THE DUNTROON SOCIETY

Newsletter 2/1995 October 1995

Time Marches On – From the Middle Distance

P. Trost

On reading Lieutenant Colonel Vikingur's screaming headline **Duntroon – The More Recent Memory Continues** *(Newsletter 2/1994),* I felt compelled to try to add some more 'gems' to my earlier effort **Duntroon – a Middle Distance Memory** *(Newsletter 1/1994).* So, the recollections of the Forties continue!

After the War of 1939-45 the Forties was still a period of shortages and rationing and this was epitomised in the life of a staff cadet – particularly a Fourth Class one at that time. We suffered shortages in the fundamentals of life – freedom, food, girls and money. Read what you may into the sequence of those essentials – but nothing significant is intended. To each his own.

Money. Our parents provided 10/- [$14 at current value] a week and this was doled out to us after the last afternoon parade on Fridays. This was an early training exercise in decision making as we then faced an intolerable situation that had no all-embracing happy solution. Two ounces of tobacco, a packet of papers, 10 tailor-mades, a bus fare to Canberra and return, a block of ice cream and one (not two) picture theatre seats in Canberra on a Saturday night came to more than ten bob! Something and/or someone had to suffer. If the trip to Canberra was a must, then one could walk home across the weir (pre-Lake Burley Griffin days!) and forget the tailor-mades. In the latter case, one survived until the tail-end of the week by 'botting' the 'bashings' from a mate. When a well-meaning parent broke the rules and slipped a ten shilling note in with a letter at Easter, birthday times etc. one had a feeling akin to winning Tattslotto in these days. Of course, if one could have his bicycle sent from home, one was not only independent of buses but was actually favoured by the senior classmen who wanted to borrow the bike.

There was one aspect of the RMC financial administration that I never fully understood. Once a month (I think it was) we would be given a little exercise-type book. In it was recorded, with pen and in copperplate, a costed list of any stationery we had requisitioned, all our laundry expenses, any clothing issues, replacement of any lost or damaged equipment and the like. On the opposite page was recorded a daily allowance that a benevolent government allowed a staff cadet. My recollection is that the latter amount never exceeded the former, up to the final day of reckoning, i.e. Graduation. We were required to sign this book as an indication that we agreed with and approved all the figures for the period in question. Several staff cadets actually were in credit in this scheme – by dint of doing their own washing and ironing and using pencils down to the last quarter inch.

Those of us who abided by the joining instructions, brought with us to Duntroon, among other things, copious supplies of summer and winter underwear. This early acceptance of military orders was ignored by the Q Staff who issued us with piles of bits and pieces, including summer and winter underwear. All of those items, of course, appeared in the first issue of our account books and ensured that we started well and truly in the red!

I might add that, in my case, this underwear, when folded to the correct width remained unused for three years and later saw service as car cleaning cloths. I am sure my contemporaries will remember the summer underpants. Of woven cotton and in a boxer style, they were devoid of any elasticised means of support. One solitary button was supposed to do the trick. Alas, buttons are known to fall off. When that happens during a drill parade and we are wearing shorts – as did happen to one of our Class – it becomes a very difficult and delicate manoeuvre to keep a steady rifle on a left shoulder while trying to hitch up an increasing display of white cotton below the leg of one's shorts. All this had to be done without attracting the attention of one Fango Watson [RSM 1944-55], a daunting and eventually unsuccessful task.

Girls. Apart from the money implications, they were hard to find! The Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) on the staff, all seemed to be 'booked'. Most of the male staff had just returned from up to four years overseas, so any female offspring were still being pushed around in prams. There were two eligible daughters however, but you can imagine how tough the competition was there! Locally available belles seemed to fall into three categories. From the surrounding properties and stations there were a few whose parents were kindly disposed towards Duntroon and its young, virile, male population. This first group was duplicated by a number of families in Canberra itself. These parents were usually very co-operative in helping out with meals, transport and/or entertainment. The third group were the 'bachelor' girls living in hostels around Canberra. These actually had money! Some even had reputations! Actually there was a fourth and rather exclusive group – mainly from Sydney. They were 'steadies' of some staff cadets. For important functions, like Graduation and the Sports Ball, they would travel down from the Big Smoke and generally stay at the Hotel Canberra – all at their own expense, of course!

It would thus far appear that there existed quite a pool of potential partners. Maybe there was, but the problem was to find them. Actually this scarcity had another significant impact on Clink life. Our annual Concert

About 0645 hours in the winter of 1946 following a period of pack drill on the 'Square'. The defaulters are W.M. Purdy, R.W.O. Pugh & N.M. Turner (all 1946).

usually included a chorus line of cadets six feet and over in height. In order to front up in a truly feminine way, we needed bras to wear. We could never get enough of them. I know they cost clothing ration coupons, but one would have thought there would be plenty of old ones around. But, like the girls, they were hard to come by!

Freedom. The culprit for the inability to find and meet essential partners for College Balls and like functions was, undoubtedly, the first missing fundamental – freedom. It was virtually non-existent for a Fourth Classman and wasn't much better for Senior Classes either. I won't labour this point, as the change from a big fish to a little fish was something nearly all staff cadets had to endure – but it certainly did not help by having no home leave for the first year. We did have an early and glorious taste of a type of freedom when Fourth Class was dumped at the Cotter Dam with a supply of tents and food and left there over Easter. No reveille, lights out, parades or senior classes! Glorious! An additional bonus was the fact that it did much towards bonding us as a group. [Although of an earlier era, a detailed description of this activity, by P.G. Heffernan, appears on p.11 of *Newsletter 1/1992*. Ed.]

Food. In a nutshell (no pun intended), the food was pretty ordinary and always in short supply! Occasionally, there would be a spare slice of bread on a table (not the top slice – called the 'flywalk') and we would play 'Pluff' for it. This was our high speed version of the ancient Japanese game of 'Stone, Scissors & Paper'. If, for some dastardly misdemeanour at the dining table, a Fourth Classman was deemed to be 'ex-Pluff', he was not allowed to play and therefore went hungry. Colonel Vikingur mentioned peanut butter, Vegemite and Toc. We did not see either of the first two and the word Toc had two meanings – the first was a brew loosely called white coffee (we believed it was a mixture of left over tea & coffee) and made available in large unheated urns after evening study or when meals were supplied in the field. I did not recover the taste for coffee for many years after Graduation. Whilst we had no Vegemite we did have three varieties of jam. The Army had hundreds of tons of melon and lemon jam left over from the South West Pacific Area and that was all shipped to the RMC. I have never eaten melon, lemon or melon & lemon jam since. Occasionally, two mystery and unbranded jams were served. The late G.G.(Chick) Jarman (1945) christened one 'Ape's Armpit' and the other a name which could not be printed on these pages. If we had a day in the field, whatever miserable scraps of food we could save we would take with us in our Basic Pouches together with the compulsory ten drill rounds of .303 ammo. It would be an unfortunate day if, on these occasions, we had to turn out our Basic Pouches for inspection.

There was one bright spot on the hunger-appeasement horizon and that was supplied by the wives of the Duntroon staff. This took the form of Sunday afternoon teas. I do not recall the selection process, but to receive an invitation to partake of real tea, scones and glorious iced sponge cakes was next door to heaven! Undoubtedly the 'Queen' of Afternoon-Tea givers was Mrs McKenzie, the wife of Professor C.E. McKenzie. Having had three sons graduate from the RMC, she truly understood the staff cadet mentality.

The second meaning of 'Toc' was of a much more serious nature. I am not sure of its derivation, but it could have come from 'T' for 'Talk'. There were various levels of Tocs, whereby a staff cadet was 'invited' into the presence of a Company Commander, the Battalion Commander or Commandant and his sins would be read to him. The result would be a reprimand, demotion, relegation or dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the sins. Our Class had the rare distinction of being awarded a 'Class Com Toc' when the Commandant, between putting his glasses on and off a record number of times, admonished us for our 'attitude'.

In closing, I am reminded by Lieutenant Colonel Vikingur's article of the vital role played in our lives by the old picture theatre. Failing all else on a weekend, one could always find the threepence or sixpence admission charge and 'go to the pictures'! There was only one projector so we had a lengthy break between each reel of a feature film. This lead to the standard answer to the question, *What's on tonight?* being, *The first four reels of Gone With the Wind.* We never did see

Who gets it, in addition to the stew? Stone, scissor, paper of Jun-ken-po in the Cadets' Mess, 1947. From the left: W.S. Hopkirk (1947 and apparently 'ex-pluff'), J.R. Clarke (1946), J.M Hutcheson (1945), J.McC. Crofts (1945), J.McL. Ross (1946), J.M. Church (1946) & P. Trost (1946). This photograph was one of a number taken for the Associated Newspapers Ltd. for a feature to appear in The Sun newspaper that year.

that movie, but hope sprang eternal. Everyone fell in love with June Allyson in *Two Girls and a Sailor.* To forestall a possible mutiny, the powers-that-be agreed to rescreen it at least once – if not twice! My final recollection of the theatre is of the seats. Staff and a very few lucky early-arrival staff cadets were assured of the luxury of reclining in the magnificent seats from the old Plaza Theatre in Melbourne. The remaining seats defied description.

