



# Lancers' Despatch



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Royal New South Wales Lancers Association  
and  
The New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum  
Incorporated  
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Note that the online version of Lancers' Despatch includes video and more photos.

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## Coming Events

Association Reunion Sunday 4 November 2018 - Lancer Barracks Parramatta - 1100 - 1400

## The Regiment

Just to let you know that our Regiment goes from strength to strength. The heritage and community ties work in its favour, the high recruiting rate compared to other reserve units being attributed by observers to this and the advantage that it is best equipped to fight a modern fast moving war.

We can credit our Honorary Colonel, Colonel Lee Long RFD with influencing the Army's mindset about protected vehicles thus having the unit trained in A vehicle rather than bus tactics; giving greater relevance to the unit's status as a vehicle fighting force rather than a supplier of scouts.

The end of 2018 will see a change in command and honorary colonel. We wish Colonels Long and Francis well for the future and welcome their replacements whose names will be announced in January 2019's Lancers' Despatch.

## Our Museum

Do note that those who work on the Museum's collection are constantly updating displays. If you have not been to the Museum for some time, do come and have a look. If you have some spare time, come and help. We are particularly interested in getting some younger members us old pharts can hand over to as we get more decrepit. The Museum and its collection are a great asset to the Regiment and the Parramatta community, without a new generation of volunteers, we could lose what has been achieved.



At the Regimental church parade this year on 4 March 2018, our restored Matilda tank ACE was dedicated as a War Memorial. Thanks very much to the Regimental Chaplain for taking the time to perform the ceremony.



*Photos Alan Hitchell, video available online.*

You will be pleased to know that the Commonwealth Department of Heritage and the Arts etc has provisionally approved the construction of overhead cover for the Museum's vehicle collection at Lancer Barracks. There are still some hurdles to jump, not the least of which is preparing a Development Application to be passed by Parramatta Council; AND raise the capital for the work. If you would like to help, DONATIONS to the Museum are appreciated, just use the attached form.

## **Our Association**

### **Anzac Day**

The Association made a great showing on Anzac Day. We led the RAAC contingent vastly expanding their numbers and were led by the Lancer Band resplendent in their black berets. One sad note was that the band got into trouble for appearing in black berets to support the Associations.





## Reserve Forces Day

Reserve forces day this year was a really great show. We had 71 on parade. This time the band did not wear berets.

More sadness, however, this was, after 20 years, the last Reserve Forces Day parade. The organising committee, concerned that the commemoration was no longer embraced by younger serving and former reserve soldiers. A great day nonetheless. The Association had the largest contingent, and John Moore, who organised every parade paid private tribute to Lancer Association members having filled many of the key parade positions including Parade Commander and RSM.

In tribute to the Association's contribution, the last parade was commanded by the Association President, Len Koles.

Our members on parade were: W Andrews, J Arnott, T Beachey, G Bell, D Blackman, G Bradley, J Burns, P Chalker, H Clarke, S Coad, P Coad, H Crampton, B Cross, C Dawson, D Deakin-Bell, P Degeorgio, B Dudley, P Dunne, B Elliott, B Falzon, J Forde, B Gay, G Glass, W Glenny, O Graham, B Hackland, P Harris, P Hastings, G Hickson, P Higginbotham, A Hitchell, K Hobbs, R Jones, P Jude, W Kendrick, B Kilgour, L Koles, M Krause, T Larkin, M Lavery, D Lee, S Leslie, P Leslie, D Lewis, B Mann, J Mcann, M McGraw, O Mcinnes, J Mcphee, J Moore, P Morris, E O'leary, J Palmer, G Pedler, D Perry, I Petterson, C Regan, A Samson, K Sinnett, W Smith, B Stanhouse, J Tabone, H Tran, J Van Gelden, M Visinko, B Walters, Z Waqataitewa, G Ware, R White, P Whittaker, D Wood.



The first Reserve Forces Day March took on the 1 July 1998 in Sydney and was created to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the revival of the reserve (militia) forces in 1948. The organisational effort to get the March going took several years prior and involved the former CO of the Regiment, LTCOL Bob Iverach (retired) as one of the representatives for the Lancers. It was a large March involving about 5,000 former and serving reservists with the route going from the northern end of George Street and up past the Town Hall. It was great to see so many of the participants in the 2018 March wearing red ribbons showing they had been in that first March in 1998!





*Photos and video (available online) provided by the Reserve Forces Day Council.  
Report by Brian Walters*

## Colonel Long's Story

Dinning President, General Glenn, Brigadiers Bond, Bridie, Major Koles. The Hon Julie Owens (MP for Parramatta), very good to see you again and braving the cooler nights, Commander Van Tienhoven RAN (Captain of HMAS Parramatta) that is a good Dutch name, Chief Petty Officer Phelps (Command Warrant Officer HMAS Parramatta), Warrant Officer 1 Carroll (Regimental Sergeant of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps) – Good to see a representative of the Head of Corps, Commanding Officer, Regimental Sergeant Major, Officers, and Non Commissioned Officers of the Regiment, Fellow Lancers and Guests.

When I have spoken previously I have attempted to be short and pointed, tonight will be a bit different because with your indulgence I will take you on a journey of the high and lowlights of my career with the Regiment which coincidentally aligns with a number of changes that were wrought on the unit and provide you with a better understanding of why I have consistently pushed for both this unit and the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Reserve in general to be trained in mounted combat. I trust this will be an interesting, entertaining and amusing journey.

I commenced my Army Career in the Citizen Military Forces by joining this unit well before most of you were born, my attestation documents were dated August 1962.

After some preliminary training and issuance of equipment as well as instruction how to spit polish shoes and boots, I had my first intro to Puckapunyal where we were put through our basic course. I was also introduced to the palliasse, for those uninitiated can you imagine being given a chaff bag and told to fill it with straw as that is your mattress for the next couple of weeks!

Travel in those days to Puckapunyal was by train, an interesting journey where we were loaded eight to a compartment. As these were pre-electronic device days there were many games of cards played and whilst alcohol was banned on the train many preloaded or played the usual sport of avoiding the roaming duty non and commissioned officers seeking to catch them out. We changed carriages at Albury where we always emptied the railway canteen of everything eatable - talk about a hoard of locusts, we probably kept Vic Rail solvent for years.

As there were only three streams of crewmen available I decided to become a Centurion gunner and after some preliminary training on our simulator (a 25 m 22 cal range with a crewman's instructional model on which we could train all three turret crew) I went to Puckapunyal again to be trained by the School of Armour, gunnery wing was run by the then Captain Malcolm Count. We concluded the course with a range shoot which was memorable, we were required to uncase over 100 Armour Piercing Ballistic Capped 20 Pounder rounds and then have to re-case 99 of the rounds as someone decided they were war stock. I assume a number of these would have been fired in Vietnam.

After one camp as a gunner and finding that you can get seasick whilst on land and suffering multiple bruises on my arm resulting from not holding the clutch while on stabilisation and moving, I thought I needed to move to a better position such as that of crew commander. But wait; that meant I needed rank, so the progression started.

In those days we would travel to the Armoured Centre and draw a Squadron's worth of Centurion tanks.

I finally became a Charlie callsign! Along the way I had some interesting issues when the Troop Leader broke down the Troop Sergeant and I headed off to continue the exercise; we headed off in an echelon formation the Troop Sergeant leading, this was Puckapunyal in early summer, I came out of the dust cloud to find him stopped in front of me. The poor fellow's face went pale when my tank climbed up the side of his before my tank lost momentum and stopped with about two roadwheels over his turret. The only physical damage was two torn off bazooka plates and damaged track bins, the psychological damage was probably a bit more but like those of our generation after a cup of tea or maybe something stronger we just wrote it off. The remainder of my pre-commissioning career had me spending time in recce troop and being promoted to troop sergeant.



In those days you could be commissioned if a corporal or above and could pass several practical and written examinations. I did the study and took the tests. While awaiting my results the Eastern Command Citizen Military Forces Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) commenced operation and pending the results of my exams I was posted to an OCTU for three difficult months before the results were published and as I had passed I saw no point in remaining in OCTU and arranged to be posted back to 1/15.

Somewhere along the way I recall a certain Major Glenny after we finished a night compass march loading up an Austin Champ with over 22 pers to return to our bivouac area even though the true capacity of the vehicle was five, something a risk analysis would not have approved today.

It was also about this time, 1969, that we were required to give up our Centurion tanks and convert to M113A1.

On our first parade in 1972 I was commissioned as a second lieutenant in front of the Regiment and was posted as a Troop Leader of a Cavalry Troop and was allocated one M113A1, which I personally rebuilt with the assistance of the unit's RAEME staff.

I was always fairly bloody minded!

At that stage we did not have dismounts to carry but still had a theoretical five vehicle troop.

