo Irvine. Jo is Don's sister.

Gary Alexander Pearse was born on 24 August 1953 and by the 1980s was a uniformed Policeman in Mildura. He was also a Warrant Officer Class 2 with 8/7 RVR in the Army Reserve. He was a Company Sergeant Major and undertook that role when 8/7 RVR sent a Company to New Zealand on Exercise Tasman Reserve in 1988. On retirement from Victoria Police Gary was a Leading Senior Constable. He was a Lodge, Mildura RSL and SSAA member. Gary died on 10 December 2023. In accordance with Gary's wishes there was a private cremation with Gary's ashes being interred at Coomealla Memorial Gardens.



Right: Gary's Army home, Kiarivu Barracks, Mildura. Named after the Battle of Kaboibus-Kiarivu 15 July to 8 August 1945 fought by the 2/7th Bn, AIF

FEATURES:

Warrnambool – A Military History

In 1802 during a lull in the wars against the French, the British Government decided upon drastic retrenchments of the military forces. In the Australian Colonies Governor King was instructed to induce as many men as possible to accept discharge from 'the Corps' and settle on the land as an alternative to being sent back to England. About this time the first equivalent of the Australian militia came into existence. The idea seems to have been Governor King's.

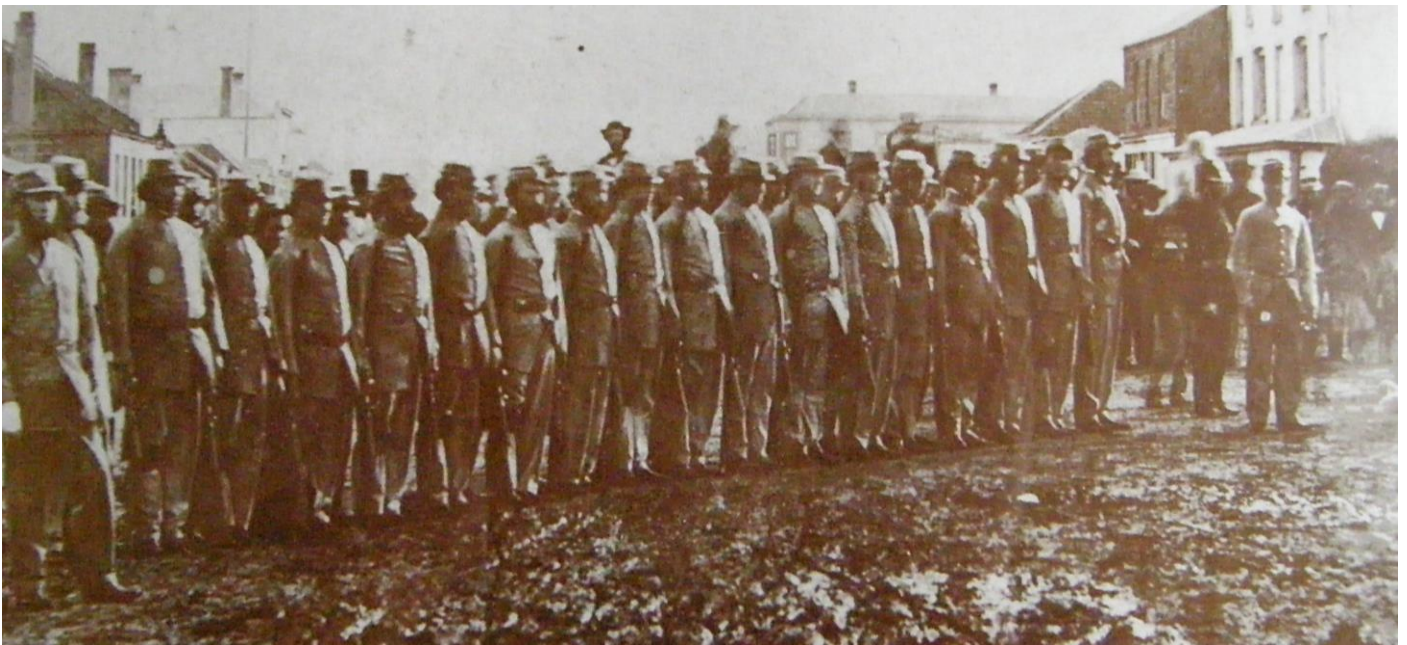
He stated that the object of the Loyal Sydney and Parramatta Associations (separate entities), as they were called, was to assist the civil and military powers in the preservation of good order and the protection of public and private property, and to meet any attack by the French upon the Colony in event of resurgence of war.