There is still much to be told about 'Clink' at this time of its history – perhaps someone else can 'pass the oil' on other inside angles of that period.

Having entered the RMC in 1946, Major P. Trost graduated in 1948 into the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. Another connexion with the RMC is that of his being the nephew of Major G.H. Capes (1911 as Staff Cadet 7 and, in February 1916, the first graduate of the RMC to be appointed to its staff).

Profile of the Students at the RMC

Current strength (3 October 1995)	384
CSC	
First Class	215
Third Class	139
Direct Entry Officer FAC	21
Specialist Service Officer FAC	9
Kuwait	12
Fiji	2
Malaysia	4
New Zealand	5
Papua New Guinea	4
Philippines	2
RAAF	6
Singapore	4
Thailand	1
ADFA Graduates	93
ADFA Transfers	4
Married	27
Females	41
Cadets with previous military experience	111

Second and Third Class, 1935-36, Duntroon Wing, RMC

E.G. Williams

[In *Newsletter 1/1995* there appeared the article, **Fourth Class 1934.** Colonel Williams continues, from the close of the Christmas leave of 1934-35, his account of the times he spent at the RMC. Ed.]

It was really with some relish that I returned as a member of Third Class to another room in Duntroon Wing of Victoria Barracks. I knew that there was much work to be done and many lessons to be learnt, but I was, and still am, a fairly light-hearted chap and was not fazed.

To begin with there was a new philosophy to be accepted; we were no longer the lowest of the low, but there were others to carry this torch. The class, too, had altered. Two of the 1934 entrants had not made the grade and were required to re-do Fourth Class[1]. They were replaced by two 'over 19' staff cadets[2] – F.P. Serong and L.J. Loughran, the latter having done 4th Class in 1933 and studied to make the grade in 1935. He was a great asset to our rugby team as well as being Catchweight champion boxer.

I must now admit that study had become more intense, particularly in subjects such as Mathematics, where I could never work out the mysteries of dy/dx, and in Signals, where my mind was not quite sharp enough. One little anecdote about Signals tells a lot. On one Saturday I had taken a horse down to the Engineer Depot at Moore Park to practise a few jumps. At first the horse refused, so I picked a switch from a tree intending to give it a mighty whack on the rump as we addressed the jump, but, alas, instead of walloping the horse's rump I hit my thumb on the cantle. We went over the jump, but I had a sore thumb. On reporting to the RAP on Monday I was told that I had a chip fracture and the whole hand was put into plaster. Now it happened that we had a Signals examination on Tuesday. Although I could handle and read the 'iddy umpty', I was astray with the light and the examination included writing. Exempt! The result was that I obtained the Class average which, compounded with my previous Signals examination meant that my results were good. I was lucky to pass this hurdle – thanks to the refusal by a horse!

Life went on with much of a muchness. Four examinations in the year, with probably 26-27 civil and military subjects to Hockey and Rugby matches. We missed out in the Services match by one point (28-27) because some bounder named, I think, Carrick converted a try virtually from the side-line. Our captain, N.L. (Stew) Currie (1933), distinguished himself by scoring 100 points for the season.

We used to spend Saturdays (or Sundays) riding in Centennial Park. This was in preparation for our cavalry trek which, in 1935, was through the cold country – a place called Robertson comes to mind. In this setting at night, the horse blankets were used not only for the horses. Camps at Holsworthy, horse lines, artillery driving the guns and limbers and finally firing the 18 pounders and the 4.5" howitzers for real were all part of the experience.

In this year, 1935, there was to be a graduation – there were more staff cadets and the standard of ceremonial parades improved. I had found a little trick to ensure that my rifle was correctly 'at the slope' by closing the left eye and looking with my right eye through the junction of my nose with the rest of my face. The most important thing on ceremonial parades was to have all the rifles with fixed bayonets parallel to each other. How our priorities change!

At the end I was glad to have completed the year knowing that I was welcome to return in 1936.

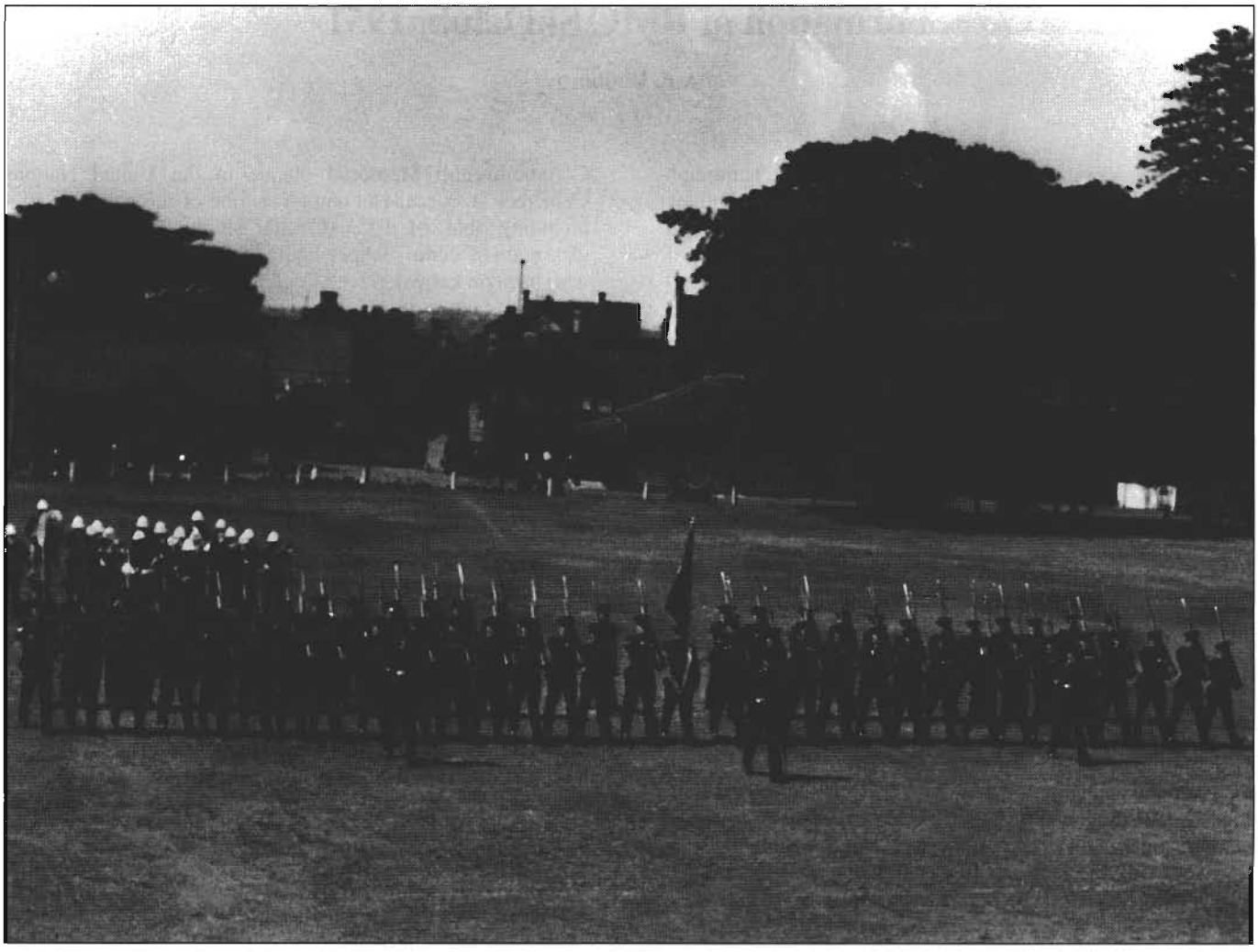
I am not going to deal at length with 1936. Suffice to say that the Clink was expanding, but we still seemed to have much the same things to do. We had lost no more staff cadets and we were near the senior class. One thing I must mention was our monthly Church parades. In our navy blue uniforms we marched up Oxford Street under the command of S.J. (Sid) Bleechmore (1933) (a nice chap) to a Methodist Church. He, with us, quickly learned to ignore the yahoos who made disparaging remarks about the 'Salvos'.

