



# THE VOICE

April 2018 Edition

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When with the armed services in Korea, he fell in love with a native girl and they became Seoul mates.

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## Editor's Opening

Welcome to your second FREE edition of *The Voice*. Still don't know what I'm talking about? I would suggest you read Page 4 of December's *Voice*, but instead I'll simplify it here: the KVAA is putting part of our accumulated capital to good use by making *The Voice* free for those who were financial in 2017, in effect, making it a lifetime subscription.

So, some inadvertent donors (subscription and donation) and deliberate donors to thank. On the inadvertent list are: Vincent O'Brien (\$55), Denis K. Johnson (\$100), Shirley Williams (\$65), Roger Marshall \$60, the Lehman Family – Denis, Fred, Jo, Ty – \$150 and Edmond Parkinson (\$65). On the deliberate donors list is Jack Philpot (\$100), Walter Perkins (\$100), Brian Wallace (\$90) and Maxwell Kath (\$75).

The Annual General Meeting has come and gone with one surprise. The basic result is that nothing has changed since December – that's the one surprise. For health reasons, Don Scally has been forced to leave the Committee (temporarily, we hope).

We are coming to the end of Guy Temple's *Korean War Memoirs* (next issue). A part replacement is a five (maybe six) part series by Dr. J. Birney Dibble, the first part of which is in this issue. Also featured is the first of many articles from Tom Moore, a prolific contributor to the *Graybeards*, the official journal of the Korean War Veterans' Association in the USA.

*Instead of the traditional President's Report, we are introducing, for the second issue, the traditional Tom Parkinson approved...*

## President's Joke of the Month

During the planning stages of a very large military operation, Operations HQ received a radio request for a "Time Check."

The Operations HQ lackey asks, "Who's calling?"

"What difference does that make?"

"It makes a lot of difference," says the lackey. "If you're a Reservist Unit, it's 3 o'clock. If you're an Infantry Unit, it's 1500 hrs. If you're the Navy, it's six bells. If you're the Armoured Corps, the big hand is on the 12 and the small hand is on the 3. If you're the Artillery Corps, it's Thursday afternoon."

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KVAA beer (stubby) holders	\$ 5.00 .....	\$	Car number plate surrounds (set)	\$10.00 .....	\$
Korean War bumper sticker	\$ 2.50 .....	\$	Commonwealth Shoulder Flak	\$ 2.50 .....	\$

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# MacArthur's Worst Nightmare

by Tom Moore

Mao Tse-tung assumed the leading role in the acceleration and expansion of the communist revolution in Asia. He postponed his Taiwan Campaign and made the decision to intervene in the Korean War, saying, "Resist America, Assist Korea." Mao changed his Army's name from Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) to Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV).

Under their Sino-Soviet Alliance and Friendship Treaty, Mao knew the Soviet Union would take responsibility for safe-guarding China's territory, that the Soviet air force might enter Korea later (but no deadline was given), and that the Soviet Union would guarantee China's military supply.

Between 12-16 October 1950, the CPV armies dispatched an advance party across the Yalu River into North Korea. Its mission was to cover their main forces crossing the Yalu River through three routes: from Antung to Sinuiju, from Ch'ang-tien-ho-kou to Sakchu, and from Chian to Manp'ojin.

On the evening of 19 October 1950, the CPV, main forces began crossing the Yalu River south, "the same day UN Forces seized Pyongyang." The CPV moved three divisions after dark. They kept moving until four a.m. the following day and then repeated the process. They finished their river crossing by five a.m. each day and concealed themselves from the UN troops during the daylight hours.

The CPV forces consisted of 12 divisions of the 38th, the 39th, the 40th, and the 42nd Armies, the XIII Army-Group, together with the supporting units of the 1st, 2nd, and 8th artillery divisions, one anti-aircraft regiment, one engineer regiment, and miscellaneous units. Their total strength was over 260,000 troops.

The 40th Army crossed the Yalu at Antung, moving to Kujang, Tokch'on and Yongwon. The 39th Army crossed at Antung and Ch'ang-tien-ho-kou and advanced to Kusong and T'aech'on. The 42nd Army crossed the Yalu at Chian and advanced to Sach'ang-ri and Oro-ri. Finally, the 38th Army, which followed the 42nd Army, marched toward Kanggye.

At this time, the 4th and 6th Engineer Battalions constructed bridges and repaired routes between Chian and Imgang and between Sakchu and Ch'angsong to support the river crossings. All of this took place at night, so they could not be detected by the UN troops.

While the main forces were in movement, the CPV commander, Peng Teh Huai, established his HQ at Taeyu-dong, half way between Unsan and Pyoktong, an old mining village surrounded by mountains. At this time, other CPV forces, were around the Chokyu Ryong Mountains, their assembly area in North Korea.

Following the four armies, the 50th Army and the 66th Army also crossed the Yalu River, on 26 October 1950. All together, a total of 18 divisions of six CPV armies crossed the Yalu and entered North Korea by the end of October 1950.