This embryonic citizens' army was to be recruited from young men of good record in the Colony, including some born in the Colony - free men themselves, though their parents might not have been.

The force, formed in the Colony of NSW, formed a reserve for the NSW Corps (the Rum Corps), wearing the same uniforms, but distinguished by having cropped hair rather than the 'pigtailed' that the NSW Corps wore.

The Colony of Victoria separated from the Colony of NSW on 1 July 1851 (Separation Day). In the midst of the Crimean War (1853-56), the Victorian Colonial Government, concerned with the threat of a Russian invasion, proclaimed The Defence Act on 3 November 1854. It allowed for the raising of a force of 2,000 men. However, in May of 1854, Geelong had already raised a unit: The Geelong Volunteer Rifle Corps.

In August 1855, locals met in Warrnambool to form a volunteer force. However, it was not until July 1859 that the Warrnambool Volunteer Rifles was actually raised. By 1863 it became apparent that the 1854 Volunteer Act had its short-comings and a reorganisation took place. Most units were dispensed with and new units raised. The 'Rifles' were disbanded.



Above: Queen's Birthday Parade, 24 May 1860, Warrnambool.

In 1866 an Artillery unit, The Warrnambool Battery, Western Artillery, was raised. Lieutenant Charles Augustus Cramer, a local Magistrate, joined the unit on 9 December 1867. He was promoted to Captain and Officer Commanding on 17 June 1869, and Major on 20 December 1884, remaining in that role until his

death on 28 July 1885. On his death Cramer was the Town Clerk, having at one time been the Mayor of Warrnambool. There is a Cramer Street in Warrnambool.

New Year's Eve 1868 saw the opening of the Headquarters, called the 'Orderly Room' in Kepler Street. The walls of the building are now incorporated into a TAFE College building. The impressive 'Orderly Room' (far right in photo at left) became the cultural, entertainment and Military Headquarters for Warrnambool and district.



In 1870 Lord Granville (Granville George Leveson-Gower, British Home Office) stated that the Imperial Forces present in the colonies were no longer required and would be returned to England. Most of the force left in August and September that year, but the General Officer Commanding and his staff (rumour has it that they were enjoying their farewells and found it hard to leave) did not leave until October. The Colonial forces were now on their own!

On 20 February 1884 the Warrnambool Detachment of the Western Garrison Battery was disbanded. It was replaced with a detachment of the 2nd Brigade of Garrison Artillery. Headquarters and a battery were at Portland, with Batteries at Belfast (Port Fairy) and Warrnambool.

On 31 March 1885, Warrnambool Grammar formed a Cadet Detachment. This was followed on 20 April 1885 by State School 1743 at Warrnambool also forming a Cadet Detachment.

In 1885, Lieutenant Colonel Tom Price raised a new force known as the Victorian Mounted Rifles. It quickly grew to 45 detachments across Victoria, with many of its recruits from Rifle Clubs, who were a back-up military organisation. In June 1891 the detachments were split into two battalions. The 1st Battalion was based in Melbourne and eastern Victoria, while the 2nd Battalion was headquartered in Ballarat and covered western Victoria. G Company included Warrnambool. A further restructure in 1894 saw the official loss of the Warrnambool detachment, although they continued to 'parade'.

On 16 October 1888 the 1st and 2nd Brigades of Garrison Artillery were cancelled and each battery was reconstituted as a Corps. In 1897 the artillery became the Western District Garrison Artillery Brigade.

On 14 June 1898 'The College' at Warrnambool formed a Detachment of the Victorian Volunteer Cadet Corps. 27 August 1900 saw the Warrnambool & Allansford Detachments of G Company VMR becomes the Warrnambool Detachment, G Company.

On 1 January 1901 Australia became a nation. The colonial defence forces became a part of the Australian defence forces. The battalions of the Victorian Infantry Brigade became battalions of the 'Infantry Brigade'. The Warrnambool artillery was once again renamed, this time as No. 4 Battery, Field Artillery. The 90-pounder muzzle loading guns were replaced with 4.7 inch naval guns mounted on field carriages. These guns were, by comparison, very heavy and needed bullocks, heavy horses and steam traction engines to pull them around, especially to the firing range at Lake Gilleard, east of Warrnambool. The guns were extremely accurate and were used in World War One with great success in defence of the Suez Canal. The guns did not return to Warrnambool.