I was subsequently made the unit's APC Troop leader when the unit converted to the infamous RAAC Regiment organisation without the tank troop. This was an interesting experience as we exercised with infantry brigades using a full thirteen vehicle troop. We quickly learned how badly the Reserve infantry could navigate whilst mounted, thus proving the oft discussed requirement that the RAAC commands whilst mounted the RAInf only when when dismounted.

We move on to my experience as a Captain which while noting two examples we will pass over fairly quickly.

The first was just after I was appointed the Regimental Technical Adjutant and we were conducting work with the RAN on a LCH landing A Squadron on Kyeemagh beach on Botany Bay. When someone decided it would be good to try a deep water landing this did not go well. Just as the sunken LRV was being recovered TV cameras arrived. Needless to say the careers of the CO and Training Major went nowhere after that.

The second entertaining part was when I was a Squadron 2IC and we were exercising at Bourke. The OC, who had his own personal .45 Webley took a number of shots at a snake whilst he was on a privy; we were a bit perturbed that he might have done something else. He subsequently forgot to duck while exiting the ACV and had concussion for about three days which left me to run the Squadron. I learnt a lot in that time!



Moving on to Squadron Command, in my view that was the most fulfilling time, not only did I have a full Sqn to exercise with including an LAD element, A1 Echelon, and Assault troopers with each troop. We deployed on a 80+ kilometre frontage and used manpack HF radios to communicate.

Thanks to the then Major Ken Studerus I exercised with the First Brigade of the 50th Armoured Division of the New Jersey National Guard training in Fort Drum, New York State. I was impressed by the equipment that the Guard had and that the Divisional RSM had his own helicopter which he allowed me to travel in. I was also impressed at the quality of the senior officers and NCOs though the quality of the junior officers was a bit disappointing.

An interesting highlight of this visit was on the middle weekend of the camp leave was given and I was taken with the Battalion officers to Canada on crossing the border we were asked if we were all Americans wherein the driver said yes (border crossing was a less formal then) on the return the same question was asked but this time the driver identified the foreign member. At which stage it became obvious that when I landed in the US the border guard stuffed up his date stamp. Off I went to sort out the problem, this caused some angst amongst some of the Battalion officers as they were smuggling Cuban cigars back to the US and there was a concern that the car would be searched. Whilst I was sorting my immigration problem out however there was no search; we returned back to Fort Drum without further incident.

On completion of my exams for Lieutenant Colonel I went off to work for Colonel "Blue" Keldie MC who was then Colonel Armour at Field Force Comd. This enabled the development of a good relationship for when he finally rose to command the Division. I was trotted off to a two week ANZUS exercise in Waiuru New Zealand which concluded after nine days after which we were tourists.

Finally, command of the Regiment. The challenges of command are not only related to dealing with the military side but with a unit such as this; there are multiples of external challenges, such as commercial pressures to use the grounds of the unit or sell off the property, these all have to be addressed in a mature way and without resorting to emotion - it is surprising I managed to weave my way through the maze.

Note for future COs avoid taking over a unit on a major date, I assumed command in 1988 at the time of the bi-centenary so there were numerous social events to be addressed such as the tri service freedom of the city under the Command of the CO 1/15RNSWL with the then CDF General Gratton as reviewing officer.

The Regiment at that stage comprised two sabre Squadrons, an Admin Squadron, LAD and Band; around 350 effectives. It was also a direct command unit of HQ 2 Div the Commander of which was Major General Blue Keldie; I told you that building sound relationships are beneficial. The Chief of Staff was Colonel Phillip Mcnamara who was later my boss as the Comandant at the Army Command and Staff College in Queenscliff when the Army not knowing what it was doing, promoted me to Colonel.

Unfortunately, Command of the Regiment involved much admin work and gave little opportunity for hands on training, however, I did have an effective training Training Major now known as an Operations Officer Major Ted McPheet.

We did go back to Puckapunyal on my first year of Comd where we conducted a courses camp during which I was advised we had sunk a carrier. Not at all certain how we could sink a carrier as we were not conducting amphibious exercises I visited the site and sure enough there were antennas waving over a dam. The training had involved giving wading experience to prospective drivers. Nobody mentioned that the creek that fed the dam had eroded a deep channel. Thankfully Puckapunyal workshop had the LRV repaired and back on strength before we completed the camp.



One of my last decisions before leaving Command was to move all fully qualified members to one Squadron to permit them to concentrate on a higher level of training and move those needing to complete courses, needing to support courses or undertake promotion courses to the other Squadron. The then DARMD asked me to stay on for a fourth year but I thought I had had sufficient experience and challenges and my replacement was the then Lieutenant Colonel Geoff Bell an ARA officer.

The purpose of my dragging you through the high and low lights of my career is to illustrate that my efforts as your Honorary Colonel have been focussed on re-introducing the skills of mounted combat not only to this unit but to the whole RAAC reserve. All of my military career whether in Centurions, Ferrets or other A Vehicles was focussed on mounted combat.

While I acknowledge that the provision of Cavalry Scouts to the ACRs is an important element of improving capability, my view is that we can do much more. Most of my service life was based on the core capabilities of the RAAC, that is the ability to communicate, manoeuvre and produce firepower. Whilst this and the other Reserve RAAC units are training in mounted combat, I wonder whether they are doing so to a common standard and why there is no formal recognition of this training?

My desire is that while the Army still requires us to provide protected lift we can still train as core RAAC soldiers. But it needs leadership from above.

I understand that Forces Command is soon to release a new directive withdrawing the old directive that the PMV is just a truck and providing guidance for the Reserve RAAC units to rebuild their mounted combat skills. In the ARA the users of PMV have clearly understood their change of role unfortunately the Reserve is, as always too slow to adapt to changing circumstances.

In my personal view I would dearly love to see the PMV's transferred to the Reserve Infantry, so they could develop the skills to support their ARA counterparts and the Reserve RAAC mounted in Hawkei or GWagons in which they can train to provide Cavalry Scouts and redevelop the mounted combat skills to support the ACRs I would also like to see a formal training package delivered by CATC or the School which sets standards and recognises achievements.

One of my concerns is if we have to deploy a Brigade where does the necessary round out, reinforcement and replacement crewmen come from unless we strip the other two ACRs? My experience was that when we deployed forces to East Timor the holes in existing organisations were needed to be filled by Reservists both in the combat and support roles. At least if the reserve RAAC is competent in mounted combat then it will take a short time to ensure their drills are up to standard and convert them to the appropriate platform. I would also like to see sub units deployed along with their ARA counterparts which will assist to build good NCOs, diggers and junior officers.

Well having said my piece there is just one thing left to do. I became your Honorary Colonel in 2011 and have annoyed a number of senior officers fighting for changes (only at the two and one star levels), this is my final year as your Honorary Colonel (age has caught up with me) I have a presentation to make.

We have trophies for the best in their field, but this trophy is for a Regimental member who displays initiative, performs beyond expectations or demonstrates great promise.

I leave it to the current CO to make the first award in due course.

I wish the Regiment well in its future endeavours and while I will cease to be your Honorary Colonel from the end of this year. I will continue to watch progress as a member of the RAAC Corporation, Lancers' Association and the Defence Reserves Association.

Tenex in Fide.

*An address given by Lee Long to the Regimental Dinner 14 July 2018. Photos by Bob Gay.*

## **The Regiment July 1918 to April 1919**

We pick up the story of the First Light Horse Regiment, Australian Imperial Force on 1 July 1918, the final chapter of the Regiment's World War 1 story.

On 7 July Major Harris went to the rest camp at Port Said, leaving Lieutenant LW Rogers in command of C Squadron. The wiring at el Maskerah and Musallabeh was now completed, but a fresh line of wire in front of Vale and View posts was commenced during the night. On 9 July Captain CS Molesworth, RMO, marched out to the 2nd Stationary Hospital at Moascar, and his place was taken by Captain NB Hall; Captain FM Mack went on leave and Lieutenant S E Gregory assumed command of B Squadron. 2nd Lieutenant DMM O'Connor having passed the Cadet Course and received his commission was posted to C Squadron.



Most of the wiring was now completed, but the squadrons worked each night at building sangars on Musallabeh and Vyse posts. Scorpions were found under most of the rocks, but although many men were bitten in the dark, none had to be evacuated. Another plague, found in the rocky ground adjoining the swamp near el Maskerah, was snakes.

A batch of 41 reinforcements was taken on strength on 12 July, and 61 cases of gift stores were received from the AIF Comforts Fund. Next day the bivouac area was shelled from the direction of the Jordan, one man being killed and three wounded.