For our Services match we ran out the winners, and after the match our bus pulled up at a little pub called the 'Rose and Crown' where the team imbibed. I don't know who paid, but I know that I had at least four schooners of someone's 'Old Beer' which made me feel quite ill.

Dinner in the Mess that night was a near riot; I think the whole team paraded along on top of the tables, but the eventual punishment of the dreaded alcohol found me very sick (ill isn't the right word). I had invited three girls to the Services dance that night and one of my classmates, P.G. Little, told me he would meet the lasses at the guardhouse and explain that I had collapsed after the match. I began to feel dried out at about 9 p.m. (2100 hours), had a hot shower and then a cold one (it was cold!) and went down to the

[1. Records held by the RMC show that only one staff cadet, J.P. Laffey, was required to repeat Fourth Class that year. However, both he and Staff Cadet F.C. Browne were discharged on 8 August 1935. Both were commissioned in the AIF early in the War of 1939-45. Ed.]

[2. At that time the age for entry to the RMC was between 16 and 19 years but there was a proviso allowing entry over 19 years if the applicant was a member of the Forces at the time at which he sat for the special entrance examination for such applicants. Their training was then completed in three years at the RMC instead of the normal four-year course. Loughran was within the normal age bracket when he entered the RMC on 24 March 1933. However he was discharged on 12 December of that year, served in the Melbourne University Regiment during 1934 and gained an 'over 19' entry to the RMC on 11 February 1935. Ed.]



The Corps of Staff Cadets during their last graduation parade at Victoria Barracks, Paddington on 8 December 1936. It appears that not only Staff Cadet Williams had learned how to maintain the correct slope of the rifle and bayonet.

dance. One of the girls, more experienced than the others, asked me if the collapse was due to the wine or to the beer. No comment! I did notice the DMA, Lieutenant Colonel Robertson (1912), watching all the team members very closely, but as I was not ready to be removed I was most circumspect. At that time the consumption of alcohol and/or spirituous liquors (if caught) meant the boot for us.

At the end of October the whole Corps went into camp at Holsworthy. This one was different as our Class and the artillery specialists were attached to 1st Field Cadre, RAA which was now a mechanized unit. Although longer distances were covered it was much more comfortable than on horseback. As 1936 drew to a close, we held our last ceremonial parade at Victoria Barracks and departed on Christmas leave with some anticipation about our impending return to Duntroon.

Corrections

The following error appeared in *Newsletter 1/1995.* p.4. **Shorts.** Second para, third line. The unit should read, Officer Cadet School.

Obituary

Since the publication of the last Newsletter we have been advised of the deaths of the following:

10 Aug 1988	Major V.H. Augenson (1920)
30 May 1995	Colonel A.K.C. Harper (1936)
12 Aug 1995	Major General R.E. Wade (1924)
5 Sep 1995	Major General B.M Poananga (1940)
8 Oct 1995	Major General D. Vincent (1935)

Formation of RMC Ski Club, 1951

A.E. Limburg

[On p.13 *Newsletter 1/1995* there appears a paragraph describing the book, *Skis on the Brindabellas,* by Matthew Higgins. A number of former RMC Ski Club supervisors and staff cadets assisted the author in compiling the book. One of them was Colonel A.E. (Allan) Limburg who, with the kind permission of the author, wrote this article. Copies of the book are available from Matthew Higgins at 99 Duffy St., Ainslie, A.C.T., 2602 for $28 ($25 for the book plus $3 for postage). A percentage of the proceeds from the book is being donated to the future conservation of the Mt Franklin Chalet, now the oldest surviving club-built ski lodge on the Australian mainland. Ed.]

My parents first lived in Canberra during 1926-27. My father, an architect, designed the Civic Centre, Albert Hall and the Girls' Grammar School. In 1947, having passed the Leaving Certificate, I went to live in Canberra, as my father had been newly appointed Assistant of Works. I was employed by the CSIRO, at Black Mountain until I entered the RMC Duntroon in 1948. During 1947, I spent some time as Scoutmaster of 4th Canberra Scout Troop and took part in many hiking and camping activities. I also made several train trips to continue taking part in club and state bike races, having won several races and the club championship in 1946. After entering the RMC in 1948, the Commandant took me aside and said, *Bike racing is a sport unbecoming of a potential officer and gentleman.* So ended my bike racing days.

At the CSIRO I started work as a stock records clerk. My immediate predecessor in that job, W.A. (Bill) Woolston (1947), resigned to go to Duntroon, as did I and my replacement, P.P. (Peter) McGrath (1949). Peter and his family often accompanied my family when, in later years, we went skiing at Mt Buller, staying in an old Army ski hut – now demolished and replaced with a more modern, spacious and fully equipped hut. Peter retired as a colonel and died in Canberra a few years ago [14 Jul 1990].

My boss at CSIRO was Ken Prowse until then recently a major in the army. I worked in the store with Jim Gillan and Harold (Gus) Angus. They, and indeed most of the younger members of the CSIRO of both sexes, were avid outdoor types, who revelled in the nearby beautiful countryside. We regularly went on hiking and camping trips through the extensive pine forests, mountains and rivers, including the Brindabella and Franklin Ranges. Jim Gillan and Harold introduced me to skiing at Mt Franklin, where we stayed at the chalet, then the home of the Canberra Ski Club. We also skied at nearby Mt Ginini. I became hooked on that sport and was a keen participant at Mt Franklin, Mt Ginini and, in later years, at Mt Buller and Falls Creek.

One member of the CSIRO transport staff was a pilot instructor at Canberra Aero Club who gave me several flying lessons in Tiger Moths. I was often invited to Jim Gillan's home and got to know his brother Bruce, a fine young man. He also learnt from the same instructor to fly in Tiger Moths. He joined the RAAF, became a pilot and, on 27 January 1952, was shot down and killed in the Korean War of 1950-53. In 1989, when I returned to Korea, I read his name on a Commonwealth Memorial plaque in the United Nations Cemetery at Pusan. His name was one of the many listed – including that of F.C. (Geoff) Smith (1948) a fellow classmate of mine – whose bodies were never recovered and who have no known grave.

In 1948 Jim, Bruce, Harold, John Murray and David Thomas built a wooden ski hut in a magnificent setting beyond Mt Franklin, near the summit of Mt Ginini at 5,780ft (1,760m) and formed the Ginini Hut Club. Being much higher than Mt Buller and Mt Franklin, it received much heavier snowfalls. By late 1950, with Bruce in the RAAF and one of the others overseas, they were anxious to sell it. Following a reconnaissance by jeep with Jim Gillan and Major W.J. (Bill) Morrow (1939) in December 1950, I managed to convince the RMC to buy it. It was finally purchased on 13 June 1951 for £160.

After the RMC had purchased the ski hut from the Mt Ginini Hut Club, I formed the first RMC Ski Club. At weekends during that winter, we would drive to the hut in GMC trucks through snow drifts in places up to 8ft [2m] deep. Initially, we all slept in the small, vastly overcrowded hut. If the snow was too deep, we would shovel and winch the trucks through the deepest drifts using the powered winch on the front of the trucks. Captain A.E. (Bert) Easter, an engineer on the RMC staff, accompanied us.