Post-Federation, the formation of the Australian Army in 1903 saw Warrnambool's Victorian Mounted Rifles unit reorganised into the Western District 11th Australian Light Horse (ALH) Regiment. Ballarat would come under the 9th ALH Regiment.

The Victorian Regiments were formed into two brigades: 3rd ALH Bde formed by the 7th, 8th and 9th ALH Regiments and the 4th ALH Bde included the 10th, 11th and 12th ALH Regiments. The 11th, centred on Colac, would form the 20th (Corangamite) Light Horse. In 1910 the Order of Battle was revised with the 3rd Bde now made up of the 7th, 8th and 10th Regiments and the 4th Bde now made up of the 9th, 11th and newly raised 19th Light Horse. 1912 saw a further change to the 4th Bde, which was now to be called the 7th Bde and was made up of the 17th, 19th and 20th Regiments. World War One saw the numbers of many of these Regiments and Brigades on the battlefields.

When the full introduction of Compulsory Military Training was introduced in Australia in 1912, 12 to 14 year-old boys became Junior Cadets at school and 14 to 17 year-olds became Senior Cadets with their local Citizen Military Forces unit. The year they turned 18 the 'boys' transferred to the CMF, where they remained until they turned 26 years-of-age. In 1912 Warrnambool, Casterton, Hamilton and Koroit, formed a company of Ballarat's 71st Infantry. As the compulsory training scheme expanded, in 1915 the 72nd Infantry was formed in Warrnambool from Ballarat's 71st Infantry. After the outbreak of World War One, many of Warrnambool's men enlisted into the 8th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Australian Division (Blood and Bandages – white over red Colour Patch). The WW1 'AIF Project' shows that there were 610 enlistments from Warrnambool.

Post 'The Great War', along with the 20th Light Horse, later renamed the 4th Corangamite Light Horse, many military units were raised in the Warrnambool area. This included B Company 21st Infantry Battalion (The Victorian Rangers), a unit which encapsulated the 21st Battalion, AIF, and the 73rd Infantry (Victorian Rangers) history. The Commonwealth Military Forces Compulsory Military Training continued for the Senior Cadets and the Militia, although the Junior Cadets ended in 1922. The 21st Battalion received their Colours in Warrnambool on ANZAC Day, 1926. By 1929 both the Light Horse and 21st Battalions had their headquarters in the Warrnambool Orderly Room.

The 'Depression', which commenced in 1929, saw the 21st Battalion linked with the 23rd Battalion from Geelong, forming the 23rd/21st Battalion. (City of Geelong Regiment). War-fighting had made the horse redundant and the Light Horse would form the basis of the Armoured and Mechanised Cavalry units.

World War Two saw many men from Warrnambool join the 2nd AIF. They were spread across dozens of units. Other men, and some women, joined the RAN and RAAF. The 23rd/21st Battalion served for some time in Australia before being disbanded, with its members reinforcing other CMF units.

Post-WW2, on 1 July 1948, the Citizen Military Forces were re-raised. B Squadron, 4th/19th Prince of Wales' Light Horse (Armoured) Regiment was formed in Warrnambool with the Regimental Headquarters in Ararat. This combined the two Light Horse unit numbers from between the wars. Cadets were also raised for boys 16 to 18 years-of-age. At the same time, at the other end of the state, the 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles was raised. 4th/19th were equipped with Grant tanks, American medium tanks armed with a 75mm hull gun, a 37mm turret gun and a .30 calibre Browning machine gun. Live firing was undertaken along the foreshore within the town boundary. Targets were moored out to sea and were engaged with High Explosive and Armour Piercing rounds. Many local citizens had their Saturday mornings disturbed by the clattering of tanks moving through the town to the firing ranges.