A strong but unsuccessful attack by the enemy at Abu Tellul on 14 July was intended as the preliminary blow of a scheme designed to overwhelm General Chauvel's entire force in the valley. It was the last deliberate offensive attempted against the British in Palestine, and it was the only occasion in the campaign in which German infantry were used as storm-troops, so its failure must have had a bad effect on their allies, or dupes, the Turks. At 0315 that day, 1LH received orders from the brigade to stand to arms as the enemy were attacking the 2nd and 3rd Regiments in the lines recently held by the 1st. At the same time the enemy commenced shelling the 1LH bivouac area. The enemy had penetrated between the forward posts, but the men of the 2nd and 3rd were still holding on grimly to the posts themselves. As soon as the position was clear, and Brigadier General Cox was aware that the Germans were advancing on Abu Tellul with the light horse posts still standing in their rear, "Get to them, Granny" was his order to Colonel Granville. The men were all ready, waiting with their horses where they had moved them to avoid the shell fire.

At 0315 the enemy had been reported to be in strength on The Bluff and Abu Tellul. At 0345 B Squadron under Lieutenant Gregory was ordered forward to Abu Tellul Posts 3 and 4, to prevent the enemy occupying these actual posts. On arrival in the vicinity he found them occupied by troops of the 3rd LH, so he diverted his squadron and gave covering fire to A Squadron, 1st LH, which was attacking the right of Abu Tellul.

Meanwhile at 0340 A Squadron under Major Weir was ordered to counter-attack; they moved forward at the gallop, using a narrow track across the Wady Auja which had been made in anticipation of the enemy barrage which blocked the usual ford. A Squadron dismounted under the brow of the hill, the Germans then being within a few hundred yards of one of the batteries. Lieutenants Taylor and Jarrett were sent forward with A and B Troops, and Lieutenant Macfarlane with C Troop was sent along the right flank to watch the plain and keep in touch with A and B Troops. Bayonets were fixed; there had been no time to draw bombs. D Troop under Lieutenant Goodchild was held in support and gave covering fire with C Squadron and machine guns, one of the guns being manned personally by Captain Hackney of the 1st MG Squadron. Caught scattered in the open the Germans did not stand and bolted back to The Bluff under heavy fire from the regiment. C Squadron under Lieutenant Rogers was ordered forward to co-operate mounted against The Bluff on the right flank of A Squadron, but was unable to get forward owing to heavy fire from hostile 107 mm. howitzers, and it eventually had to reinforce A Squadron on Abu Tellul. One troop of A Squadron, under Lieutenant Macfarlane, gained a footing on The Bluff at 0745, and the enemy, who were all Germans of the 702nd and 703rd Battalions, began to surrender as they were completely surrounded, for the 2LH posts in their rear had held out and brought crossfire to bear on them. At 0800 Lieutenant Gregory reported having recaptured Vale Post and taken one enemy machine gun.

Pack-horses had been sent back early to brigade headquarters for ammunition, but water was badly needed for the men. C Troop had found a little water at The Bluff, which was fortunate as supplies could not be sent up until sundown. The day was extremely hot and the German prisoners, although well equipped with bottles of both coffee and water, felt the heat badly, numbers falling down with it. On the whole they were young men, with good, smart uniforms and equipment, and comparatively well supplied with automatic rifles (sub-machine guns).



RHQ had been established by 0800 to direct an attack on The Bluff. But as C Squadron had been unable to move up along the Roman road owing to shellfire, RHQ had to be withdrawn to another location. By this time prisoners were coming in from all sides and a great number of the enemy had been killed or wounded. The regiment's casualties during the attack were: Lieutenants Taylor, Macfarlane and Goodchild wounded, six other ranks killed and 30 wounded, eight horses killed, 17 wounded. German prisoners numbering 170 were taken, including a percentage of officers, also three machine guns, 17 automatic rifles (sub-machine guns) and about 100 rifles.

A little after dark the enemy put up a heavy barrage of shell fire just in front of the wire and another attack was anticipated, but the Germans were only gathering their dead and wounded outside the barbed wire entanglements, and had apparently had enough. Prisoners stated that the Turks had let them down by not attacking on the flanks as arranged, and also that they did not expect to find the Anzac Mounted Division holding the line as the German Intelligence had assured them that this division was resting at Bethlehem. Captured maps showed that the enemy had accurate information in regard to the Australians' wire and dispositions. One of the objectives of the attack was to get command of the good water in Wady Auja and it was said that the Turks had been kept on a short ration of water for several days prior to the attack.

Orders were received at 1800 that The Bluff, Abu Tellul, Right Post and Vale Post were to be held during the night by 1LH C Squadron held The Bluff, A Squadron Abu Tellul and B Squadron Vale Post. The night was spent in collecting war material, ammunition, etc. and in burying the dead Germans which lay nearest the trenches. Next morning all squadrons reported in camp, six men of B Squadron being wounded by shell fire on coming out of the trenches, and B Squadron had to move its horse lines about 200 metres south as the enemy were shelling them, 18 horses being killed.

The Bluff-Abu Tellul line was again held on the night of 15-16 July by A Squadron, with one troop in Vale Post, while a party from C Squadron buried the regiment's dead and the Germans killed on 14 July.

At 1700 the enemy again shelled the bivouac area with 107 mm guns, killing four and wounding seven horses. These guns were firing from across the Jordan by direct observation, and it was good to learn on 16 July that 9LH were to relieve the 1st. Unfortunately, before the move took place the enemy again bombarded the area. Captain EC Battye and a trooper were killed, and 2nd Lieutenant DMM O'Connor and five men were wounded while endeavouring to remove the horses. In a few minutes 58 horses were killed and another 27 wounded, the latter being evacuated to the MVS. It was a great loss to the regiment, so many of the best horses being killed after the many fights they had been in and the care that had always been taken to put the led horses under cover when the regiment was in action dismounted. The remainder were moved south about 400 metres, where good cover was available, and they remained there during the day.

After dark, 9LH did relieve the 1st, and an all-night march brought the regiment to Talat ed Dumm, where it bivouacked for the day, the men boiling their quart pots using shale rock. This, no doubt, contained oil, and was to be found in the country near Nebi Musa. The transport arrived some hours later, having travelled by the Nebi Musa road.

The regiment spent two days at this camp, and while there was inspected and addressed by Lieutenant General Sir Harry Chauvel. On 19 July it moved at night with the brigade beyond Jerusalem to a new camp in the vicinity of Wady Arrub. Lieutenant Colonel Granville temporarily took over the brigade again. The camp site was reached at 0430 after a long dusty night march. Lieutenant Upton and his troop re-joined from escorting German prisoners through Jerusalem, and the regiment supplied two officers' picquets for Jerusalem and Bethlehem, under Lieutenants Campbell and Parbury.

At 0900 on 22 July orders were received to march with the brigade to Richan. Men were still going sick with malaria, and before leaving camp Lieutenant Macfarlane and seven other ranks were evacuated to the field ambulance. After another night march Enab was reached at midnight. The road was clogged by local camel convoys, carrying oranges from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and charcoal from Lebanon. Wood was always scarce in the camps around Jerusalem, and although green olive trees burn well, they were protected, the Turks having wiped out plantations of them.

On 24 July the following awards were notified: 868 Signaller . Hastie, Military Medal; Lieutenants S E. Gregory and S R Macfarlane, Military Cross; Major FV Weir, Distinguished Service Order.



Richon was reached in the early morning of 25 July; two batches of reinforcements, 21 and 58 men respectively, marched in and helped to put the men and horses on an equal basis, as many of the men were still sick though not evacuated.

On the 27th Captain Chaplain Donovan left for England. Wine was purchased from the Richon winery and resold to the men under supervision. Grapes and tomatoes were also purchased from regimental funds, while melons were plentiful. These goods, after a long course of bully beef and no vegetables, were indeed appreciated. On 29 July Lieutenant Colonel Granville relinquished command of the brigade and proceeded on leave the following day. The Port Said rest camp was still in operation and Lieutenant Goodchild and 44 men were sent there for a spell. On the 31st the commander-in-chief, Sir Edmund Allenby, inspected and addressed the men and thanked them for their recent work in the valley.

The beach was only seven or eight kilometres from the bivouac area at Richon, and squadrons were able to take it in turns to go for a swim. Municipal hot baths in Richon, which had not been destroyed by the enemy, were still in running order, and a time table was arranged to permit the members of each unit to get a hot bath once a week. Beer was bought and issued to the men.



Washing horses in the Mediterranean Sea

From 1 August a syllabus of training was carried out, commencing with Hotchkiss gun training daily and finishing with small tactical schemes. Septic sores were better, and the general health of the men greatly improved, but men continued to go to the field ambulance at the rate of five or six a day.

On 5 August the regiment drew 85 riding, 18 pack and five draught horses from the Remount Depot at Ludd. Major T E W W Irwin's name appeared in the Gazette under the heading of "Mentioned in Despatches". Lieutenant Colonel Granville returned from leave on 8 August and 42 all ranks returned from the rest camp, a fresh batch of men under Lieutenant Macfarlane being sent to take their place. Inoculation against typhoid and cholera was commenced on 12 August.