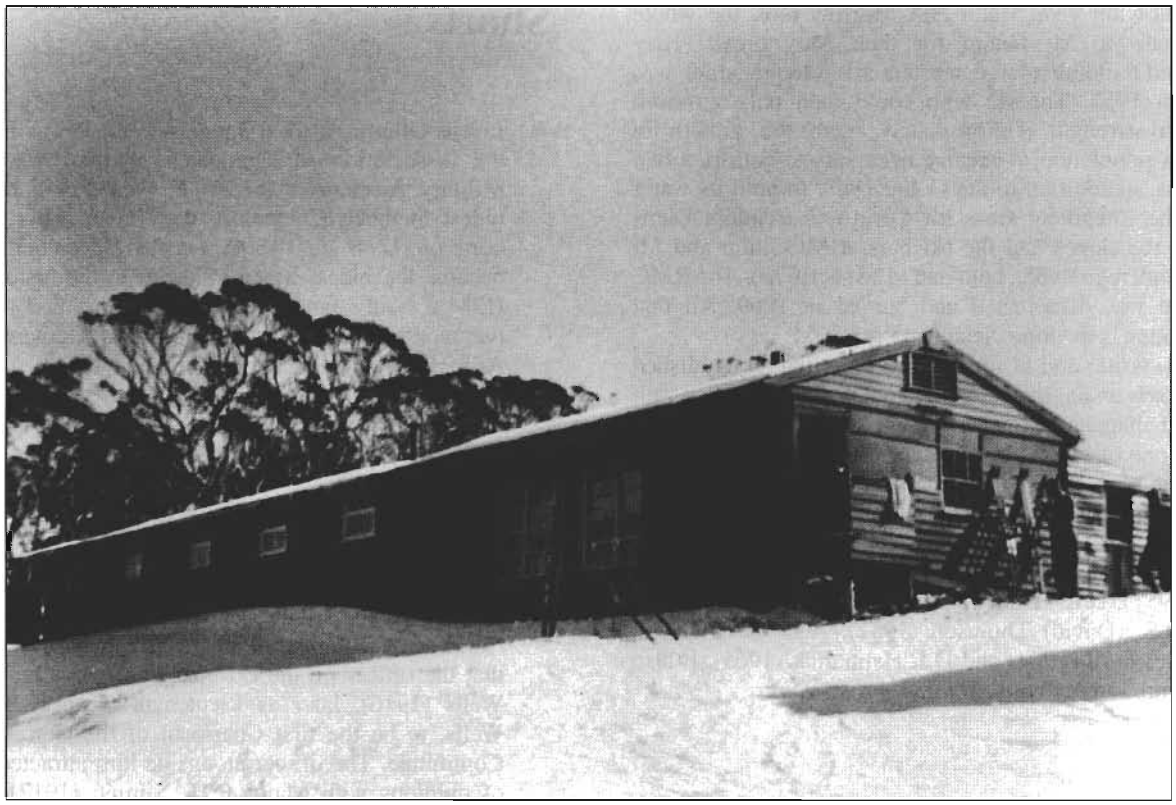
Again during that winter we transported three masonite-clad pre-fabricated huts to Mt Ginini. On arrival, we cleared the snow from the site, then dug down through the frozen earth, concreted in the stumps for each building and then erected the buildings which we lined to keep out the cold. We also managed to do a little skiing with skis, boots and clothing which, by today's standards, were primitive indeed. Still, it was great fun.

I think that some of the wooden skis and bamboo stocks had been brought back from the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan[1]. We wore a motley collection of our army clothing and army boots and gaiters. Our boots were firmly clamped on to steel plates on the skis by wire cables, around grooves cut in the rear of the boots – 'ankle breakers' – no safety bindings in those days.

We spent some time surveying several ski runs and blazed the tree trunks on their edges, for subsequent removal. We planned cross-country trips to the heights of Mt Gingera (6,092ft) [1,857m] and Mt Bimberi (6,274ft) [1,912m] – a real test of endurance.

On one weekend, one of the trucks broke down on the return trip and we had to spend that Sunday night in the Mt Franklin chalet which, luckily, was never locked. We consumed some rations that were always stocked in the chalet for such emergencies. We could not get back to Duntroon until late Monday afternoon, just as the annual cross-country run was finishing. You can imagine how sorry we were to have missed that! We had told the RMC of our plight by radio which we always carried.

[1. This may well be so as this type of ski equipment was issued by the Australian Army Amenities Service in Kure, Japan for the winter of 1950-51. It was used then just as described here. Ed.]



The main lodge building completed in 1953. (Ken Heldon photograph).

Early members of the RMC Club at Mt Ginini during the winter of 1951.
Behind them is the hut that previously belonged to the Ginini Hut Club.
From the Left: D.W. Lamperd (1950), D.R. Kepper (1950), T.G. Martin(1951), ? ,
M.O. Goldrick (1950), J.B. Gregory (1951) & N.J. McGuire (1950).
(Allen Limburgh photograph).

The following year Major Bill Morrow took the whole Fourth Class to Mt Ginini for their May break. They commenced building a large substantial ski lodge which was finished in 1953. The ski club could then only go from strength to strength. Unfortunately, with the growth in Canberra's population, it became necessary to construct two more dams, in addition to the Cotter Dam, to hold its water supply. The catchment areas for Corin and Bendora Dams contained the slopes and the ski huts at Mt Ginini and Mt Franklin and, regrettably, both had to be sacrificed. The RMC Ski Lodge was demolished and burned in 1969. All that remains today is the long cleared ski run.

In 1994, writer and historian Matthew Higgins, published his book, *Skis on the Brindabellas.* Included in it are five well researched chapters on the RMC Ski Club with many photos, a notable one of which, in colour, shows the snow up to the roof of the ski lodge in 1956. His book is peopled with Duntroon identities of the period – N.R. (Chick) Charlesworth (1946), K.J. (Ken) Heldon (1958), R. (Bob) Joshua (1951), I.D. (Ian) McFarlane (1951), T.G. (Tom) Martin (1951), D.R. (Doc) Kepper (1950), A.T. (Tony) Hall (1949), D.S. (David) Thomson (1942), A.E. (Fred) Ness, M.J. (Mike) Ford (1954) and D.J. Halmarick (1965). It also gets a mention in my book, *Soldier and Servant.*

Colonel A.E. Limburg, CVO entered the RMC on 14 Feb 1948 and graduated on 12 Dec 1951 into the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. On 23 May 1958, due to medical problems, he transferred to the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps. As the Deputy Controller, Central Army Supply Agency at Headquarters Logistic Command he was medically retired from the Regular Army on 9 May 1977.

From the Editor

Newsletter 2/1992 included an index by title and by author for the period 1980-90. The accompanying explanation noted that, as a mere newsletter this very modest offering is unlikely to be a series occupying space on Members' bookshelves. However, it does contain some matters worthy of occasional reference and to facilitate such reference an index is to be provided from time to time. Writings from the period 1991-95 have been incorporated with the original index and appear at the back of this Newsletter.

Some readers may have noticed that the heading over the snippet about RMC statistics now uses the word 'Student' instead of the words 'Corps of Staff Cadets'. This change flowed from the new composition of the student body now at the RMC.

Other changes, although small, are of some significance. In *Newsletter 1/1995* was begun the use of the badges of the Officer Cadet School, Portsea, the WRAAC Officer Cadet School and the Officer Training Unit, Scheyville. This is to acknowledge our comrades-in-arms and to indicate a desire to also serve the graduates and friends of those institutions should they so wish it. Hence too, the slightly different front page of this Newsletter.

Shorts

- In this column, in *Newsletter 1/1995,* it was noted that the Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, had as its oldest member, Colonel E. de Treville Ellis who was born on 12 March 1890. On 18 December 1994 he became the oldest living graduate in the history of the USMA. Sadly, on 22 January 1995, he died just under two months short of his 105th birthday. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery nine days later.

- On p.15 *Newsletter 1/1995* there appeared a photograph taken on 10 May 1927 after the presentation of the first Colours to the Corps of Staff Cadets. Two in that photograph were not identified and a request was made for suggestions as to who they were. Professor H.S. Hodges (RMC 1948-67) responded first but he was followed by a number of others, all of whom were certain that the officer on the extreme right was Lieutenant H. Wells (1916), later as Lieutenant General Sir Henry Wells, to be the first Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. The officer alongside him attracted a range of opinions with Major R.H. Nimmo (1912), Captain A.G. Thomson (1915) and Captain W.F. Patterson (1917) being the most preferred. Because Nimmo had left the RMC staff in 1926, and Patterson did not arrive until 1929 but Thomson commanded A Company on that parade, the name of Captain A.G. Thomson will be added to the caption. The effort and thought of all who contacted the Editor are much appreciated.

- Mr R.A. (Ross) Howarth was appointed the RMC Archivist in July 1995. His interest in matters military led to his enrolment in his school cadet unit and, later, to his graduation from the Eastern Command Officer Cadet Training Unit in 1974 with a posting to the ANU Company of the Sydney University Regiment. Much of his working life, however, has been with archives. Since joining the Commonwealth Public Service in 1970, Mr Howarth has served in the Archives Units of a number of government departments including that of the Defence Archives Unit in 197980 as Executive Officer in charge.

- In *Newsletter 2/1992* under **This, That and the Other,** it was noted that George McKenzie, the grandfather of Professor C.E. McKenzie had among his descendants, eight graduates of the RMC, the last being Under Officer C.S. McKenzie (1977). To this can be added Professor McKenzie's long association with the RMC for much of the period 1912 and 1948 to create what must be a record of some kind for one family. While not challenging that record, the Jeffery family may claim another. Major General P.M. Jeffery (1955) has three sons and a daughter. Graig Phillip Jeffery, on graduation from the Australian Defence Force Academy, entered the RMC in July 1988. David John Jeffery followed him into the RMC in July 1990. One of David's classmates is Jan Marinus van der Klooster who later married Sara Elizabeth Jeffery. She, in turn, entered the RMC in July 1993. All graduated, so putting another record on the books.

NEAR DISASTER

'Ubique'

For reasons which will become obvious, the names of the people involved in this tale have been suppressed. No doubt a few of them will remember the events.