By 1952, being so far from the Puckapunyal RAAC Workshops, maintaining the tanks was becoming an issue. With the introduction of National Service in 1951, it was thought that the numbers being posted to units for three years after their initial three months at Puckapunyal, that numbers in all existing CMF units would quickly increase. The Warrnambool and Port Fairy unit was therefore transferred to the artillery as 36 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, with its RAEME workshop at Warrnambool, and its ancillary 36 Artillery Platoon, RAASC at Terang. The 3.7 inch guns had their first shoot at Thunder Point, just west of Warrnambool. A year later it was found that the CMF numbers were not as high as expected and Warrnambool would be changed to 38 Light Anti-Aircraft/Searchlight Regiment with batteries at Warrnambool, Portland and Hamilton.

A further change occurred in 1957 when Warrnambool became a battery of the 8th Medium Regiment. This would change again, becoming R Battery, 10th Medium Regiment. In 1960 the unit moved out of the 'Old Drill Hall' in Kepler Street into the Pertobe Road Depot.



The Pentropic Division (every level in groups of five) commenced on 1 July 1960, which meant massive changes to the CMF Infantry units, but Warrnambool remained as artillery, However, a review of the Pentropic Division in February 1965 saw more changes. The Warrnambool unit now became Support Company of 2 RVR. Battalion Headquarters, Admin Company and a part of B Company were in Ballarat, with B Company having a depot in Maryborough. C Company was located in Shepparton, with depots at Echuca and Cobram.

Since 1965, the Warrnambool depot has remained with 2 RVR, which was renumbered 8/7 RVR in 1987.

The Malone Military Dynasty, Part 2 (Neil Leckie)

The first part of 'The Malone Dynasty' article was published in the previous issue of the association's newsletter. It concentrated on the first generation of the Malone family to serve in the Australian Army: Vic and Perc. Vic served with Ballarat's 8th Battalion. The article was written for the Malone family by your Editor and was first published in 2021 in the Ex 22 RVR Association newsletter in the lead up to the 50th Anniversary of the Presentation of Colours in February 2022. Major Malone played a big part in the organisation of that Colours Presentation Parade and later in the formation of the Ex-22 RVR Association. Mark and Michael Malone attended the 50th Anniversary and commented at the time that they thought it was fantastic that their family's military history, particularly their father's, had been published. 'How many other families have had their military history published?' was the thought expressed. However, one member of the family was not happy about the family information being published. Our apology! Consequently, the full article will not be published.

In summary, the *second generation* in the Malone Dynasty was James 'Jim' Malone (centre of photo at right) who served in the post-WW2 AIF, the 8/7th Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment), 2 RVR and finally 22 RVR.

The *third generation* were Jim's son Peter, who joined the Regular Army, finishing his time with 8/7 RVR; youngest son Terry who served with 2 RVR before joining the Regular Army; and younger daughter Donna, who joined 2 RVR and also spent time in the Regular Army.



The *fourth generation* were Peter's son Andrew and Mark's sons Paul (RAAF) and Jesse.

MINUTES OF AGM held 19 November 2023 at Alfredton Sports & Community Centre

1. President Dick Wilkie opened the meeting at 10.37am and welcomed all present. A special welcome to Bill Burns who had travelled down from Koorlong (NW Victoria) to attend the dinner and AGM.
2. A minute's silence to remember those who had departed in the past 12 months.
3. **Present:** Dick Wilkie, Bruce McKinnon, Lindsay Govan, Jeff Zala, Bill Randall, Bob Prewett, Greg Code, Ian Nunn, Neil Leckie, Barry Harris, Heather Harris, Bill Burns, Bob Carmichael, Barbara Birthisel, Lyndon King, Jason County (16)
4. **Apologies:** Clark Chester, Chris Liston, Bernadette Ackland, Bluey Franc, Sheldon Brunt. (5)
Moved Greg Code seconded Jason County; that the apologies as noted be accepted. Carried
5. **Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting** held on 20th November, 2022 were read out by the President. Moved Jeff Zala seconded Neil Leckie; that the Minutes be confirmed as a true and correct record. Carried
6. **Business Arising from the minutes:** Nil

7. **Reports for 2022 -2023**

Combined President and Secretary's reports

The Committee conducted regular monthly meetings at the Sebastopol RSL

Highlights:

The Association received an invitation to attend a function at Government House that was conducted by the Governor herself in which she acknowledged her time in her appointment as Governor. Several Association representatives attended.

ANZAC Day parades were poorly attended this year as was the Reserve Forces Day.