It was now nearly time for the 1st Light Horse to relieve others in the Jordan valley, the three brigades in the division taking turn about in the front line, in support and spelling. On 16 August Major DWA Smith DSO, marched in from the 1st Training Regiment. Owing to damage done by shell fire to the regiment's saddlery in the valley on 16 July, 108 new sets were now drawn. At 0800 on 17 August the brigade marched out once more to the valley, via Jerusalem, and the opportunity was taken while passing that town to interview the Graves Registrar regarding crosses for the graves in the Jordan valley and elsewhere. As usual, most of the marches were done by night, Talat ed Dumm, where the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade passed the unit, being reached at midnight, 20-21 August. Early next morning the march was continued to a bivouac site near Jericho. Here Lieutenant Ross had to be evacuated to hospital.

The British West Indies battalions were now holding the left of the brigade's old position, and the 1LH allotted 10 men to each post held by the BWI, commencing with a post known as Wax and following round to the sectors of Musallabeh and el Maskerah, where 1L.H. relieved 9LH. Daily and nightly mounted patrols were sent to Tel el Truny, with Hotchkiss guns and signallers, the night patrol picking up nine other ranks from the BWI. All the men detailed to the sub-sectors held by the BWI came under the orders of the BWI battalions. Since the attack in July the line had not been altered, the enemy contenting themselves with shelling from both sides of the Jordan. The Australians got on very well with the Indians and British West Indians with whom they came in contact; the former were known as "the Salaam Johnnies", and the latter as "the Golliwogs" and "the Black Anzacs",

At this time the whole of the front line in the Jordan valley was held by Australian and other empire troops, except for the artillery (English). The 1LH stayed in its present camp at Ain Duk until 21 September when the big push that finished all Turkish resistance in Palestine commenced.

The patrol to Tel el Truny was carried out each day and invariably drew fire from the enemy, the Turks holding the hill one day and the regiment the next. The post was of no tactical value to either side, but it formed a good observation post. The support to the BWI, 10 men per post, was withdrawn on 25 August. Next day Lieutenant Colonel Granville was evacuated to hospital, Major Irwin taking over command of the regiment.

Rations were drawn by the unit's transport from the Jericho dump at night, as clouds of dust arose from every movement and attracted enemy shell fire. The camp was a good one, showers having been erected there by the New Zealand brigade who had occupied it previously. The spring's course was confined, and all still water was kerosened against the malaria mosquito.



Seventeen crates of beer were drawn from the A.I. Canteen and issued to the men. Near the end of August, Major Ryrie and four men marched in from the 1st Training Regiment, while Lieutenant Markwell, with one man, was detached as Liaison Officer to the Royal Air Force. Men continued to be evacuated to the field ambulance with malaria, and on 31 August 1918 the unit was reinforced by a draft from Moascar consisting of Lieutenant Drummond and 36 men.

No history of the regiment would be complete without reference to the splendid work accomplished by Mrs Alice Chisholm (Dame Alice Chisholm, D.B.E.) and Miss R McPhillamy (Mrs Clive Single) in establishing canteens at Port Said, Kantara, Jerusalem and Rafa for the benefit of the soldiers. Miss McPhillamy's Soldiers' Club at Jerusalem was situated close to the Anzac Divisional Rest Camp to which men were sent from the Jordan valley, insufficient railway facilities limiting the numbers that could be sent to Port Said.

### **To Amman: September - October 1918**



Sir Edmund Allenby's plan for September's operations was, briefly: on the west (seaboard) flank, the artillery and infantry to break the enemy line and three cavalry divisions to follow through, move swiftly via the Plain of Sharon to the Plain of Esdraelon, cut the railway at Afule and Beisan, and push on to close the roads from the Jordan valley and Nablus, thus trapping the German Seventh and Eighth Armies - this would necessitate transferring three cavalry divisions and one division from the east flank to the sea; on the east (Jordan) flank, "Chaytor's Force" to form a defensive flank to guard the crossings over Jordan and to be prepared to co-operate, on receipt of orders, in the advance and seize the crossing at Jisr el Damieh. Chaytor's Force comprised the Anzac Mounted Division, 20th Indian Infantry Brigade (Imperial Service Infantry), the Composite Infantry Brigade (two battalions of Jewish soldiers and two battalions of the British West Indies Regiment) and some artillery.

Owing to rumours of a general advance in September, the regiment was ordered to make dummy horses out of bamboo and old blankets. It was hoped that these dummies, stood in rows, would have the appearance in air photographs of troop lines.

On 5 September an officer from the Wellington Mounted Rifles reported to 1LH to proceed with Lieutenant Cundy on night observation patrol to Tel el Truny, the NZMR Brigade taking over the patrolling duties from the regiment next day.

Although at intervals men were sent to cookery schools at Ismailia and Alexandria, and a number of certificates of proficiency were obtained, most of the men preferred to cook for themselves whenever possible.

On 6 September, 79 cases of gift stores were carted from Jericho and distributed to all ranks. These gifts were from the Australian Comforts Fund and consisted of tinned fruit, lime juice, sweets, sauce, chewing gum, milk, jam, writing material, tobacco, cigarettes and other goods; they were most useful and appreciated as usual. Beer was obtained when possible and issued to the men at the nominal price of one shilling per bottle.

There was fair grazing in the vicinity of Ain Duk. Crops had been sown and irrigated by the monks from the monastery on the Mount of Temptation, these were respected and any damage done was paid for after assessment by the Claims Officer. The enemy bombarded Jericho daily with heavy shells, many of which proved to be duds, and little damage of military importance was done. Instruction was carried out on an enemy 77 mm gun which had been captured some time previously, the idea being that when the proposed push took place, captured guns could be used on the fleeing Turks. Instruction on enemy machine guns had been going on for some time with the same idea.

The 1st Light Horse was considerably below strength owing to sickness, and on September 16 a draft arrived from the 1st Light Horse Training Regiment, Moascar, consisting of Lieutenants C S Frost and S F Lumb and 54 men with three signallers from the Signal Squadron.

Practically all movements of troops in the valley at this period were made to deceive the enemy into thinking that the main attack would be across the Jordan; the two earlier raids to Amman and Es Salt had already created such an impression. Enemy 'planes flew over, but by now the Royal Air Force had complete mastery in the air, so the true disposition of the Allies' forces was kept hidden.

A regimental dump was formed near Jericho on 18 September, and all surplus gear was carted there; orders had been received that the unit was to be ready to move at short notice. Saddles were packed with horse feed for two days, greatcoats, mosquito nets, bivvy sheets and iron rations. On the 20th Lieutenant Colonel Granville returned from hospital; Lieutenant Campbell and 12 men were evacuated.

The regiment remained standing by all day and all night.

Twelve more men went to hospital. Meanwhile, on 19 September, the great attack by Allenby's troops on the left of the line, with grand air co-operation, had commenced, early in the morning the cavalry - Yeomanry, Indians, French Colonial Regulars and Australians - were sweeping up Sharon. Towards midnight on 21 September orders were received to report to the officer commanding the Au ja bridgehead defences. On arrival, at 0200, Major Harris with two troops moved across the Jordan and reconnoitred the country on the left bank of the Jordan towards Red Hill. Lieutenant Drummond also pushed across the Jordan with a troop to patrol to the east. At 0900 brigade ordered 1LH to move to Khurbet Fusail, which the unit, less C Squadron, reached at 1400. The strong position the Turks were evacuating was now in sight; the general advance on the coast had caused this flank of the enemy to withdraw across the Jordan and, furthermore, the Turks knew by now that the railway behind them had been cut at Deraa by the Arab allies.

Very heavy firing could be heard on the left and the regiment remained in support of 3LH which was attacking the enemy at Wady Mellahetum Afein. Unfortunately the spot chosen for a camp was the site of an old Turkish hospital and was infested with mosquitoes, for the Turks did not take any steps to combat this menace; there is no doubt most members of the unit were infected with malaria here.

Next morning there were orders to move and by midday the regiment had crossed the Umm bes Shert ford and halted on the left bank. Patrols were sent to Red Hill, which proved to have been evacuated by the enemy. At 1520 the regiment, with the brigade, marched for Umm es Shert and Es Salt by way of the number 6 Road, all transport moving by the Jericho-Ghoraniye bridgehead and number 5 Road. Es Salt, headquarters of the Turkish Fourth Army, had been hurriedly evacuated, so it was occupied without opposition and the horses were fed and watered there. The Royal Air Force had effectually bombed the fleeing Turks in the narrow, mountainous roads; dead men and animals were lying on either side, and considerable work was entailed in clearing the road of wagons, limbers and motor-cars. GHQ now ordered Chaytor's Force to cut the retreat of the enemy northwards from Amman and to join hands with Feisal's Arabs.