Mao ordered the 9th Army Group, comprising the 20th, 26th, and 27th Armies of the 3rd Field Army, near North Korea, held in reserve. The CPV troops, veterans of fighting Chinese Nationalist Forces, wore two-piece (blouse and pants) mustard-colored, quilted cotton outer-garments over summer uniforms, and cotton caps, with fur-lined ear-flaps. They were shod in canvas shoes.

Each soldier carried a four-day supply of food, pre-cooked, to avoid tell-tale campfires. They also carried about 80 rounds of ammo and some hand grenades.

Then came some drastic miscalculations on UN commanders' parts. In 1950, UN front line commanders did not doubt that Eighth Army and X Corps had encountered powerful, organized elements of the CCF armies across North Korea. Numerous CCF prisoners had been taken. Yet, the rear-area intelligence analysts continued to doubt the evidence.

The Eighth Army G-2 was Lt. Col. James ("Clint") Tarkenton, age 34. As late as October 26, 1950, he stated that there was no intervention of Chinese forces in Korea. Later, after seeing Chinese prisoners, Tarkenton stated on 31 October 1950 that it was possible that "maybe 2,000 Chinese were in the Eighth Army sector."

Tarkenton was powerfully influenced by G-2 Maj. Gen. Charles Willoughby, General MacArthur's G-2 (FEC Intelligence Chief). As late as 4 November 1950, MacArthur stated that while large-scale CCF intervention in Korea was a "distinct possibility," there were many basic logistical reasons against it.

Willoughby knew there was the "MacArthur Factor." MacArthur did not want the Chinese to enter the war in Korea. Anything MacArthur wanted, Willoughby produced intelligence for. In this case, Willoughby seemed to falsify some reports. Sometime later, many in Washington DC thought Willoughby should have gone to the stockade, but the war was over by that time.

UN war correspondents described the CPV waves of attacks as "a human sea" or "swarms of locusts." China, by entering the Korean War, prolonged the war by 33 months, left a divided Korea, and caused untold devitalization to millions of people.

Source: *The Graybeards* magazine Vol.26, No.1, Jan.-Feb. 2012.

## Warrnambool's Many Rescues

The WWII corvette *HMAS Warrnambool's* 6-year service literally started and ended with a “bang.” Five months after commissioning in Sydney on September 23, 1941, under the command of Lt. Eric J. Barron RANR(S), *Warrnambool* was at Darwin when the first Japanese air raid occurred on February 19, 1942, but sustained no damage or casualties.

The following day the ship rescued 73 survivors from the Filipino merchant ship *Don Isidro* which had been attacked and set on fire by Japanese dive bombers. During the rescue operation, *Warrnambool* was bombed by a Japanese flying-boat, but without damage or casualties.

*HMAS Warrnambool* was a 186 feet long *Bathurst Class* minesweeper with a crew of 85. Its top speed of 15 knots was acceptable given its class and purpose.

In the first 12 months of *Warrnambool's* commission, all except the first three of which were spent in northern waters, the ship had carried out five evacuations or rescue trips, was present in 18 air raids, and ferried 4,000 troops to New Guinea.

In July, 1942, in company with *HMAS Southern Cross*, she carried Netherlands East Indies troops and stores from Darwin to Dobo in the Aru Islands. She returned in September to rescue the survivors of this force.

Later in September, *Warrnambool* assisted in the rescue of personnel of *HMAS Voyager*, which had grounded at Betano on the south coast of Timor whilst landing Australian troops and subsequently became a total loss. Towards the end of 1942, *Warrnambool* transferred to the Australian East Coast and spent most of the remainder of the war operating in that area on anti-submarine patrols and convoy protection.

In September, 1944, she proceeded to Fremantle, where she was based, and stayed until the end of February, 1945. *Warrnambool* spent the rest of 1945 at Darwin and was present at the Japanese surrender at Koepang, Timor on 11 September, 1945.

*Warrnambool's* postwar career consisted of mine clearance work in Solomons and New Guinea Waters, followed by similar operations in the Barrier Reef area. Whilst engaged in this work she struck a mine in the vicinity of Cockburn Reef on 13 September 1947 and sank shortly afterwards. Four sailors lost their lives.

Source: *Navy News* 4 April 1980

### KVAA Inc. 2017 Accounts

#### Korean Veterans Association of Australia Income and Expenditure Statement For the Year Ended 31 December 2017

	2016	2017
Income	\$	\$
Interest received	7	28
Donations	3,844	2,339
Subscriptions	13,241	8,056
Merchandise	1,355	780
Other Income	3,057	1,791
Total Income:	21,504	12,994
Expenses		
Auditor's remuneration	1,012	1,100
Bank fees and charges		55
Depreciation - other	976	
Sundry expenses	17,947	17,824
Total Expenses:	19,935	18,979
Profit from ordinary activities before income tax:	1,569	(5,985)
Closing Retained Profits:	31,585	25,600

Bruno Accounting Services has prepared this financial report in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, examining on a test bases of evidence supporting the amount and other disclosures in the financial report. The policies do not require the application of all the Australian Accounting Standards.