The Association had a very successful year again participating in the Ballarat South Rotary Club raffle selling 100 books in total. We had recently received advice that it was to be held again. The Association has given a commitment to undertake ticket sales again. The Association will need to look at how best to approach the many no cash scenarios that present these days.

Assistance Dogs. Members donations to be addressed. It has been identified that we need to reactivate liaison with the group.

Liaison with Bn. Contact has been very difficult. Currently the Bn members are deployed and as a consequence could not attend the Annual Dinner.

There is a need to get some social activities in place again.

Congratulations to Neil for his efforts compiling and producing the Newsletter.

Thank you to all Committee members for their input and enthusiasm. Best wishes for the next twelve months.

Dick expressed the importance of keeping in contact with one and all.

Welfare

Barbara reiterated Dick's last point and stressed the importance of herself or a Committee Member being told of any illness or bereavement known involving our members. During the year we had lost several members as acknowledged at the beginning of the meeting and best wishes had been sent out to those members who were far from well. We will continue to send out the Christmas cards which has proven to be a great means of keeping in touch.

Moved Greg Code seconded Bob Prewett that the above reports as presented be accepted. Carried

Treasurer's Report

In the absence of the Treasurer, Barbara Birthisel spoke to the tabled finance reports, being Statement of Receipts and Expenditure – CBA Working Account

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure – People’s Choice Investment Account – then handed over to Bob Prewett to pass on any comments re the annual audit. Auditor’s comment on the bottom of the finance statement.

Moved Bill Burns seconded Neil Leckie that both the Treasurer’s and Auditor’s reports as presented be accepted. Carried

Moved Neil Leckie seconded Greg Code that Bob Prewett be appointed as the Honorary Auditor for the next financial period. Carried

8. Moved Bruce McKinnon seconded Bob Prewett that the Secretary be directed to forward the Annual Statement to Consumer Affairs, Victoria within the prescribed time. Carried

9. Recognition of Life Members

Dick Wilkie, Tom Chambers, Barbara Birthisel, Lyndon King, Bruce McKinnon, The President acknowledged the passing of Life Member Brian Driscoll.

10. Election of Office Bearers

Bob Prewett took the chair and declared all positions vacant, then. continued to conduct the Election of Office Bearers. Prior to the AGM some nomination forms had been received.

President: Nomination form received for Dick Wilkie, moved and seconded.

No other nominations received. Dick Wilkie accepted and declared President. Carried

Vice President:

Nomination form received for Chris Liston, moved and seconded.

No other nominations received. Chris Liston accepted and declared Vice President. Carried

Secretary

Nomination form received for Dick Wilkie, moved and seconded.

Nomination form tabled for Jason County. Moved Dick Wilkie seconded Greg Code.

Dick withdrew his nomination. Jason County accepted and declared Secretary. Carried

Treasurer

Nomination form received from Chris Liston, moved and seconded.

Nomination form tabled for Barbara Birthisel, Moved Neil Leckie seconded Bruce McKinnon

Following a show of hands for both nominations Barbara Birthisel accepted and was declared

Treasurer. Carried

Committee Members

Ian Nunn, Allan Wettenhall, Lyndon King, Neil Leckie (Newsletter), Barbara Birthisel (Welfare/Membership), Les Taylor, Bruce McKinnon, Lindsay Govan, Greg Code. moved Jason County seconded Lyndon King. Duly elected and welcomed as a new committee member. Carried. The President thanked all members of the Committee for their efforts. A special thank you to Bob Carmichael who is not re-electing.

11. Confirmation of Membership fees for the 2024-2025 year.

Moved Jeff Zala seconded Lyndon King that the Association’s annual membership fee be increased to \$25 effective 1 October, 2024.

12. The newly re-elected President, Dick Wilkie, closed the meeting at 11.57am.

Proud to Have Served in the Battalion

Every numberplate is unique in every state or Territory in Australia!

Greg Code holds his unique numberplate in Victoria: 2 RVR.

As RSMs used to say: ‘Well done that man!’



THE BALLARAT RANGER MILITARY MUSEUM

Our Other Battalion, the 39th Battalion

8/7 RVR's history is inexplicably linked with the 8th Battalion, being the first battalion raised for service in "The Great War" linked to Ballarat. The headquarters included Lieutenant Colonel William Bolton (70th Infantry, Ballarat) and some other 70th Infantry officers and men.