At midday on 24 September the regiment moved to Ain Hemar (near El Sweileh) with the brigade and bivouacked there until 0430 next morning, when it stood to arms and moved in support of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade which was attacking Amman from the north and north-west. A troop of A Squadron under Lieutenant Lumb acted as escort to two RHA batteries. At 1100 1LH was ordered to operate on the left of the New Zealanders just north of the Es Salt-Amman road, in an attempt to cut the Hedjaz railway line about Amman and block all roads. At midday the New Zealanders, anticipating a counter-attack, asked for support on their left flank. B Squadron under Major Smith, acting as advanced guard to the regiment, pushed down a wady without opposition. Enemy were observed on the railway line and retiring along the main road (to Deraa and Damascus) parallel to it; B Squadron opened fire on them at 1,400 metres. A sub-section of machine guns was sent up to support B Squadron, especially as rifle fire was coming from the direction of Ain Ghaxal. Three troops of A Squadron under Major Weir were pushed up on the right of B Squadron, and the latter advanced towards the railway line with covering fire from A Squadron, Hotchkiss guns and other machine guns.

The enemy defending the railway surrendered, and B Squadron crossed the line and cleared the high ground on the east side. As hostile fire of rifles, machine guns and two 107 mm howitzers continued from the direction of Ain Ghaxal, B Squadron moved forward along the east side of the railway line. Meanwhile a troop of A Squadron was escorting prisoners to the rear and another troop under Lieutenant Macfarlane had been ordered to secure a five arch culvert and strongposts in the hills to the left; C Squadron under Major Harris had orders to watch the country to the north-east. Contact with the New Zealanders was made on the railway line, and all enemy in the vicinity were killed, wounded or captured.



Amman was now in General Chaytor's hands and he could turn his attention to the destruction of the Turkish force, 5,000 or 6,000 strong, which had garrisoned Maan, further south on the Hedjaz railway line.

Lieutenant Morrice and two men had been wounded during the action, unfortunately dying from his wounds later. The total captures during the day by 1LH were: 110 prisoners, 3 150 mm guns, 2 100 mm. howitzers, 1 anti-aircraft gun, 4 gun-carriages, 1 machine gun, 10 wagons, 6 field bakeries, 1 field cooker, 1 water cart, 11 damaged motor lorries, 1 railway engine, 2 railway trucks, 1 large ammunition dump, 2 burnt aeroplanes and some livestock.



At night, on the outpost line, the picquets of A Squadron found difficulty in halting the Bedouins, who all claimed to belong to the Hedjaz army, but were really out for loot, robbing the dumps and collecting all the weapons dropped by the surrendered Turks. Next day, 26 September, the captured guns and transport were drawn into the Amman railway station by the regimental transport which had arrived with rations in the early morning. During the afternoon C Squadron was attached to the 3rd L.H., under Lieutenant Colonel G J Bell, CMG, DSO, which was engaged with the enemy on Wady Hamman, 25 to 30 kilometres north of Amman.

On 27 September the regiment moved with the brigade about eight kilometres down the Wady Amman and pitched camp at Khurbet el Raseife, watering in a splendid trout stream. A Squadron was ordered to take up a line of observation posts from Zerka to Wady Hamman and cover country to the north-west. Lieutenant R G Fawcett led a patrol to Khirb es Samra to report on roads and water and, on returning late that night, reported one small well at Samra where there were 70 sick and wounded Turks, two railway engines, 16 trucks, three red crescent (ie, hospital) carriages and the debris of material which had been discarded by the Turks and looted by the Arabs. Bedouins sniped the patrol near Samra.

Next morning the regiment stood to at 0400 until the early morning patrols reported all clear, when C Squadron, with a machine gun sub-section, proceeded on a reconnaissance to Samra and Mafrak, returning to camp at 2200 Bedouins fired on the squadron eight kilometres north of Samra, killing two men, and 13 Bedouins were killed in the subsequent fight. No water was found at Mafrak but Lieutenant Drummond reported the road as good for all wheels from Samra to Mafrak. From the red crescent carriages 45 Turks were removed as prisoners, and the other rolling stock was collected together with 14 field guns, five burnt aeroplanes, a number of machine guns and automatic rifles, and a quantity of ammunition.

The divisional train had arrived at Amman, and a string of motor lorries was bringing rations from Jericho and taking back sick and wounded prisoners. The unit remained in the same camp until the end of October, during which time about 80 per cent of the personnel were evacuated with malaria. There was a shortage of quinine at first, but this and other drugs were found in the captured hospitals. Grazing was good on the Amman flats and tibbin was procured from the abandoned village of Raseife. The local Circassians, who could not get away with the Turks, were now most friendly, being afraid of the Bedouins, and the road was often lined with their quaint bullock carts, drawn by hump-necked cattle, making their way to Amman.

Squadrons took it in daily turns to hold the outpost line. When the third Light Horse withdrew from Zerka the 1LH outpost line was adjusted to cover that village and to connect with the 2LH to the north in Wady Amman. When the tibbin at Raseife was finished, further supplies were drawn from Zerka.

On 4 October ten other ranks were evacuated with malaria, with 17 on the next day and 28 on the day after that. On the 7th, Major DWA Smith and 17 others were evacuated; on the 8th, Lieutenant Rogers and 21 other ranks; on the 10th, Major FV Weir and 26 other ranks. The men were going down like nine pins. Insufficient reinforcements arrived for the regiment to carry on properly. It was fortunate that the Turks' resistance had been broken.

On 11 October Bedouins fired on a patrol, wounding Trooper Collins and killing Trooper Lewry; Lieutenant Macfarlane and his troop brought in the body which was buried at Amman with full military honours. On 12 October Lieutenant GHS Cundy and 30 other ranks escorted the GOC to inspect captured cars. It was decided to bring back by train the war material reported by Lieutenant Fawcett at Mafrak, and for this purpose Major T E W W Irwin, Captain S M Moore, Lieutenant W G Drummond and 40 other ranks set off by train but found the line blocked six kilometres from Mafrak. The party returned by the afternoon of 14 October with two 77 mm. guns, two mountain guns, 300 rounds of artillery ammunition, various parts of machine guns, tools and other material.

During the next two days 82 men were evacuated with malaria and Lieutenant W F M Ross and 29 men marched in from the Training Regiment. Major G H L Harris and 40 others went to Mafrak and brought back nine field guns, 15 machine guns, an assortment of other weapons and a quantity of ammunition; another gun was brought in from Samra later. Captain F H Otton with two troops proceeded to the vicinity of Zerka to erect crosses over the graves of two men killed recently by Bedouins.

Seventy-one cases of gift stores were received from the Comforts Fund depot at Kantara, and were issued to the men. On 25 October, Lieutenant Colonel C H Granville and 12 other ranks were evacuated with fever, and Lieutenant Jarrett and 43 other ranks arrived from the Training Regiment at Moascar. A miniature rifle range was constructed; Hotchkiss gun and rifle practices were carried out. The usual day and night outpost line was held and escorts were provided for Royal Engineers parties.

C Squadron under Major Harris formed, together with two companies of British infantry, a guard of honour in Amman on 28 October at the ceremony of handing back the Hedjaz to the government of King Feisal and the raising of the Hedjaz flag.

On 30 October, the day of the signing of the Armistice by Turkey, Captain W. H. McKeown, regimental quartermaster, and 15 other ranks were evacuated with malaria, and Lieutenant Markwell took over the duties of quartermaster. Wagons were packed as orders had been received to move to Es Salt on 1 November.

### **Final Days: 1918-1919**

The regiment left Amman on 1 November, and marched to Es Salt on its way to Richon once more, the 1st Light Horse Brigade being the last of Chaytor's Force to march out of the hills of Moab and recross the Jordan. How quiet and empty of troops was the valley this time.

Richon le Zion was reached on 5 November and the unit settled down on its old camp site. Evacuations due to malaria had now dropped to about a dozen a week. The first party to march out on "1914 leave", consisting of 27 all ranks, left on 8 November, three days before the general Armistice with Germany was signed.

More reinforcements arrived at intervals from Moascar. After a general overhauling and cleaning of saddlery and equipment, the regiment formed up under Major Irwin at brigade headquarters on 29 November for official photographs to be taken. Next day there was a very successful regimental sports meeting. Football and cricket grounds were made and on 4 December there were brigade sports. Horse-racing was the most popular of the sports, so a divisional race meeting was held, which proved a great success.

Naturally, a constant topic was the dates of embarkation and demobilisation. The educational facilities offered to all ranks during the period of the Armistice and the subsequent period of demobilisation were made known and explained by the CO. By January 1919 there were an agricultural school at Jaffa, a mechanical school at Ramleh, a tractor driving school at Ludd, and, under the aegis of the YMCA, classes on veterinary science, internal combustion engines, bookkeeping and languages.