### Spilling Your Salary

Spilling salt invites ill fortune, it is thought, and in ancient times it actually was unlucky. It was the equivalent of throwing money away. Salt – essential in retaining water and preserving the chemical balance necessary to life – was so rare and valuable in ancient Rome that soldiers were paid with it. Their portion was called *salarium* after *sal*, the Latin word for “salt,” yielding today’s word *salary*.

Because it is a preservative, salt was also the symbol of constancy and durability, and therefore of friendship. Thus the spilling of it might betoken treachery or betrayal. Leonardo da Vinci took note of this aspect in painting *The Last Supper*, in which Judas has knocked over the saltcellar.

Like most evil omens, spilling salt has antidotes. Throwing a pinch of the spilled salt over the left shoulder is the most familiar one. Old stories hold that salt tossed in such a way strikes the devil in the eye and prevents him from doing harm.

Diplomacy: The patriotic art of lying for one’s country – Ambrose Bierce

# Korean War Memoirs

By Lt. Col. Guy Temple, 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

## Part Twelve

1952

The Christmas snow lasted throughout January and February but it had thawed enough to have a St. Patrick's day football match – Irish v English. The ground was very muddy, and the game, which started as soccer, ended up as rugby! I remember how much we all enjoyed it. Needless to say, there was not a drop of alcohol with which to celebrate the occasion!

This was the first time I had played football in captivity. The timing was fortunate as the event occurred just before we were given another letter card to write home, so I was able to tell my parents about it, and later learned that they had received the letter. The reliability of mail getting through in either direction was very suspect.

Graeme Lutyens Humfrey never did get a letter in the whole two and a half years he was a prisoner, so we were both surprised when, in May, I got one from his mother. I always felt that the reason some people's mail did not arrive was because they were too accurate in their description of the Chinese and their treatment of us. I particularly wanted my mail to get through, because, apart from the obvious reason, they also contained coded messages.

Sometime in the summer of '52 an annex to Camp 2 was made a little way up a valley about three miles away in a westerly direction. We presumed this was to avoid overcrowding. The camp was built of mud, pine and thatch by local labour supervised by Chinese. There was an idea that PoWs should help in the construction, something I personally would have welcomed, as it would have provided much needed exercise, interest and job satisfaction.

The other point of view was that PoWs should make it as difficult as possible for our captors, thus keeping more Chinese soldiers in back areas and away from the front line. Well, that was the theory, though I did not subscribe to it, particularly as it seemed to involve somebody being labelled as a ring-leader or 'reactionary'. I always thought that one should keep a low profile, so that there would be less chance of escape preparations being detected.

I had always been quite clear that the foremost duty of any officer was to escape. During the past six months, as our diet had improved, so had my general fitness and my dropped wrists had almost recovered, leaving me only with scars on my wrists and upper arms, and pins and needles and sensation loss in my finger tips, all of which I still have fifty four years later. Anyway this meant that I could now entertain the idea of an escape.

To this end, I spent much of the daylight hours walking round and round the exercise area. This was a dirt space between the huts and the perimeter fence; I suppose it measured about 100 by 50 yards. I used to do this mostly with friends, Carl Dain, Vance Drummond, a pilot from New Zealand and Donald Allman in particular. I was particularly grateful to Carl Dain; he was something of a boffin. When he found out that I was still set on the idea of escape, he made me a compass, the needle of which was fashioned from the metal arch support of a US army boot.

A popular time for many people was between morning roll call at 8 o'clock and breakfast at 10 o'clock. The second and last meal of the day was at 5 o'clock. In between, it was possible to get hot water for drinking from the cookhouse. Many people pretended to themselves that they were enjoying a cup of tea. Myself, I preferred cold boiled water even though its natural taste had been boiled out of it.

There were a number of people who took little or no exercise. In the main these fell into four groups, the card players, the musicians, the chatterers and the dedicated sleepers. The card players were mostly American with a sprinkling of British. The musicians were Randle Cooke and an Afrikaner pilot by the name of Hector Macdonald. These two had managed to make guitars out of very basic materials.

Of the tunes they played I remember Hector playing *Sarie Marais*, *die Alabama*, *Zulu Warrior* and a rugby song whose chorus was *na die, na die pale to*. *Sarie Marais* and *Alabama* I learnt in Afrikaans and still remember them. The only tune I remember Randle playing was 'So long it's been good to know you'. Another musician was John Ory, a Hungarian American, who had made himself a violin, but could only play 'Turkey in the straw'. This he did endlessly.

The sleepers, well perhaps there was only one, and that was Bert Marsh of the Royal Ulster Rifles. He managed to sleep most of his two and a half years captivity away.

The prime example of the chatterers were Pappy and Pepe. Pappy was Pappy Green, a Texan with a face resembling a cartoon of a witch in a children's story, with a very prominent nose and jaw. Pepe was Isidore Pepe, an Italian American. These two had had the misfortune to be captured just a few days after the war had

*(continues on Page 6)*

started. Together they had survived the winter march north, when many of their number had died of starvation and cold.