Originally, the 8th Battalion raised eight companies:

A Company – Ballarat.

B Company – Geelong (69th Infantry) plus some from Ballarat (70th and 71st Infantry),

C Company – Creswick and Geelong (plus some Northwestern Victoria (73rd Infantry (Victorian Rangers)),

D Company – Ararat, Colac, Hamilton, Maryborough, Melbourne and the Wimmera (71st, 72nd, 73rd and 81st Infantry (SA),

E Company – Ararat, Stawell and Horsham (some 73rd Infantry),

F Company – Mildura and Warracknabeal (73rd Infantry),

G Company – Box Hill, Canterbury and Surrey Hills (Melbourne suburbs, some from 48th Infantry), and

H Company – Korumburra, Sale and Wonthaggi (Gippsland) plus some 48th Infantry.

So, while it was the first battalion connected with Ballarat, it was by no means a Ballarat battalion.

Similarly, the 39th Battalion was not a truly Ballarat battalion, drawing most of its men from Country Victoria. However, the 39th Battalion was raised in Ballarat, trained in Ballarat and was known locally as the 39th (Ballarat) Battalion. The battalion left Ballarat by train in May 1916 and embarked at Station Pier, Melbourne, for England.



Like most of the original Commanding Officers, the 39th Battalion's first commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rankine, was an 'older' man. At the start of the war he was 48 years old – by the end of the war the average age of Commanding Officers was 38 years. He raised the battalion, but in March 1917 found himself in England in charge of No. 1 Command Depot. Robert Oswald Henderson was appointed to Bendigo's 38th Battalion in May 1916 as a Major. He transferred to the 39th Battalion as the Commanding Officer in February 1917 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Henderson was commemorated on the Australian War Memorial's Last Post Service on 29 September 2023, on the 105th anniversary of his death.



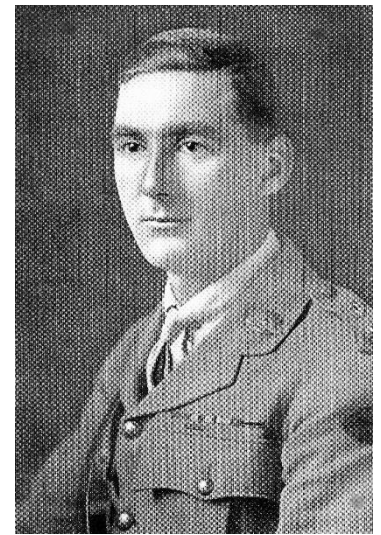
Henderson was a builder's merchant from Bendigo, with his business in the Beehive Building in Bendigo's Pall Mall, almost opposite the Soldiers Museum. Lieutenant Colonel Henderson was killed in action in France on 29 September 1918. He is buried at Templeux-le-Guerard British Cemetery, Picardie, France. He was 43 years old.

Left: Major Henderson is at the left in the Bendigo Camp Band photo

Henderson was followed by Alexander Thomas Paterson. Paterson was appointed to the 39th Battalion in May 1916 as a Captain and promoted to Major in 1917. On Henderson's death, Paterson was promoted to Temporary Lieutenant Colonel and took command of the 39th Battalion. By the end of the war his promotion had been confirmed. He was just 32 years old!

The 39th Battalion was the third of the four battalions of the 10th Brigade, 3rd Division. On arrival in England the division underwent further training. Under command of the by now Major General John Monash, the 3rd Division left England for France in late 1916, arriving in time for the worst European winter in decades. The division would enter battle for the first time at Messines on

6 June 1917, the best trained division in the AIF. Unfortunately, during the march to the start line of their first attack, the battalion received a gas bombardment, which severely depleted its numbers, however, the battalion still took all its objectives.