On 17 December came the order to move to the demobilisation area at Rafa. All tents and spare gear were carted to the railway for transport to the new camp; wheeled transport was brigaded and marched ahead of the main body. When the regiment reached Gaza on 20 December it was interesting to ride over the old Turkish positions for the last time and to see how well chosen those positions were. Every movement along the Wady Ghuzze to Shellal had been under direct observation by the enemy.

The camp area at Rafa was reached on 23 December and the regiment bivouacked on the old battlefield, close to the graves of many of the Anzacs who had fallen in that fight. The whole of the division was now encamped there, and a lot of work was put into laying out and constructing the camp and making roads as it was anticipated that several months would be spent there before the return to Australia. Lectures and mounted training were carried out daily, but plenty of leave to Jerusalem,



Beersheba and Cairo was granted, and the opportunity was taken to see that the graves of the fallen men were in order. A party under Lieutenant W H James, MC, had sailed for Gallipoli with the 7LH in November to carry out graves registration there. When the horses of the unit were paraded before the Assistant Director of Veterinary Services, Lieutenant Colonel Kendall, on 25 January, there were 36 of the original horses still on strength. A number of the horses, mainly the older ones, were shot, and the remainder, sad to relate, were sold locally.

On 12 January Major T E W W Irwin was left in command of the regiment and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel, to date from 25 October.

Football, boxing and horse racing were indulged in as much as circumstances permitted during February and March. Valuable cups were presented by senior officers and prizes were subscribed for by units. Also, a regimental polo team took part in matches twice a week, whilst a divisional team was sent to Cairo to compete against other units. The regiment's successful football team also visited Cairo, but was prevented from playing in the finals by the departure of the unit for Australia. Mrs Chisholm and Miss McPhillamy had transferred the Jerusalem branch of the Soldiers' Club to Rafa, where it was run under the direct supervision of Miss McPhillamy.

On 12 March the 1st Light Horse Regiment entrained for Kantara where it embarked next day for Australia in the SS Ulimaroa, the muster being 21 officers and 486 other ranks, with 16 other ranks from Moascar. The steamer had been well fitted up for troops and in addition to the 1LH Regiment it carried Brigadier General CF Cox, CB, CMG, DSO, V.D., brigade headquarters, the 2LH Regiment and a medical detail.

The Comforts Fund representatives had placed on board a considerable quantity of extras, and a proportion of the regimental funds was spent for the amusement and comfort of the men on their way home. A band of 19 players under Sergeant B Peterson helped to entertain those on board. Mr Jones of the YMCA brought books, cards, games, boxing gloves and other things, and helped to arrange sports and concerts. Physical training and educational classes were held daily and twice a week all ranks were put through a disinfectant steam bath. The health of the troops was good, recurrent malaria and colds being the worst trouble. Colombo was reached on 25 March and the opportunity of going ashore for a day was taken.

Very few of the officers and men who had formed the First Light Horse Regiment in 1914 were on board the Ulimaroa; many had "gone west", others had already gone home on "1914 leave" and some to England, but all present were keen to get back to Australia now that the war was over.

A serious epidemic of influenza was sweeping Australia by the time the transport reached Fremantle and no shore leave was allowed at ports of call. There was also a strike by waterside workers, as a result of which the troops had to coal the ship when it called at Albany.

After arrival at Sydney in April 1919 all personnel were put into camp under canvas at the Quarantine Station on North Head for some days. When the isolation period ended the troops were landed and transported to the Anzac Buffet in Hyde Park, where they were finally broken off.

And so, without pomp or ceremony, the First Light Horse Regiment, Australian Imperial Force, passed out of physical existence. There remains its record of achievement, which is summed up in the battle honours subsequently awarded.

Military Order 364, published in August 1918, stated: "In order to maintain the traditions and perpetuate the records made and distinctions gained by the Australian Imperial Force in the present war, it has been decided to alter the designation of all Citizen Military Force and Senior Cadet units to conform to the numbers borne by the Australian Imperial Force Units abroad." This led to the 7th Light Horse (New South Wales Lancers) being re-designated 1st Light Horse (New South Wales Lancers). Henceforth this regiment wore the distinguishing colour patch - light blue over white divided diagonally - of the 1st Light Horse Regiment, Australian Imperial Force, while on its guidon, presented in 1928, were emblazoned the battle honours:

Defence of Anzac	Jerusalem
Sari Bair <sup>1</sup>	Jaffa
Rumani	Jericho
Maghaba-Rafah	Jordan (Amman)
Gaza-Beersheba	Megiddo <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sari Bair-the attack on the Chessboard by the 1st L.H. Regiment on August 7 1915 was a part of the offensive aimed at the capture of the hill-mass known as Sari Bair.

<sup>2</sup> Megiddo-the actual site of ancient Armageddon and the name given to Allenby's victory of September 18-23 1918. Regiments of the Anzac Mounted Division which had operated on the eastern flank across the Jordan River were awarded the battle honour "Megiddo" for their contribution to the victory.

## Casualties 1<sup>st</sup> Light Horse Regiment 1914-1918

	Died <sup>3</sup>	Wounded <sup>4</sup>	Prisoner <sup>5</sup>
Gallipoli	119	397	
Egypt/Palestine	96	282	4
United Kingdom	9		
TOTAL	224	679	4

<sup>3</sup>Killed in Action or Died of Wounds.

<sup>4</sup>Wounded, survived the war unless reported as died.

<sup>5</sup>Taken prisoner by the enemy.

*Adapted from the contemporary account prepared by the officers of the 1 LH (AIF) en-route to Australia, 1918.*

## Tanks at Hamel and Amiens



At the centenary of the Battle of Le Hamel commemoration, along with the Governor General, our Ambassador to France and other dignitaries who spoke there was a trooper from the Royal Tank Regiment (RTR). In the group of soldiers surrounding the monument there was a full troop of soldiers from the RTR; the trooper who spoke, also laid a wreath. They were easy to pick out, dressed in black with black berets, silver badges, epaulettes with a bar with the colours of the mud, blood and green fields beyond.

They were there to commemorate what is recognised as the first effective employment of tanks in infantry support. Tanks had been in the battle since September 1916. The Mk 1 Mother tanks then employed, were few 32, 9 of which made it across no-man's land. They were difficult to control, had gaps in their armour through which slivers of lead could pass and their engines were hot leaky and un-reliable. Temperatures inside were around 50 deg in summer, the air tinged with Carbon Monoxide. Fuel, petrol, was stored inside, in a roof compartment, they easily brewed when hit by a howitzer.

As the war progressed, so too did the design of tanks. By July 1918 the tank was a Mk 5, not yet tested in battle. The armour had been strengthened, engines were more reliable and internal exhausts less leaky. Most importantly, drivers could control the vehicles using levers they could hold rather than having to signal in the dark and smoke to "gearsman".



Australians had not worked with tanks since Bullecourt, April 1917. There, in the cold the unreliable vehicles had either not turned up, lost their way and in one case fired on Australian troops thinking them to be the enemy. Many of the troops who would be expected to work with the tanks at Le Hamel were veterans of Bullecourt. Monash, the Australian Corps commander had seen what the new vehicles were capable of. He organised for the troops to train with, ride on and even drive the Mark 5s; they were impressed.

For the Battle of Le Hamel on 4 July 1918 where Monash had gained permission to remove a salient from the front before of Foilleu from the Somme River to the Roman Road. Every aspect of the operation was planned in detail. Tanks were to be used to lead infantry into battle, crash through wire obstacles and deal with strong points. Tanks were to bring up ammunition and supplies releasing soldiers (men were in short supply in Australia's volunteer army) for valuable combat duties.

Monash planned every aspect of the operation in detail. Tanks were to be used en masse, 60 combat and four supply tanks, for a seven brigade operation. The advantage of using tanks en masse had been proven as a breakthrough strategy at Cambrai, there, however, most of the vehicles ended up in the enemy's hands due to the failure of infantry (and cavalry) to follow-up, and the success of German storm-trooper tactics. At Le Hamel there was effective follow up, and storm trooper counter-attacks proved ineffective against Australian combat veterans many of whom had been in the line since 1915.

Not everything went well. In a battle where two VCs and a CMH were awarded, not everything was perfect regardless of the fact that the battle only ran three minutes over time (planned 90 minutes, objectives taken in 93). Before the key initial objectives of pear and kidney trenches the tanks did not turn up for zero hour. They were lost en route. They had to move in in the dark. Drivers and commanders had no night vision devices, there was no moon, and guides were hard to see. Those of us who have manoeuvred A vehicles in inky blackness have often had similar experiences; even when you can hang-out of a hatch. No such hatches in Mk 5s, just small slits covered with steel grids to peek through. The infantry had to follow the artillery barrage, so could not wait, the trenches were taken and the assaulting infantry having a smoko by the time the tanks turned up. A VC, in each case Private Henry Dalziel at Pear Trench, Lance Corporal Thomas Axford at Kidney.