The Scene

1. The time was in the 1940's and our Class was within a month or two of graduation.

2. The Commandant, who had a delightful daughter, was absent from the RMC. His deputy (presumably the DMA) was in the chair. He was a wimp, universally disliked by the Corps.

3. The Governor-General at the time had two very glamorous daughters. One of them (subsequently referred to as the 'G-G's daughter') was enamoured of our BSM and vice versa. She was also a mate of the Commandant's daughter.

4. Knowing that our departure from the RMC was fairly imminent, the 'G-G's daughter' invited the BSM to bring 20 of our class, with young ladies, to a party at Government House, Yarralumla, on a Saturday night.

5. Being a Vice-Regal occasion, the RMC provided a bus to transport the staff cadets and their young ladies to and from Government House.

6. At the time, RMC Regulations stated, in so many words, that **any** staff cadet found drinking, or known to have been drinking, alcohol would be discharged immediately – no redress!

Act One

1. The Comptroller of the Household at Yarralumla was an RMC graduate who had decided that we staff cadets should be looked after properly. The booze flowed, the music was memorable and the dancing stomping.

2. The rooms at Yarralumla were a bit like a rabbit warren, which makes finding a loo somewhat tricky. One of our number, bladder bursting, tottered around the labyrinth in search of such and eventually fetched up in the billiard room where a lone male, in shirt-sleeves, was playing billiards. The ensuing conversation was, (Cadet) *Hey sport, can you tell me where I can have a leak around here?* (Lone male) *Yes, go through that door, turn right and it's the second on your left.* After a while, Cadet (surprisingly) returned to the billiard room where the Lone male was still playing. He said, *Would you care for a game?* Cadet said, *No thanks sport, there's a bloody good party out there and I don't want to miss any of it.* Sadly the Governor-General continued with his lonely game of billiards.

Act Two

1. The party ended in the wee hours of Sunday morning. The RMC bus, full of raucous staff cadets, some with weak bladders, deposited young ladies at their Canberra homes. At one such stop, the young lady was dropped off and some bladders were relieved on the nature strip. The young lady's mother was not impressed so, at a decent hour on Sunday morning, she telephoned the acting-Commandant to tell him the horrifying story.

Act Three

1. Sunday morning meant Church Parade. We were there with varying degrees of remorse, but were told after the parade that those who had been at Yarralumla were to be in the Tactics Room immediately.

2. Once there, we were told by the wimp that because we were sozzled we would be discharged immediately.

3. When we were released, the BSM told the Commandant's daughter of our fate. She immediately called the 'G-G's daughter', who told the story to her Dad.

4. The Commandant, who had returned on Sunday night, received a direct telephone call from the Governor-General on Monday morning.

5. I was not privy to the call, but I was assured it was a terse, *Drop it!* We graduated.

As It Once Was

80 Years Ago – September 1915

- Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges, KCB, CMG, was interred at Duntroon on Friday, 3†September 1915. The Pall Bearers were Captain C.H. Morgan, RN, the Minister of Defence, the Leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister, Lieutenant Colonel L.H. Kyngdon and Colonels D.S. Miller, G.G.H. Irving and J.W. Parnell.
- The Right Honourable A. Fisher, PC, High Commissioner for Australia, visited the RMC for a few days in September.
- Mr and Mrs Pinching were taken on as Butler and Cook respectively in the RMC Officers' Mess.

40 Years Ago – September 1955

- On 3 September 1955 the inter-company drill competition was held.
- On 10 September 1955 the Corps of Staff Cadets presented the annual revue.
- Overlooking Harrison Road and the Hospital, the first permanent barracks for staff cadets since 'Cork' Block, was completed in September.

20 Years Ago – September 1975

- At the RMC Cinema, *Girls are for Loving* will be shown on 21 September 1975 but persons between the ages of 2 and 18 years will not be admitted.
- Badges of rank for Warrant Officer Class I, incorporating the new pattern of the Australian Coat of Arms, are to be introduced.
- The RMC Radio Club's call sign VK 2RM is now fully on air.

Moshe Dyan's Eye

R.W. Eastgate

[The article below is an extract taken from the manuscript of a book titled, *Saunas and Sand,* and written by Major Eastgate about his time in the Middle East on duty with the UN. As an aid in setting the scene for this account, some of his covering letter precedes it. Ed.]

This is set in southern Lebanon in March 1987 after the first Israeli invasion and subsequently at the School of Signals, Watsonia. Naquora was the old Lebanese Customs post on the coastal road to Beirut. The buildings would have been familiar to 7th Division veterans of the invasion of Syria in 1941.

At the time that my story was set, those buildings were performing the dual role of operational HQ and accommodation for the staff of HQ UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Israelis had blown up one of the four double-story buildings in the complex and a tank had used another for target practice. I was accommodated in the latter and the room I shared with a Swedish observer had an unusual picture window overlooking the Mediterranean, compliments of the Israeli tank. The OP was on the roof of a third and the Israelis were occupying the fourth useable building. The old Customs covered drive-through inspection building was being used as a vehicle workshop and store. For anyone who might be interested there is a sketch of this latter building on p.47 of the book, *Signals, the Story of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals,* published in 1944. It is one of a series of commemorative publications from the War of 1939-45. The building depicted is almost exactly as we encountered it in 1978.

About five kilometres north of Naquora itself and on the coastal road at a place called Iskandouran were the remnants of a stone building which had been destroyed by the advancing Israelis. We were told that this had formerly been a Police post and was the site where Moshe Dyan had been wounded, losing his left eye while acting as scout for the Australian forces. The severity of his injury had resulted from the round striking a pair of binoculars through which he had been looking at the time. An Australian corporal of the 2/14 Bn had been killed in the same incident while moving out alone to attack a Vichy French machine gun which had been firing from an adjoining orchard on the Australians and their Palestinian guides. I was performing OP duty on the roof at Naquora when a Peugeot, which had been driving past, suddenly stopped and one of the occupants got out and started waving at me. I turned the binoculars on him and recognised Uri Dan, an Israeli liaison officer who had been at a checkpoint with me during one of my Sinai duties. I handed over the OP to another observer and went down to meet him. This time he was wearing the insignia of an Israeli war correspondent. We exchanged pleasantries and I asked him where he was going. He indicated that he was escorting some pressmen forward to the Israeli front lines. He asked me if I knew where Moshe Dyan had lost his eye. I confirmed that I did and he offered to take me there again. I asked him how he knew where it was, for the area had been supposedly closed to Israelis before the invasion. He became very vague and evasive about how he obtained his detailed local knowledge, merely admitting that he had been there 'before'.

This incident had an amazing sequel. Some years later I was at a luncheon at the School of Signals at Watsonia in Victoria. There had been a parade to celebrate some significant occasion and some of the civilian guests had been invited to dine. During the luncheon, the gentleman to my left asked me what my medals were for and, when I said I had served in Lebanon, he asked if I knew where Moshe Dyan had lost his eye. It seemed to be a topic which interested a surprising number of people. Never one to pass up an opportunity, I regaled him with my story of the mysterious Uri Dan and my drives up and down the southern Lebanese coast. I explained the story of the war-time incident, right down to casualties. Perhaps I should have been a little more cautious, but it is not a trait for which I am renowned. When I had finished, he was quite quiet, then said softly, *Yes, I know. My brother was the corporal who was killed and I was the Adjutant of the Battalion.*

Brigadier H.A. (Ben) Buckler (1936) was a captain at the time of the Syrian invasion. He was Adjutant of the largely Victorian 2/14th Battalion of the Second AIF. His brother, Corporal H.A. Buckler, was a soldier in the same unit. Ben Buckler provided a unique personal perspective to the story. His son-in-law, who was then CO of the School of Signals, had set up the seating arrangement so that the brigadier could quiz me. He had let me tell the story before he declared his hand and, my credibility established, he opened a number of doors for me. He arranged for me to meet a number of 7th Division veterans during the following Anzac Day when we shared reminiscences about the place and they shared with me the experiences of their invasion. For someone who has an interest in military history, such experiences are invaluable.

A graduate of the RMC in 1971 and now a member of the Inactive Army Reserve, Major Eastgate has contributed to earlier Newsletters.

This, That and The Other

[In seven earlier Newsletters, Major H.B. McKenzie (1933) contributed photographs and reminiscences. In this edition he adds a few more memories. Ed.]

As one gets older memories get stronger. At times they take over from day to day activities when there is no pressing need to be up and doing to earn a living etc.. Of course, we had the advantage of being able to enjoy our early age at Duntroon with all the advantages then of living in such beautiful surroundings, where everyone in the community was a personality from the Commandant down to the blacksmith who would fashion hoops for us children. As for Commandants, I knew not one who would pass by without a friendly word.