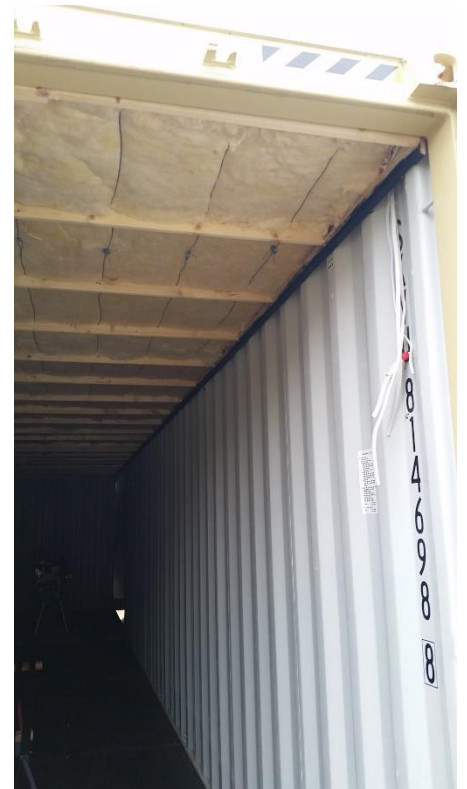


In October 1917 the battalion fought in the battle of Broodseinde and in the mud of Passchendaele. In March 1918 the 3rd Division was rushed south The Somme where it helped the British forces stop the German advance on Amiens. The 3rd Division participated in the Allied advance that commenced on 8 August 1918, “The Black Day for the German Army”. It participated in the capture of Mont St Quentin. At war’s end, like the majority of the AIF, the division was out of the front line.

Ballarat Ranger Military Museum

The museum expansion project progresses, albeit slowly. The two 40’ containers are connected into a ‘U’ shape and the insulation has been fitted into the ceiling of each of the containers. (Right: insulation in place). The ceiling will be covered with hessian, giving it a look and feel of being in an underground bunker.

It is planned to have the walls lined with a special carpet that is good for attaching Velcro to, thus allowing for photographs to be attached to one wall. The other wall will have new display cases showing the various eras of the history of Ballarat and Country Victoria’s “Army” – “Country Victoria’s Own”. Funding for this expansion comes from funds received over the years and put aside for an ‘expansion’, plus a considerable grant received from the Lillingston Trust in Ballarat.



Name the Barracks!



Some Photos from 2 RVR Days (from Jeff Zala's collection)



Probably wearing a Ballarat Long Distance March Medal. Can you name the when and where and the missing names?

Rear: Jeff Zala then five Unknowns

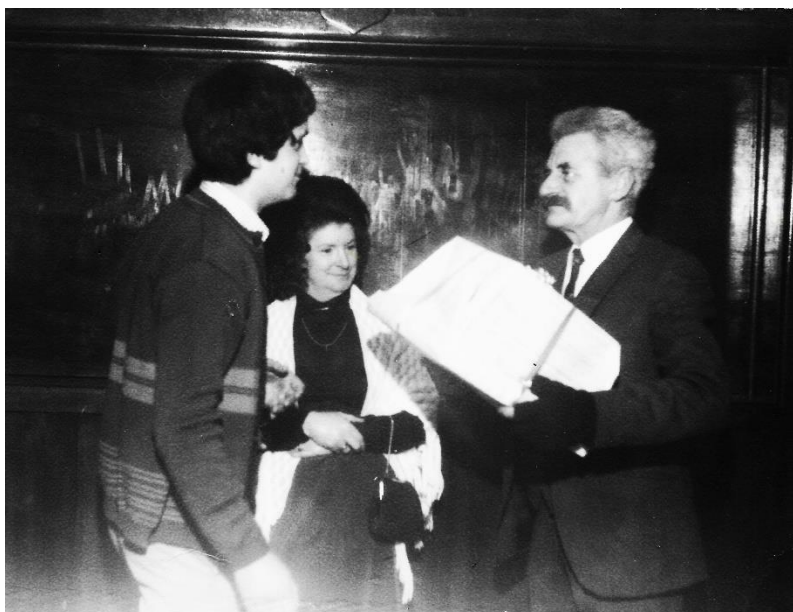
Front: Unknown, Cpl Jeff Whitten, WO2 Alan Douglass, Sgt Dick Wilkie, Cpl Unknown, Unknown



Left: Again, when, where and who?

Left: Jeff Zala, unknown lady, Les Taylor

Right: unknown soldier, unknown lady, unknown lady and unknown soldier.



At left: Jeff Zala presents Captain Ken Loveridge with a gift. Probably on Ken's retirement from the Army.

The North-Western Ranger



8th/7th BATTALION – 2RVR ASSOCIATION Inc.
VICTORIA'S OWN COUNTRY BATTALION

(Including the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum Newsletter)



If undeliverable, please return to:
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JULIANA ADDISON
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