They had also managed to avoid the attention of a Korean officer known as the 'Tiger', who apparently used to shoot prisoners of war on a whim. Anyway these two were just about inseparable, and were always to be seen talking animatedly to each other as though they had just met at a party. They were in the same room as me, so I was able to observe this at close quarters.

Aside from these groups there were six Turks. Five were officers and one was a private soldier called Naffi, he was rated an honorary officer and therefore reactionary because he was reputed to have murdered a Chinese guard. How he got away with this, I know not, but Communism has the idea that 'minorities' have to be looked after. To this extent, when the Turks made it known that they spoke no English, the Chinese sent for an interpreter. He eventually came from some remote part of the Communist empire, and when he did, the Turks pretended not to understand him, and so he started on his long way home!

I must say that I have always been impressed by Turks. Two instances come to mind, both before capture. The first was when I was making a liaison visit as they were the next unit. It was dusk, and a column of refugees were coming down the road. The Turks opened up with their machine guns. When I pointed out that they were civilians I received the short reply "All communists" and they started firing again.

Of course, this probably was the safest option as these columns frequently concealed disguised North Korean infantry. The second incident, which I only saw after the event, was when a Brigade of Turkish infantry, having declined an offer of artillery support by the Americans, attacked a Chinese position using bayonets only and killed some three hundred Chinese for the loss of three of their own.

And so we passed the time in our separate ways, with myself getting fitter by the day. One really enjoyable occupation was carrying logs back from a jetty on the Yalu River. I note from a letter I wrote, and that my parents kept, that I had a swim on 23 May '53, and found it cool but refreshing!

On one occasion we became aware that, in a house by the side of the road, was a recently shot down American pilot. Any attempt to talk to him was rapidly stopped by both our guards and his. Down at the Yalu jetty we devised a way of talking to him by chanting our bits of news and advice we had for him. This worked fine, as, of course, Chinese communists are used to atonal dirges! On another occasion, we communicated to the tune of the Chinese Communist ode to Chairman Mao, the first line of which we knew as "Who flung dung at Mao Tse Tung".

Reading matter was truly scarce. There was the odd copy of the Shanghai News or the London Daily Worker which most of us shunned. But there was a grand total of six communist approved books. I can only remember *War and Peace*, Maxim Gorky's *Mother*, a Charles Dickens and a John Steinbeck. The last three were too depressing for me, but I put my name on the waiting list for *War and Peace* and got it after about three weeks.

I delighted in it, and by dropping everything else, finished it within seventy-two hours. I have since come to the conclusion that this is the only way to read such a book, as that way one does not lose the plot or get confused by the patronymics.

As to escaping, the main problems were firstly lack of food. We did, however, reckon we could eat and digest green field corn in July. Then the terrain made going difficult because the mountains all tend to run east/west, and, of course, our direction was south.

Movement had to be entirely by night, as our clothes and even our gait was so different from the locals. And the climate meant that winter was out of the question as the temperature could go down to minus 40 degrees centigrade. In July of my first year of captivity I was at Pak's Palace, the second I was busy trying to get fit and, by the third, although reasonably fit there were such strong rumours of the peace talks at Panmunjom, succeeding, that it did not seem a good idea.

(Continued next issue).

## Origin of 'Fathom'

Fathom was originally a land measuring term derived from the Anglo-Saxons word "faetm" meaning to embrace. In those days, most measurements were based on average size of parts of the body, such as the hand (horses are still measured this way) or the foot (that's why 12 inches are so named).

A fathom is the average distance from fingertip to fingertip of the outstretched arms of a man and about six feet. Since a man stretches out his arms to embrace his sweetheart, Britain's Parliament declared that distance be called a "fathom" and it be a unit of measure. A fathom remains six feet.

The word was also used to describe taking the measure or "to fathom" something. Today, of course, when one is trying to figure something out, they are trying to "fathom" it.

# Battalion Surgeon

by J. Birney Dibble M.D., Lt. USNR, MC, ret.

## Part One

*J. (James) Birney Dibble was born on 8 December 1925 in Madras, India, the son of Methodist missionaries. The family returned to the USA in 1929 and settled in Northern Illinois. He enlisted in the Navy in 1942 while a senior in High School and went into the service days after he graduated in 1943, and was a corpsman assigned to the base hospital at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. After World War II, he completed medical school and became a Navy Reserve officer. Called to active duty, he spent 16 months with 1st Marine Division in Korea, from 2 January 1952. On return from Korea he took up a number of posts until his discharge from the Navy on June 30, 1953. A prolific writer, he is the author of nine books, numerous short stories, and over 100 articles and essays.*

When I left Camp Pendleton on December 15, 1951, after two months of combat training, I had no idea what was in store for me in Korea. I would guess that no one in the States – or on our transport, *USNS William Wiegel* – knew what our assignments would be. But I found out the day I arrived at First Marine Division Headquarters where I would be going.

As I sort of expected, I was going to be a battalion surgeon. And that in the Fifth Regiment, the most storied regiment in the Marine Corps, participating in eight battles in the First World War, five island landings in the Second World War, and already in the Korean War, the Pusan Perimeter, the Inchon landing, the Chosin Reservoir, and the bloody battles up the peninsula to where the lines were when I arrived, roughly along the 38th parallel.