Needless to say by the time of the battles that won the war, Amiens, Great Bend of the Somme and Hindenburg Line routines were developed that enabled tanks to be positioned in the dark. These battles were marked by many examples of how tanks can save lives, and lessons in armoured deployment.

On 8 August during the Australian Corps break through Lieutenant Colonel Carter had 16 armoured cars dragged through the mire of no-man's land by tanks and on to paved roads. The raid proved there was no opposition to the Australian Corps front. If, General Rawlinson, the British Fourth Army Commander of which the Australian Corps was a part, had accepted Monash's advice given after receiving Carter's report and allowed the Australians to exploit their success, the war could have ended a month earlier.

At the Hindenburg Outpost Line, Monash was short of tanks; he devised a tactic where all of the Corps' machine guns would deliver a band of fire 300 metres ahead of the advancing infantry. It worked.

The available tanks had been conserved for the ill-fated breaching of the Main Hindenburg Line by the US 2 Corps under Monash's command. There the tanks were decimated by mines. British mines sown in anticipation of German tank attacks when the British had occupied the area prior to Operation Michael in March 1918 when they had been driven out by the German offensive. A very practical lesson in minefield marking and recording.

'Tis a great tribute to our nation that our general, son of European immigrants and a reservist, not a full time soldier like most of us can be credited with development of many key Armoured Corps tactics.

*John Howells 2018*



## Operation Oboe 2

### What was Proposed

Operation Oboe 2 saw the 1st Armoured Regiment (Royal New South Wales Lancers) in support of the 7th Division in an operation to capture and hold the Balikpapan and Manggar area of eastern Borneo to enable the establishment of air and naval facilities and to conserve petroleum producing installations. The Regiment had under command the 2/1 Armoured Brigade Reconnaissance Squadron, a special equipment squadron with three Matilda flamethrowers, three Matilda dozers and a Coventry Bridgelay, the one in the Museum's vehicle collection.

The operation was to commence (F Day) on 1 July 1945. It had been preceded by work-up training and rehearsals at Moratai.

### Was it Necessary?

Possibly, Macarthur would certainly have been aware of what was proposed for 6 August 1945 at Hiroshima, we do not know if the future field marshal knew. No one knew what the Japanese reaction would be to the proposed atomic bombings. If Hirohito had not surrendered the war could have continued 'till every Japanese soldier in the field was found and killed. Before July 1945 the Japanese had shown no intention to surrender.

Did the deaths of Major Edward Ryrie, Corporal Athol Playford, Troopers Keith Broome, Ray Richardson and Wilfred Burton in any way contribute to the security of the nation? You would like to think so but given the result of the bombings on 6 and 9 August 1945, you would have to say their sacrifice was in vein.

### The Operation

Operation Oboe 2 was the largest single employment of tanks in combat yet made by the Australian Army. The Regiment's three squadrons were all committed. A and B Squadrons landing on F Day, RHQ on F+3, C Squadron being on the water reserve, ultimately landing on F+13.

The landings were preceded by the heaviest air and sea bombardment since the Normandy landings just over a year previously. Tank recon parties landed with the infantry, tanks landed a few minutes later.



Peter Teague with the captured Katana and the sword on display in the Lancers' Museum

B Squadron was placed in support of 25 Bde with the task of securing the refinery at Balikpapan and taking the commanding height known as Parramatta Ridge. Exploitation was to then be along the Milford Highway to Coke Spur in the hinterland.

A Squadron with the special equipment squadron, was to support 21 Bde and was tasked to land east of B Squadron, then take Manggar airfield, by advancing along the Vasey Highway and by sea. Ace, OC 1 Tp, Sergeant Harry Britten's tank was the first to land. Ace is on the edge of the parade ground.

Oboe 2 for the regiment was an infantry support operation, and for the most part went well.

On 2 July 1945 Corporal Peter Teague, the Regiment's intelligence corporal was checking out a tunnel off the Vasey Highway as A Squadron advanced toward Manggar. He was with two colleagues. As they came around a corner, three Japanese were surprised to see them. The Australians engaged the Japs with their pistols, killing them. One Jap was an officer with a ceremonial Katana. The Katana is in our Museum. On one occasion the Japanese were recorded as attacking tanks with spears.



Reg Hole

On 10 July, at Coke spur there was a significant action. Lieutenant Alan Aynsley's 2 Troop A Squadron with a frog attached were called forward to support A Coy 2/31 Bn. The action started at 1330. The fire fight was heavy. At 1745 the tanks were running short of ammunition and had to withdraw. Trooper Reg Hole\* was the A Squadron intelligence orderly. As the tanks withdrew, infantry were pinned down by fire. At great risk to his own safety, Reg broke cover and got to the 'phone at the back of the nearest tank. He directed the tank's fire at the Jap position enabling orderly withdrawal of the infantry. For this action Reg was awarded one of two MID's men of the regiment gained in the operation. The other was awarded posthumously to Major Edward Rylie the regiment's 2IC for a similar selfless act at Parramatta Ridge.

The enemy broke contact on 23 July in the area of Coke Spur.

#### Aftermath

The Japanese surrendered on 15 August, and on 8 September a formal instrument of surrender was signed with the local Japanese commander Vice Admiral Kamada; Lieutenant Colonel Glasgow and Major Hordern the CO and 2IC of the regiment were witnesses. In December 1945, the last of the Regiment left the area, the tanks less those designated for return to Australia were dumped into about 20 metres of water off Morotai.

\*The Hole family name was subsequently changed to Hollis, Reg's son Frank later commanded the Regiment, his grandson Domenic served in it.

*An address by John Howells to the Regimental Dinner 14 July 2018.*



## The Last Lancer Grave Marker in South Africa Vandalised

The Regiment lost six in the Boer War. Fred Kilpatrick, Rowland Harkus, Walter Ellis, Frederik Avard, Franz Fetting, Leslie Tunks.

Fred Kilpatrick was the first Lancer to die in battle. He died after being shot in the jaw when a patrol of Lancers and Australian Horse were ambushed on 17 January 1900 near Colesberg. He is buried at Colesberg Boer War Cemetery. There is no grave marker, his name is recorded on the cemetery's obelisk.



Colesberg Cemetery



Rowland Harkus died of enteric fever (typhoid) at Bloemfontein, he is buried at the President Brand Cemetery Bloemfontein, and his name is on the central obelisk.

Franz Fetting died of enteric fever at Bloemfontein. He is buried at the President Brand Cemetery Bloemfontein, and his name is on the central obelisk. He did have a grave marker though not over his grave, it was one of those arrayed around the obelisk in 2014, however, by 2016, this display had been removed. Some of the grave markers are used to decorate bridges over drains as you enter the cemetery. These grave markers have the names obliterated (a piece of metal is welded over the name).



President Brand Cemetery with grave markers including Franz Fetting's



Lancers on the Bloemfontein obelisk. Daly was a NSWMR member not a Lancer



Frederik Avard died of wounds at Carolina. He is buried at Ermelo Cemetery, his name is on the central obelisk.



Walter Ellis died on the transport ship Harleich Castle on his way home 18 November 1900. He was buried at sea.

Leslie Tunks died of enteric fever at Kroonstad. He is buried at the main Kroonstad Boer War Cemetery. In 2016 there was a grave marker over his grave and his name was on the wall in the cemetery gatehouse. By 2018, his grave marker had been smashed from its stand. The cast iron markers are saleable as scrap. The gates from the cemetery had also been removed and presumably sold as scrap. It is sad that the economic circumstances pertaining in rural South Africa encourage such activity.



This was the last grave marker of any of the six Lancers.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission only has responsibility for 1914 to the present, so graves from the Second Boer War are not covered. I note that the Canadians have put up marble headstones for their dead in South Africa; marble has no scrap value. You might note that in South Africa unit names etc can get mixed up.

*John Howells 2018.*

## Departed Comrades

### MERV CUMMINGS

Merv passed away in February 2018, he was a member of the 2/3 Anti Tank Regiment in World War 2, seeing service in North Africa and New Guinea.

After the war, he joined the Regiment where he was a pillar of HQ (Op Spt) Sqn where his background as a bus driver and one time truck owner was of great assistance.

Merv was also a stalwart member of Castle Hill RSL.

### JOHN CRESWICK

John Creswick passed away at his Coffs Harbour home on 29 March 2018. John, a Centurion crewman and troop commander left the Regiment in 1965, he had been unwell for some time.