We were very much a closed community with staff wives much involved with the life of the College, particularly in entertaining the staff cadets, and lending at times a sympathetic ear to their problems. In that era there were no guidance counsellors about which we now hear so much. When I write of a closed community I suppose I mean it was a time of 'one in, all in', when often in times of emergency, a directive would be issued and carried out without question.

I remember that we children were subject to bouts of tonsillitis, no doubt from the rather dubious water supply. The local Army doctor acted also as the medico for the staff families. At this time, Lieutenant Colonel Stoker, tired of continually cutting out tonsils, suggested that it would be more efficient to remove the tonsils of all Duntroon children within certain age limits and, accordingly, it was so directed.

I recall being collected in the horse-drawn brake with numerous other children and being off-loaded at the hospital to wait on the verandah before going into the operating theatre. Of course we were much upset because we could hear the cries and moans of those already operated on. Chloroform was the order of the day and the smell of the cloud which covered the hospital remains in my mind. The hospital ran out of beds, and even after doubling up, did not meet the need, so we were laid out on the floor. Such treatment was then accepted as the norm but what, I wonder, would be the reaction if it were meted out these days.

From Mr R.W.O. Pugh (1946)

The Allen Main Memorial Pre-school Centre at Duntroon was named in memory of Major Allen Main, Royal Inskilling Fusiliers, who died tragically in a road accident while he was the British Exchange Officer on the RMC staff. He and his wife were active on the committee during the development of the pre-school. With their four young children they were residents of one of the original 'Captain's Quarters' at 4 Harrison Road.

Under the heading **Shorts,** in *Newsletter 1/1991,* it was recorded that Mrs Main, here on a visit from the UK, had called at Duntroon the previous October. That has now been followed with a recent visit by Michael Main, the youngest son and an 'old boy' of the earlier Duntroon Pre-school. With rucksack, energy and good luck, Michael, who works in London, began his travels in Malaysia, where his parents were posted when he was born. Then he made his way through the Indonesian archipelago to Darwin, to Brisbane and, eventually, further south.

In Canberra Michael achieved all he came to do. He saw his father's grave in the military cemetery. He visited the RMC, called at the Allen Main Pre-school and spoke to the children, saw No. 4 Harrison Road and played a game of cricket (in a staff match at the Australian Defence Force Academy). He also called on Monsignor John Hoare [p.6. *Newsletter 1/1995*], whom many of our readers will remember as the RC Chaplain at the RMC.

A Little Known Event at the RMC

D.A. Cormack

In keeping with the dignity of the RMC, the sanctity of the parade ground is fiercely guarded. No one, other than the authorised RMC staff and cadets, would dare set foot on this piece of ground. Former students would find it difficult to believe that a whole regiment of 'outsiders' once marched on to the ground and were inspected by the Commandant. This happened on * . Many things were possible during the War of 1939-45 if they were in any way related to the war effort. Who were the participants in this and what were they doing at Duntroon? The regiment was a unit of the Australian Corps of Signals and was, at the time, about to be disbanded and the trained personnel distributed over the AIF Divisions and Corps Troops.

It was the former 12 Lines of Communications (L of C) Signals located in Darwin and elsewhere in the Northern Territory and composed of a high proportion of the AIF 6th Division and 1 Aust Corps of Signals who, upon arrival from the Middle East, had been rushed to Darwin. The situation in those days was urgent. Upon being relieved the unit took the temporary title of 12 Division Signals and its Darwin successor carried on as 12 L of C Signals. There was no 12th Division.

It came south and was billeted in the Sydney suburb of Strathfield. The CO, Lieutenant Colonel S.G. (Syd) Greville, was immediately reposted and his successor, Lieutenant Colonel D.A. Cormack marched in from the disbanded 1st Armoured Division Signals. Both Cormack and Greville had previously served in the Middle East.

We now move to the RMC where Colonel C.C.F. (Charles) Spry (1928) was conducting special courses for potential AIF staff officers. A course was about to culminate in a staff and command exercise which would normally have been located in a number of syndicate rooms. Spry was offered the services of a full divisional signals unit and the opportunity to place out in the field a realistic deployment of the actual facilities normally available to staff commanders. He accepted this, together with an independent telephone network for his umpires.

The Signals unit moved to the ACT and camped on the RMC rifle range. The two systems of communication were installed and functioned without breakdown throughout the exercise.

At an interview in the Commandant's Office in Duntroon House, following the exercise, both the Commandant, Brigadier B. Combes (1912), and Colonel Spry were generous in their praise of the services rendered by Signals. Cormack asked the Commandant if he would consent to review the unit and perhaps say something to the men. He agreed.

The point then arose as to where the parade could be held. Brigadier Combes agreed that the rifle range was too rugged and asked Cormack for a suggestion. With a thumb gesture at the parade ground visible through the office window, Cormack said, *Why not here Sir?* There was a shocked silence and heavy intake of breath by the staff officers present. Brigadier Combes then quietly said, *Yes, why not?* and swivelled around his office chair to face the frozen staff, roared, *Why not?* There was no dissent.

Colonel K.A.L. Best when Director of the Women's Royal Autralian Army Corps.

The next morning the regiment marched on, was inspected, heard the kind remarks by the Commandant and marched off. The precision movements were as near to faultless as one could wish.

It was not revealed at the time, but Cormack had foreseen the possibility of what happened and saw to it that the unit was rigidly trained in ceremonial, that all weapons were clean and the webbing (including his) was all dipped in the same tank so as to get a uniformity of colour. Also, for good measure, before moving off on the day, he informed the troops of the significance of the parade on that special ground. Everyone rose to an occasion which possibly may never be repeated.

* Actual date would be between November 1943 and January 1944.

Colonel D.A. Cormack, ED wrote the above following a suggestion that a record should be made of this event. He did so on 13 April 1981 and passed it to the RMC Archivist, Colonel R. Fuhrman (1938) a week later.

Council Column

At its meeting at Duntroon on 15 September 1995, Council, in addition to routine business, dealt with other matters including the following:

Centenary Project

First mooted in 1990 and developed during the ensuing years as a firm commitment by the Society to establish a Duntroon Museum, this project is being re-examined. The Society was to have raised funds to build the Museum and to have it opened by 2011. To this end the Duntroon Society Museum Committee (DSMC) was formed under the Chairmanship of Brigadier A.R. Roberts.

The RMC Stage II Development described in *Newsletter 1/1995* is progressing well and from it has emerged an opportunity to use a suitable existing building for the Museum. This will nullify the need to provide funds to erect one. The DSMC was therefore dissolved, but Brigadier Roberts will continue to be the Society's representative on the RMC Historical Committee.

The Duntroon Society will now need to consider a new Centenary Project. Branches will be approached for ideas to be put to Council in March 1996.

Historic Walking Tour

Council was briefed on the development of an historical self-guided walking tour of the RMC.

Association with Duntrune Castle

In the past the link with the Laird of Duntrune Castle had been quite firm but has lapsed in recent years. It was decided to revive this, beginning with a greeting on New Year's Day.

National Secretary

Captain M. Schmidt is to be reposted at the end of 1995. His work as National Secretary was recognised by Council passing a vote of thanks on behalf of the Society.

Colonel Kathleen Best, OBE, RRC

[On p.5. *Newsletter 1/1995* there appeared a photograph of the Kathleen Best Memorial Gates in their new site at the RMC. What follows was written in 1987 by her sister Mrs Gwen Sylvia Ellis for a project called, *20 Greatest Stories Never Told.* Sadly Mrs Ellis died four years ago and this very brief account of the life of her sister is now published here with the kind permission of her husband, Mr Neville Ellis. Ed.]

Kathleen Annie Louise Best was born at Summer Hill, Sydney in 1910, the eldest of three children. Throughout her life she always wanted to be a nurse and her subsequent career was greatly influenced by her maternal grandmother during her early years. Her grandmother was herself a nurse during the pioneering years of the profession.

Kathleen entered nursing at the Western Suburbs Hospital, Croydon and completed her four years of training. In 1933 she finished her obstetrics training at Crown Street Women's Hospital, thus having obtained her double certificate.

She was then appointed Out-patients' Sister at the Rachael Forster Hospital, Redfern and later became Sub-matron of that hospital. After several years, she was appointed Senior Staff Member at the Masonic Hospital, Ashfield and, whilst there, she joined the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) Reserve.

Kathleen was called up for War Service in 1940. As the youngest Matron (then only 29 years of age) ever to serve in the Australian Army, she sailed on the Queen Mary to the Middle East as Matron of the 2/5th Australian General Hospital which was stationed in Palestine.