### Welcome to Korea

We arrived in Korean Waters during the night and were anchored off shore when we awoke on January 2, 1952. After breakfast we heard over the intercom, “Now here this. Now hear this. All hands lay below and prepare to disembark. All hands lay below and prepare to disembark.”

We doctors and Corpsmen had our seabags packed, ready to go. We slung our M-2 carbines over our shoulders, unloaded but uncased, and filed out onto the deck. An LST was already alongside. It took 1,000 men at a time, 500 on each of its two decks, and unloaded them onto the beach. We doctors and Corpsmen were on the fourth transfer out of the five.

There was no port. There were no buildings, no docks, no nothing. We disembarked from the LST directly onto the beach.

We knew immediately that we were in a war zone because we could hear big guns booming. Every man

was issued forty rounds of ammunition for his rifle.

We didn't see any houses or Korean civilians, but we were told that we had landed near the village of Sokchori, on the east coast near Wonsan. We were well up in North Korea and it was very COLD!!! This part of Korea was mountainous, heavily wooded, and empty of habitations and people.

### Three days and a rude awakening

On the beach we were picked up by 6-by-6 open trucks and taken up through the mountains. We went almost straight west from Sokchori and then a little bit to the north, just east of the Punchbowl.

We were all from Camp Pendleton in warm Southern California and just off a heated ship. We had our cold weather gear, i.e., wool pants, parkas, and bunny hats, but we were all just cold. It took us three or four days to acclimate and feel warm again.

I spent a day at First Marine Division Headquarters, a day at Fifth Regimental Headquarters, and then went up to Third Battalion Headquarters. There was a ruling at the time that we had to be in the country for three days before they could put us on the front line.

I was assigned with Dr. Robert Kimball to the Third Battalion of the Fifth Marine Regiment, which was located on Hill 812 between Hills 751 and 556. These latter two hills had been taken before I got there, so I knew nothing about them. They were behind us and could be seen from 812.

The MSR (Main Service Road) to 812 snaked between them. Someone in a jeep took Kimball and me up to battalion headquarters a couple hundred yards back of the front lines. The first casualty I saw was when we were driving into the H&S (Headquarters and Service) Company tent camp. Sergeant John Gumpert in his jeep ambulance was bringing a Marine down off the hill. He'd been killed by a bullet in the chest, fired accidentally by his bunker-mate.

The battalion surgeon that I was relieving said, “Hi, Dr. Dibble. I'm gone.” The other battalion surgeon said about the same thing to Kimball. They jumped into the jeep that we had arrived in and left.

### An intense existence in tents and trenches

There were no buildings at H&S. It was a small tent city for the headquarters and service people: commanding officer, executive officer, heads of personnel, supply, intelligence and operations, motor pool (truck, jeeps, etc.), rear aid station, chaplain and his assistant...

All of the Corpsmen, doctors, and chaplain lived in tents in what the Marines called Mercy Row, a

*(continues on Page 8)*

*Battalion Surgeon (continued from Page 7)*

row of tents along the back (southeastern) slope of Hill 812. All tents in H&S, except for those housing the Corpsmen, were 16x16-foot pyramids.

The Corpsmen lived in a 16x32-foot squad tent, which easily held sixteen men in the summer and twelve men in the winter, when a stove was installed.

Bob Kimball was from Virginia, and still lives there. We doctors bunked with two Marines, Lt. Col. Charlie Schuster and Captain Jack Murnane. Charlie, who died in 2001, was the supply officer.

Jack, who I've lost track of, was a Marine pilot who was a "forward observer." He and his mate Eddie Abner alternated going up into the front lines on an observation post. Their job was to call in and direct air strikes off the aircraft carriers. Most of the planes were gull-winged Corsairs.

There was a trench system that extended from coast-to-coast at about the 38th parallel. There were many of them dug as the UN troops moved northward from the Pusan Perimeter in the early part of the war. From the time I got there until the end of the war, nineteen months later, it remained fairly stable, moving only when one side or the other mounted an offensive.

The system paralleled the enemy lines, sometimes only a hundred yards apart, but mostly 200 to 300 yards. It was dug down about three to four feet in a serpentine manner so that incoming shells landing in the trench could not do damage for any great distance.

It was wide enough for only one man to crawl along, so when you met someone coming from the other direction, the one with the lower rank had to flatten out while the other man crawled over him.

Bunkers were dug out of the hillside about every 15 to 20 yards, roofed over with whole trees, covered with dirt and then reinforced with another layer of logs and covered with another layer of dirt.

They withstood all enemy fire except a direct hit by a large artillery shell. At that time we were just holding the line, but most nights the Marines sent out patrols of one kind or another. There were patrols for reconnaissance, prisoner taking, and guerilla searches.

Every once in a while we were driven back off a hill and then we tried to take it again. Major attacks were begun early in the morning. It was a see-saw battle back and forth for control of the high ground.