Graham Hodge sent a message to say. "I first met John in 1956 when I was posted from full time national service into Recce troop as a ferret driver . John was a couple of years older, he and Gordon Aire were the two lance corporals in the troop. Looking through my Lancer files I came upon a photo taken in 1956 showing John together with all the troop under the watchful eye of the then troop leader John Drolz. John Creswick and I progressed through the ranks, John and I on any chance occasion met to reminiscence. I will always remember John as a lovely bloke always smiling and especially when I was his junior and he gave me the benefit of his knowledge."

Jim Gellett fondly remembers John as his first troop leader in the early 1960s.

### TED DAVIES

Ted passed away in December 2017. Ted has been an active member of the Association since 2015, sorry, we do not have any details of Ted's service.

### BILL HARVEY

Bill's passing was noted in Reveille, he served with the 2/2 Machine Gun Battalion in North Africa including the siege of Tobruk.

### KEL HEALY

Kel passed away in February 2018, he worked for the NSW Railways for very many years and at various locations including booking and goods offices and more recently in Central Motive Power Control at Sydney Terminal Station

Kel was a member of the Australian Army Reserve for many years including a long period with the 1/15 RNSWL at Parramatta. (Thanks to Terry Boardman for this advice.)



Hector Howlett

### HECTOR HOWLETT

Hector of Beverley Hills passed away at 2030 on 17 July 2018 aged 99, he was buried at Sutherland on 27 July. Hector served in the Regiment during World War 2 in New Guinea and Borneo rising to the rank of sergeant. He was an active member of the Regimental Association until recent years. Another of our links with the World War 2 Regiment has passed on. (Our thanks to Mr Lloyd Howlett, Hector's son for letting us know).

### DON MORRIS

Don served in the Regiment as a tank crewman in the 1960s. Of recent date Don was a Museum volunteer, devoting his Sundays to manning the gate and guiding patrons through the Museum.



Don's ashes will be scattered at Lancer Barracks at 1100 on Saturday 18 August 2018. Association members are invited to be present, please wear Regimental beret, Regimental tie and medals.

## SIR LAWRENCE STREET

Sir Lawrence Street was the Honorary Colonel from 1987 'till 1995. He had not previously seen service in the Army, but had served in the Navy in World War 2. His career as Chief Justice of NSW, and Lieutenant Governor ensured he was just the right person to be Honorary Colonel and foster the needs of the Regiment.



Sir Lawrence passed away on 21 June 2018 and was farewelled at a state funeral at the Opera House.

## Thank You

Thank you all very much for your assistance in supporting the Museum and Association financially in the 2017/18 financial year to date. Our records (and they may not be perfect, human data entry has been involved) show the following supported by donation, the Association:

Michael Alexander, Douglas Black, Tony Blissett, Joseph Camilleri, John Carruthers, Bert Castellari, Alan Chanter, Paul Degiorgio, Glen Eaves, Tony Fryer, Brian Hanlon, Alan Hitchell, Graham Hodge, Graham Horsfall, Michael Krause, David Meidling, Doug Pollard, Joyce Sharpe, Margaret Sheppard, Eric Stevenson, Gloria Warham, Graham Yee, Albert Zehetner.

and the following the Museum:

Michael Alexander, Douglas Black, Tony Blissett, Cynthia Booth, Charlotte Butler, Ron Cable, Joseph Camilleri, John Carruthers, Bert Castellari, Alan Chanter, Paul Degiorgio, Glen Eaves, Tony Fryer, Warren Glenny, Brian Hanlon, Bev Hill, Alan Hitchell, Graham Hodge, Michael Krause, Mary Lamb, James McCann, Brian McEvelly, David Meidling, Brad Pearce, Kevin Regan, Joyce Sharpe, Margaret Sheppard, Eric Stevenson, Norma Swadling, Gloria Warham, Wellington RSL Sub-Branch, Graham Yee, Albert Zehetner.

## HELP!

Yes we really do need your financial assistance. No amount too large, no amount too small.

Donations to the Museum (the Museum is registered with the charity tick) and Association are possible securely using PayPal from your credit card (Visa, Mastercard, AMEX) or from your PayPal account (from our website). If paying by cheque or money order, simply use the attached form, donations to the Museum are tax deductible.



Don't forget your memorabilia, the online shop now has Regimental Centenary Beret Badges for sale; we have secure payment facilities available using your credit card or your PayPal account. If paying by cheque or money order please use the attached form.

## RAACA

Membership of the RAACA NSW is free to all applicants over 75. The RAACA NSW newsletter complements Lancers' Despatch, providing news of events in the wider corps community. If you wish to join the RAACA and receive the newsletter, drop a line to the Association at Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Paddington NSW 2071, or visit the website: [www.raacansw.org.au](http://www.raacansw.org.au).

## A Vehicle Crewmen Needed

The Museum will have a number of commitments this year as part of the WW1 conclusion centenary. This will stretch our available A vehicle crewmen, some of whom now find their agility; that needed to crawl into a crew position is not what it was. So if you are a trained A vehicle crewman, and have the time to up-skill to a Ferret, Centurion or Matilda, driver or gunner and participate in parades this year, call Brian Staniland 0409 970 578.





### "TENAX IN FIDE"

"A regiment is not solely the men who presently comprise its strength. It is an entity stretching back in time to its beginnings. It is all the men who have served in its ranks, with their traditions and achievements. The serving unit, like the tip of an iceberg, may be the only part you see, but underneath, supporting it, there is a great deal more." (These words, often quoted, were introduced by the Museum's Patron, Major General Warren Glenny, AO RFD ED, during his term as 2IC of 1<sup>st</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Royal NSW Lancers in the 1960s)



Royal New South Wales Lancers Association and  
 New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum Incorporated ABN 94 630 140 881

## Response Sheet – August 2018

I will be at the Regimental Association Reunion Sunday 4 November 2017, Lancer Barracks.

Post to: New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum Inc  
 and Royal New South Wales Lancers Association  
 PO Box 7287  
 PENRITH SOUTH NSW 2750  
 AUSTRALIA

I would like to make the following donation/s.

An Amount of: \$(AU) \_\_\_\_\_ to the New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum Inc.

An Amount of: \$(AU) \_\_\_\_\_ to the Royal New South Wales Lancers Association.

Total: \$(AU) \_\_\_\_\_

A cheque or money order is enclosed made out for the total amount to the "New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum Inc".

(For credit card donations, please use the online donation form at [www.lancers.org.au](http://www.lancers.org.au))

*Note that funds will be transferred to the "Royal New South Wales Lancers Association" account in accord with your allocations. Receipts will be provided in January or July for donations to the Museum.*

### Your Details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(If applicable)*

Street 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Street 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Town (etc): \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

eMail: \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL DONATIONS OVER \$2 TO THE NSW LANCERS MEMORIAL MUSEUM INC ARE DEDUCTIBLE FOR TAXATION PURPOSES WITHIN AUSTRALIA**







New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum Incorporated ABN 94 630 140 881

# Memorabilia Order Form

Post to: New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum  
PO Box 7287  
PENRITH SOUTH NSW 2750  
AUSTRALIA

I would like to Order:

- \_\_\_\_\_Regimental Centenary Beret Badges @ \$(AU)20.00 within Australia \$(AU)30.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_1LH Centenary Mugs @ \$(AU)20.00 within Australia \$(AU)30.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Regimental Stickers @ \$(AU)7.00 within Australia \$(AU)10.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Regimental Polo Shirt @ \$(AU)40.00 within Australia \$(AU)50.00 Overseas SIZE: S, M, L, XL (*please circle*)\*
- \_\_\_\_\_Regimental Plaques @ \$(AU)50.00 within Australia \$(AU)70.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Regimental Bow Ties @ \$(AU)20.00 within Australia \$(AU)30.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Bullion Blazer Badge @ \$(AU)25.00 within Australia \$(AU)30.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Stubby Holders @ \$(AU)15.00 within Australia \$(AU)25.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Regimental Ties @ \$(AU)25.00 within Australia \$(AU)35.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Histories of 1/15 RNSWL @ \$(AU)60.00 within Australia \$(AU)80.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Key Rings @ \$(AU)15.00 within Australia \$(AU)25.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Embroided Badges @ \$(AU)7.00 within Australia \$(AU)10.00 Overseas
- \_\_\_\_\_Caps @ \$(AU)25.00 within Australia \$(AU)30.00 Overseas

Above prices are inclusive of GST (within Australia) and Air Mail Postage

\* Please note that should the wrong size be selected and an exchange requested, the buyer will be required to cover the cost to post return the unwanted item, and post out the replacement.

A cheque or money order is enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(for credit card orders, please use the online shop at [www.lancers.org.au](http://www.lancers.org.au))

### Delivery Address

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Street 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Town (etc): \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

eMail: \_\_\_\_\_