On 10 April 1941 the hospital was transferred to Greece, about 12 miles out of Athens. Kathleen was instrumental in relocating and establishing the hospital under great difficulties, as there was no available record of the contents of the hundreds of packing cases but, within 48 hours, 120 beds, the X-ray facility and the operating theatre were functioning. The following day the first convoy of patients arrived with the bed availability rapidly increasing.

Unfortunately the evacuation of Greece was taking place in certain areas and it was not long before orders came through that all nurses, with the exception of 40, were to be evacuated. With 39 other volunteer nurses, she remained to look after the men. However, orders were received at the last minute for the nurses to evacuate as best they could. She was instrumental in evacuating the remaining nurses to Crete and then to Alexandria. This, of course, entailed the commandeering of trucks and boats to transport the nurses to the ships, none of which were too happy about taking on 40 nurses as they were already overloaded. The ships were continually being bombed and the air raids were frequent. She was subsequently awarded the Royal Red Cross, First Class, for *conspicuous devotion to duty.*

Kathleen returned to Australia from the Middle East in 1942 and was appointed Controller of the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AMMWS) on promotion to lieutenant colonel. This posting she retained until 11 September 1943 when she was appointed Assistant Adjutant General (Women's Services). She was responsible to the Adjutant General for the co-ordination of matters relating to the three women's services then in the Army – AANS, AWAS and AAMWS.

In 1944 she was appointed Assistant Director of the Reestablishment Division, Ministry of Post-war Reconstruction. In anticipation of the complete cessation of hostilities, her duties were to advise and plan civilian re-establishment of all ex-Servicewomen and of the physically handicapped.

In 1951, Kathleen was appointed Director of the newly formed Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC), her rank then being colonel. Her work in and for the WRAAC has long been remembered by the women who served under her – both officers and other ranks. After she died on 15 November 1957, the members of that Service designed and erected Memorial Gates in her honour at the training school at Georges Heights. When the WRAAC School disbanded in 1984, the writer was given the honour of closing those gates.

On her death in 1957 in Melbourne, Kathleen was given a full Military Funeral, the service being at Scots Church, Toorak. She died after having dedicated her entire life to her faith and to the service of her country and her fellow men and women. She was a great Australian.

Letters to the Editor

From Colonel T.G. Brennan (1927)

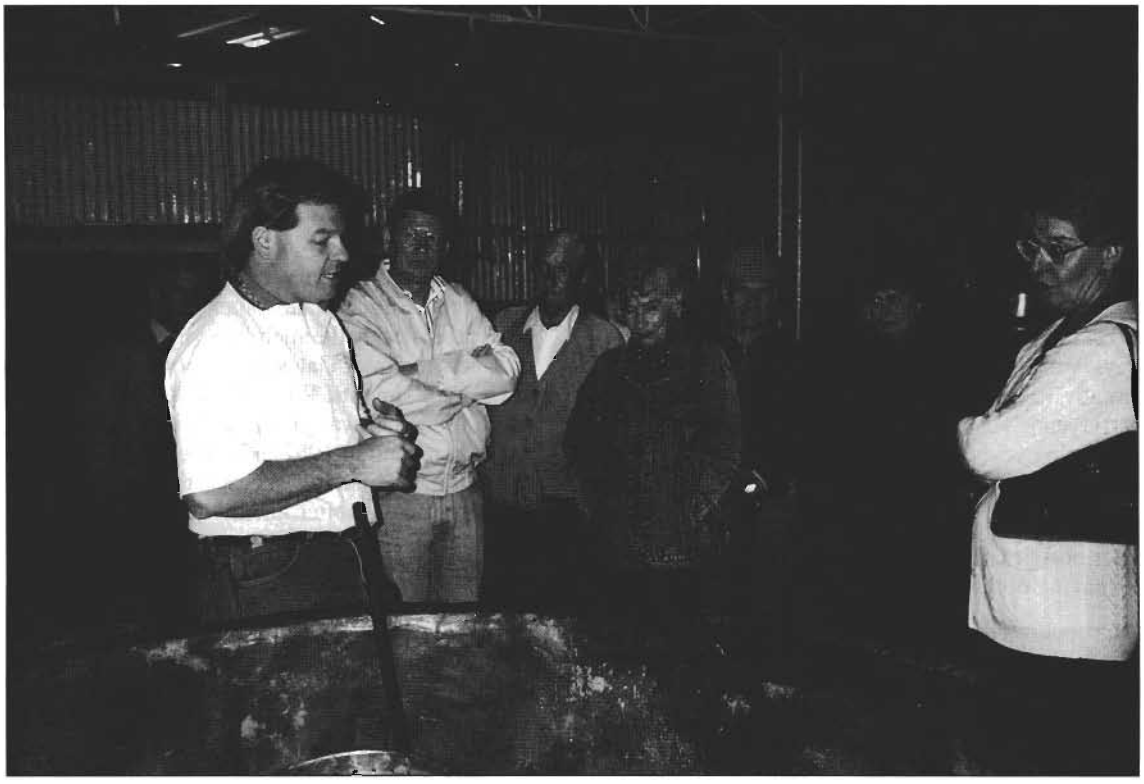
There were two mentioned in the **Obituary** in *Newsletter 1/1994* who were with me at Duntroon. C.C.F. Spry [later Brigadier Sir Charles Spry] was a year junior to me. The other was Captain C.A. (Coles) Osborne who was then the Instructor in Tactics & Topography.*[p.6 Newsletter 1/1985]*

When, in 1929, the newly elected Labour government decided on the abolition of compulsory military training and, in consequence, a reduction in the officer strength, vacancies in the Commonwealth Public Service were offered to my Class (1927). I was not interested. The Director of Military Art, Lieutenant Colonel G.C. Stubbs of the Suffolk Regiment contacted the War Office and, as a result, vacancies were offered in the British Regular Army. Four of us, H.J. (Joe) Kauter, P.A. (Philip) Morecombe, J.G. (John) Wilton and I applied and were accepted.

Had I remained in the Staff Corps I was destined for the RAA but a cousin of mine, Douogh O'Leary, was then commanding the Royal Irish Fusiliers (RIF). I went to Coles Osborne and asked if he advised me to apply for the RIF. He said, *No, promotion in the infantry is terribly slow. In some cases it can be as much as 17 years.* Coles said that even if promotion to captain was 13 years in the Royal Regiment, at least it had the technical side of gunnery and the horse to stop boredom, as so often happened in the infantry.

[Colonel Brennan remained in the Royal Regiment of Artillery for nearly all of his service including a stint as CO 20 Field Regiment during the severe Chinese attacks on the Hook in Korea during May 1953 (p.7. *Newsletter 2/1992*). Ed.]

ACT Branch Hunter Valley Excursion, 2-3 September 1995



Are we going to drink that??? One of the winemakers of Tyrell's Rothbury Estate attempting to convince his doubting audience of D.J. Mannett (1946), A.J. Morton (1963), D.R.O. Cowey (1937), Sally Sinisoff, R.R. Harding (1946), Tess Salmon & Pam Morton.

Wet outside, but with warm thoughts of good vintages ahead. From the left Shirley Evans, Elizabeth Harding, Jean Mannett, P.J.A. Evans (1955), Dallas Fullford, Pam Morton, R.R. Harding (1946), D.J. Mannett (1946) & Joan Spring, (both obscured), A.J. Morton (1963), Tess Salmon, Sally Sinisoff, J.J. Spring (1943) & G. T. Salmon (1956).

Branch Reports

Australian Capital Territory

For what is now a well established annual event, some 80 Members, wives and friends gathered, at the Sky Lounge of the Yamba Sports Club in Phillip, on 17 August 1995 for a combined dinner and lecture. The latter was given by Professor K.S. Inglis whose subject was the 50th anniversary pilgrimage to Gallipoli. It transpired that this almost matched the bungles that marred the later 80th anniversary functions. However, Professor Inglis made his description of the 1965 activities entertaining as well as revealing.

After a two-year gestation period, about 18 Members and wives arrived at Singleton to begin their Hunter Valley excursion over the weekend of 2-3 September 1995. No rain had fallen for 67 days but, with the arrival of the ACT Branch, the heavens opened. Fortunately this did little to dampen the spirits of the group or spoil the programme of winery visiting, wine tasting and dining that had been very well organised by Brigadier G.T. (George) Salmon (1956). The venue for the dinner on the Saturday evening was the Infantry Centre Officers' Mess where, on arrival, Members were welcomed by the PMC Major McMillan and his wife in a completely candle-lit foyer – as were all the other rooms! Awe of this most effective ambience was slightly diminished when it was discovered that it was not due to a bright idea of the PMC, but to a sudden power failure shortly before the Branch hoved into view. A gas-fuelled kitchen enabled a most enjoyable dinner to proceed as planned. To round off a memorable weekend, the rain ceased on Sunday and added pleasant weather to the other delights.