### **My big TOE**

The "Table of Organization" (TOE) was quite simple: Four men to a rifle team, one of them carrying a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), the others an M1 Garand. Three rifle teams to a squad, led by a corporal or sergeant. Three squads to a platoon, led by a second lieutenant. Three platoons to a company,

led by a captain. Three companies to a battalion, led by a lieutenant colonel. Three battalions to a regiment led by a brigadier general. Three regiments to a division, led by a general.

Add these up and you have 364 riflemen and their commanders. Add to this, Weapons Company (machine guns, mortars, flame throwers), and H & S Company in support, and you have approximately 1,000 men in a battalion. Two Corpsmen were assigned to each platoon, for a total of 18 in the battalion.

Two Corpsmen were assigned to Weapons Company. So, when we were at full strength, I had 20 Corpsmen on the MLR and another 12-15 Corpsmen in Rear Aid for a total of around 35 per battalion, one of whom was a Chief Petty Officer.

All Corpsmen, except the Chief, served in a platoon for three months, in Rear Aid for three months, then rotated to a rear-echelon position for the next six months, then home. This plan varied some if a corpsman elected to stay with the battalion longer than required.

(continued next issue)

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## **United States War Production**

That World War II had a beneficial effect on the American economy is common knowledge, but the full economic story is a tale beyond belief. In 1939, national income was still shy of 1929 levels. Many serious thinkers believed that the US economy could never surpass the per capita income levels of 1929.

But during the War years, the gross national product (GNP) rose from \$90 billion to \$213 billion. America spent \$186 billion on war production, receiving 3,500,000 vehicles, 296,000 airplanes, and 6,400 naval ships. At its peak, American production was nearly equal to the combined production of Britain, Russia, Germany, and Japan.

But unlike other participants, the US economy did not exact great sacrifices from the civilian sector. In fact, war production consumed only about one-half of the increase in the US GNP in the war years, the balance expanding the civilian economy. Even so, it became apparent already in the latter part of 1943 that war production was outstripping the most extravagant needs of the military; a scaling-down of production began. The full potential capacity of American war production was never approached.

Source: *Strategy & Tactics* No. 96 March-April 1984

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.



## Hitler's Last Offensive

With the Soviet Army firmly established on the Oder River and threatening Berlin, Hitler was still obsessed with taking the offensive elsewhere. Being in possession of an uncommitted reserve – the 6th SS Panzer Army – Hitler decided to launch an attack to create a buffer zone between the Soviet forces near the Danube River and the Nagykanizsa oil fields. *Operation Friehlingserwachen* (The Awakening of Spring) began on the night of March 5th, 1945 south of Lake Balaton in Hungary.

Soviet General Tolbukhin's main force was hit hard, and the fighting was fierce. For the next several days, the Germans ground forward adding divisions as they went. German armour battered away at the Soviet right flank where, on the 14th, General Wohler threw in his last reserve formation, built out of the 6th SS Panzer Division and fielding 200 tanks and self-propelled guns, in one final desperate push toward the Danube.

Soviet General Goryachev's 35th Guards, supported by the 23rd Tank Corps and two SP gun brigades from Stavka reserve, fought fiercely to hold back the German tanks from the rear defence line, halting them just short of it. On the Soviet left flank, the 30th Rifle Corps and 18th Tank Corps kept the Germans back even though outflanked to the east.

The main German assault lumbered to a halt on the 15th with no great successes from the other German supporting attacks. Over 500 tanks and assault guns, 300 guns, and 40,000 men had been pounded to pieces in this last German offensive – all for no gain. Berlin fell a month later.

Source: *The General* magazine Vol. 31, No.1 1996

## Japs: 0, Yanks: 0, Aussies: 1

In January 1943, General MacArthur, furious at the perceived inability of his commanders to crack the Japanese fortified positions around Buna and Gona in New Guinea, had relieved his top field officers and placed General Eichelberger in command, telling him to "Capture Buna or don't come back alive!"

The Japanese fortified positions included a coconut plantation on Giropa Point which had held out against repeated Allied assaults. General Wooten, the Australian Area Commander, was awaiting fresh troops and armour (mainly Stuart tank) support before resuming the attack on New Year's Day.

Eichelberger, however, in an attempt to grab all the glory, first threw two companies of the U.S. 128th Infantry Regiment at the Japanese. They were almost immediately stalled and came under such intense fire that they were unable to support the Australian attack scheduled for the next morning.

The Australians jumped off after a brief artillery preparation and, with the armour in the lead, soon ran into the line of Japanese pillboxes. With the help of the armour, the Aussies were able to crack the heretofore impregnable defences. Some Stuarts fired AP into the bunkers until they were so riddled with holes they collapsed. Other tanks were used as battering rams to knock holes in the pillboxes, through which the infantry would then place a jury-rigged demolition charge and a can of petrol.

This combined-arms approach silenced the Japanese machine guns one by one and two hours after the assault began, the Australians were mopping up what was left of the defenders.

Source: *The General* magazine No. 29, No.3, 1994

## Travelling? Do It By Sub.

by A. B. Feuer

In addition to sinking enemy ships and delivering U.S. Marines to attack Japanese forward bases in the Pacific, American submarines were used in many other capacities. Some were decidedly off-beat.

Early in the Pacific War, the *Permit* evacuated 111 people from Corregidor, and *Amberjack* delivered ammunition and aviation gasoline to land-based naval aircraft on Guadalcanal.

In late December 1942, the *Nautilus* rescued 29 civilians from Teop Harbour, Bougainville, only minutes before Japanese troops arrived. And, in November the following year, the *Nautilus* departed Pearl Harbour carrying the U.S. marine Amphibious Reconnaissance Company for a night raid on Apamama Atoll in the Gilbert Islands. During this mission, the *Nautilus* was mistaken for a large Japanese submarine. She was attacked by the destroyer *USS Ringgold* and almost sunk.

In between war patrols, submarines were often assigned to "lifeguard" or air rescue stations to save the lives of airmen who had crashed in the sea. But probably the most dangerous operations conducted by American submarines during WWII were the missions transporting Australian commandos deep into Japanese controlled waters.

In the spring of 1943, the British Services Reconnaissance Department began using U.S. Navy submarines to deliver the commandos on information gathering missions in the Dutch East Indies, the South China Sea, and along the coast of Indochina and the Malay peninsula. Under the cover of darkness, the submarines would sneak into shallow enemy harbours, let off the commandos, and then return to pick them up. The missions were extremely dangerous, but about two dozen sub commanders volunteered for the hazardous duty.

Source: *Military Heritage* magazine, Oct. 1999

# Remaining Seated for the Loyal Toast

## from Historical Highlights: making a meal of it at the table

by Lieutenant Tom Lewis

There are various stories as to why navy members remain seated when drinking the loyal toast. Commander Beckett, RN, wrote in his book *Customs, Superstitions and Traditions*:

“I cannot trace the exact date when the privilege of sitting to drink the health of the Sovereign was accorded to the navy. Some say that it was William IV [who, we are told, never went to sea] and others that it was Charles II [more likely], who on returning to England in 1660 aboard *Naseby*, which had been rechristened *Royal Charles*, bumped his head when replying to a toast, and ever afterwards held naval officers excused from rising on these occasions.”

Another suggestion is that King George IV when Regent, dining on board one of HM ships said, as the officers rose to drink the King’s health, “Gentlemen, pray be seated, your loyalty is above suspicion.”

William IV, was known as the ‘Sailor King’ and did in fact – despite Beckett’s advice to the contrary above – serve for many years at sea. The third son of King George III, he entered the Royal Navy at the age of 13, fought in the American Revolution, and, while serving in the West Indies, formed a close friendship with the future naval hero Horatio Nelson. When he left the sea in 1790, however, some accounts say he had become unpopular with many other fellow officers and had angered his father by his numerous love affairs.

Created by then the Duke of Clarence, William then largely avoided public life and raised a large family of 10 children with his mistress, the actress Mrs Jordan. After she died, William married Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen in 1818, but their children died in infancy. William saw a return to naval association in April 1827, when the new Prime Minister, George Canning, revived for him the office of Lord High Admiral...

John Winton, the British naval historian, noted that William’s accession to the throne in 1830 “...encouraged nautical drama and naval songs...” The new King would have had years of direct experience of the inconvenience of trying to stand up in a confined space, often at sea, when holding a glass of valuable liquid. Perhaps he therefore suggested naval toasts be given seated. However, whether he actually gave the privilege to the RN is unknown.

Source: *Navy News* Vol.44, No.18, 17 September 2001

## The Saga of the Memphis Belle

by Bruce C. Shelly

In the afternoon of 21 May 1943, 14 B-17s of the 91st Bombardment Group, 1st Bombardment Wing, 8th Air Force, landed safely at Bassingbourn Airfield outside of London. These planes were returning from the 8th Air Force’s 60th bombing mission of the war, a strike on the U-boat yards at Wilhelmshaven. They each had dropped ten 500lb. bombs on the target. Luftwaffe resistance had been fierce. Of the 98 American bombers dispatched by the 1st Bombardment Wing, seven were missing -including four from the 91st Group. The gunners of the wing claimed 47 German fighters downed, five “probables” and 17 damaged. Of these, the 91st claimed seventeen “kills”. Besides the forty men in the lost B-17s, the group had six other crewmen seriously wounded.

For one of the veteran crews returning, there was a special reason to celebrate. The Memphis Belle of the 324th Squadron, piloted by Lt. Robert K. Morgan, had survived its twenty-fifth mission. The Belle and her crew had departed Bangor, Maine on 25 September 1942 bound for England. There they became part of the newly forming 91st Bombing Group, and took a role in that group’s first mission on 7 November, an attack on the V-boat pens at Brest.

In the following months, the Belle and her crew saw action after action over Occupied Europe, steadily and steadfastly doing her job, and always returning safely. When the plane’s crew climbed from their craft on 21st of May, there were smiles and congratulations all around. These men, and this plane, were the first to complete 25 bombing missions over Europe. They had finished their tour and “earned their ticket home.”