New South Wales

Over 80 attended the Queen's Birthday Weekend buffet and raceday on Monday 12 June 1995. Unfortunately there was no running of the Duntroon Society Handicap this year. The Australian Jockey Club had dedicated the race meeting on 12 June 1995 as 'Australia Remembers' Day and, in arrangement with the Department of Veteran Affairs, had named all the races to fit this theme. Despite entreaties from the NSW Committee, including the appropriateness of Duntroon to the theme and tradition of 13 years of running the Handicap, the AJC was unable to accommodate our request.

Nevertheless, in the opinion of many of those attending, this was the best of the best. Having moved from the Vice-Regal Suite to the Galaxy Room in 1994, we sought to return there this year but found that due to its refurbishment, it was unavailable. In lieu, the AJC offered us the use of the Kingston Town Room and this proved to be a blessing. The Kingston Town Room is the highest in the Queen Elizabeth Stand at Royal Randwick and provided an unparalleled panoramic view over the whole course and surrounding districts while being directly in line with the winning post! The weather being perfect for June (for once) and all the normal facilities being available, the consensus of opinion was that we should return to the Kingston Town Room in future.

Queensland

The Branch secured a private box at Eagle Farm racecourse on 1 April 1995. All enjoyed the outing but no fortunes were made.

On 17 July a small group of Members enjoyed a winemaker's luncheon at the Lyrebird Restaurant in Brisbane.

South Australia

The Branch Annual Postal Golf Competition was played at the Royal Adelaide Golf Club on 20 April 1995. What began as a wet morning turned into a fine day with a light wind.

Members have been polled to assess the support for the proposal to hold an additional function each year to mark the re-introduction of mid-year graduations at the RMC. From the results it was clear that a mandate does not exist for the proposal, so it is not intended to proceed with it.

Western Australia

Two functions were organised for 1995. Both were luncheons held in the Round Room at Fremantle – the first on Thursday, 29 January and the second on Thursday, 14 September. The small numbers attending did not prevent those present from enjoying themselves.

Coming Events

New South Wales Branch

Tuesday, 12 December 1995. Annual Buffet luncheon and Biennial General Meeting at the Officers' Mess, Victoria Barracks, Paddington. Members from others Branches are most welcome.

New Zealand Branch

Friday, 17 November 1995. Annual Postal Golf Match at Helensville Golf Club.

Sunday, 10 December 1995. Wellington Sub-branch Graduation dinner at the Remuera Golf Club.

Friday-Sunday, 16-18 February 1996. Annual North/South golfing weekend at Taupo.

Queensland Branch

Wednesday, 11 October 1995. Black tie dinner with Duntroon Society President, Brigadier S.V.L. Willis, as the guest speaker.

Saturday-Sunday, 21-22 October 1995. A weekend at Noosa.

Friday, 24 November 1995. Visit to Enoggera and Annual General Meeting. (Date to be confirmed).

South Australia Branch

Tuesday, 12 December 1995. Graduation Luncheon in the Officers' Mess, Keswick.

Friday-Sunday, 15-17 March 1996. Weekend at Mildura in conjunction with the Victorian Branch. ACT and other Members are most welcome. See notice below.

Victoria Branch

Thursday, 5 October 1995. Buffet luncheon in the Officers' Mess, Victoria Barracks.

Friday, 1 December 1995. Annual Postal Golf Match at Sorrento Golf Club.

The Duntroon Society 'Weekend at Mildura'
15-17 March 1996.

Organised by the Victoria & South Australia Branches
Dinner Cruise on the Murray (P.V. Rothbury)
Tour of Historic Mildura
Winery Visit and Barbecue Luncheon
Golf
Excellent Accommodation
Enjoy the fellowship of Society Members

For further details contact:
Tony Stove (Vic Convener)
Ph: (03)9592 6294 (W)
(03) 9583 6318 (P)

RMC Ceremonial Parades

Thursday, 7 December 1995. The Sovereign's Banner Parade.

Tuesday, 12 December 1995. The Graduation Parade.

Saturday, 24 February 1996. The General Reserve Full Time Commissioning Course Graduation Parade.

Wednesday-Friday, 20-22 March 1996. Beating Retreat/1812 Overture.

Further information can be obtained from the SO3 (Ceremonial), Captain K.W. Scheuermann on (06) 275 9539.

Open Day

During 1996, Duntroon House is to be refurbished so there will be no Open Day that year.

Duntroon Society Alumni Weekend

Saturday-Sunday, 23-24 March 1996. To include the Officers' Alumni Sports Day. All graduates of the Officer Cadet School, Portsea, the Officer Training Unit, Scheyville, the WRAAC Officer Cadet School and the Royal Military College are invited to attend.

Book Launches

Friday, 20 October 1995. *Conscripts and Regulars; with the Seventh Battalion in Vietnam* by Michael O'Brien (Brigadier M.P.J. O'Brien (1965)) will be launched by Lieutenant General H.J. Coates (1952) in Duntroon House.

Monday, 11 December 1995. *Loyalty and Service – The History of the Officer Cadet School* by Colonel N.R. Lindsay (1953) will be launched by the Chief of the Defence Force, General J.S. Baker (1954) in the Harrison Room of the RMC Cadets' Mess.

Official Opening

Tuesday, 5 December 1995. The Honourable Senator R. Ray, Minister for Defence has been invited to officially open Patterson Hall, the new RMC Headquarters. The occasion will also be used to launch the book, *From Duntroon to the Dardenelles,* a biography of Lieutenant W.H. Dawkins, a classmate of Lieutenant P.J. Patterson.

RMC and Community Sporting Competitions

[On 6 September 1995, Brigadier S.V.L. Willis, as Commandant of the RMC, issued a press release to explain the revised policy relating to the involvement of the RMC in community sporting competitions. It is reprinted here because of the widespread interest of Society Members in the sporting environment and achievements of the RMC. Ed.]

The aim of cadet participation in sport is to introduce the cadets to common sports played in the Army, to learn how sporting activities are conducted and administered and to emphasise the importance of sport as a military activity. Sport at the RMC has always been a strong feature of the College curriculum in order to improve, develop and maintain physical fitness, team-work, camaraderie, pride, determination, competition and toughness. Sport is one means by which the RMC strives to inculcate team spirit, character and physical development.

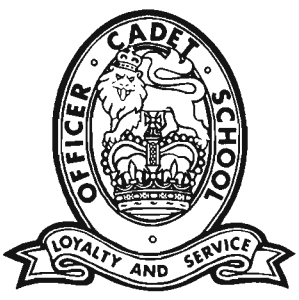
Cadet sport at the RMC currently involves intra-college, inter-varsity and community sporting competitions. Sports played by cadet teams within community competitions are Rugby (3 teams), Australian Rules (2), Soccer (2), Hockey (1 female & 2 male teams), Basketball†(2), Netball (2), Water-polo, Rowing, Cricket and Touch Football.

The RMC is to withdraw from current community sporting competitions at the conclusion of the 1995 Winter Sporting Season and intends to incorporate an extended intra-college competition, develop inter-varsity competition and maintain some level of participation in various community sporting competitions. This will allow the RMC to reduce its external commitments and provide the necessary flexibility to schedule cadet sport to accommodate our training programme.

The RMC will promote sport to cadets by introducing them to numerous winter and summer sports and then develop this introduction to a coaching level and participation in specific sports. This is an appropriate requirement for cadets given both their futures and their expected responsibilities upon graduation.

A proposal being considered is the possibility of RMC cadets participating with the Australian Defence Force Academy in community competitions on an as-available basis. It is stressed that this is only a proposal being investigated at this stage, with any outcome not expected until the end of October 1995. Should this lead to the development of a separate 'Joint Sports Club' competing at first grade level only time will tell but, if such an outcome eventuates, it could provide an outlet for elite cadets sportspersons to participate at senior or representative level.

There is some speculation that the occurrence of sporting injuries is a major reason for the change in the stance of the RMC regarding cadets participation in sport. The occurrence of sporting injuries is not sufficient justification, in itself, to alter or reduce cadet sporting activity as these occurrences are not disproportionately high. The RMC consistently endeavours to reduce sports injuries, however, withdrawal from contact or team sport is not considered a viable option in this regard.



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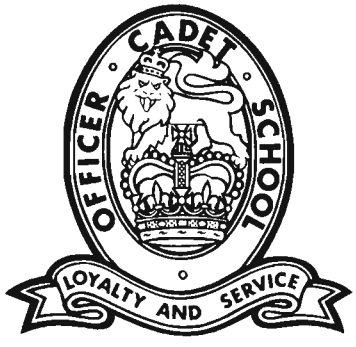

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