The Memphis Belle was named in honour of Lt. Morgan’s sweetheart, Miss Margaret Polk of Memphis, Tennessee. Following the return of the Belle to the States, Miss Polk joined the plane’s crew for a war bond tour in the venerable B-17F. After the bond tour, the crew was given the choice of new assignments and the plane was sent to McDill AFB in Florida (where she was used for training). The Belle was the star (of course) of William Wyler’s wartime documentary “The Memphis Belle”. Wyler flew five missions on her to obtain actual combat footage. This full-colour, 45 minute documentary was the best of those on B-17s, and is still available.

Source: *The General* magazine No. 20, No.6

# Military Humour

## The Laziest Man

The Sergeant was addressing a squad of 25 recruits: "I have a nice easy job for the laziest man here. Which one of you wants it?" Twenty for men raised their hands. One didn't.

The Sergeant approached him. "Why didn't you raise your hand?"

"Too much trouble, Sarge," was the reply.

He got the job.

## The Cheapskate

Before shipping out to Europe with the Army Air Corps during World War II, my father loaned his buddy \$20. The two were assigned to different units and lost contact. Months later, my father's plane was shot down. Bleeding from shrapnel wounds, he bailed out and was greeted by German soldiers, who took him as a prisoner. After a long train ride, little food and days of forced marching, he arrived at his assigned stagg. As he entered the compound, he heard a familiar voice. "You cheapskate! You followed me all the way here for a measly \$20?"

## The Extra Step

One American soldier to another during WWI, "I dread the day they tell us to march on the enemy with bayonets fixed."

"Afraid of the enemy?" asked his buddy.

"No, of the guy marching behind me. He always takes an extra step when the sergeant tells us to halt."

## Camouflage Training

The Sergeant Major growled at the young soldier: "Why weren't you at camouflage training this morning?"

"I was there, sir," answered the soldier.

"I didn't see you," returned the Sergeant Major

"Thank you very much, sir," replied the soldier.

## Why Not French?

A Royal Navy Admiral was attending a naval conference that included Admirals from the U.S., English, Canadian, Australian and French Navies. At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of officers that included personnel from most of those countries. Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks but a French admiral suddenly complained that, whereas Europeans learn many languages, the English learn only English.

He then asked, "Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?"

Without hesitating, the British Admiral replied, "Maybe it's because the Brits, Canadians, Aussies and Americans arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German."

When I lost my rifle, the Army charged me my full fortnights pay. That's why in the Navy, the captain goes down with the ship.

## Military Acronyms

Army: Another Retarded Misguided Youth

Army: Ain't Ready to be Marines Yet

Marine: My Ass Rides In Navy Equipment

Marine: Muscles Are Required,  
Intelligence Not Expected.

Navy: Never Again Volunteer Yourself.

## A Scorpion in the Tent

Three members from the three branches of the Australian Defence Force were asked what they would do if they found a scorpion in their tent. The responses were as follows:

Army: "I would grab my bayonet and stab it to death."

Navy: "I would flick it into a bucket of water and drown it."

Airforce: "I would get on the phone and complain that someone put a bloody tent in my hotel room."

## Sister Soldier

A man was bragging about his sister who disguised herself as a man and joined the army.

"But, wait a minute," said the listener, "She'll have to dress with the boys and shower with them too. Won't she?"

"Sure," replied the man.

"Well, won't they find out?"

The man shrugged. "But who'll tell?"

## Car Keys

Finding a woman sobbing that she had locked her keys in her car, a passing soldier assures her that he can help. She looks on amazed as he removes his trousers, rolls them into a tight ball and rubs them against the car door. Magically it opens.

"That's so clever," the woman gasps. "How did you do it?"

"Easy," replies the man. "These are my khakis."

## On Guard Duty

The new Army recruit was given guard duty at 2 a.m. He did his best for awhile, but about 4 a.m. he went to sleep. He awakened to find the officer of the day standing before him. Remembering the heavy penalty for being asleep on guard duty, this smart young man kept his head bowed for another moment, then looked upward and reverently said, "A-a-amen!"

# Punnies

Broken puppets for sale.  
No strings attached.

To write with a broken pencil is pointless.

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be...

Professional mourners are usually groan woman.

I'm learning to steal. A cat burglar is teaching miaow.

An artist's nude model is a girl unsuited for her work.

The mini-skirt was tried and found wanton.

I used to have a fear of hurdles, but I got over it.

I used to be addicted to soap, but I'm clean now.

I hate Russian dolls...so full of themselves.

She was a suicide blonde; she dyed by her own hand.

Clothes don't always make the man, but a good suit makes a lawyer.

A socialist is a confirmed partygoer.

A funny accident can leave you in stitches.

To be successful, a doctor must have a lot of patients.

She has made her share of puns, but I wouldn't want to quota.

A bigamist is one who has loved not wisely but two well.

The population explosion was caused by overbearing women.

Every dog has his day. And those with broken tails have week ends.

It is better to have loved a short girl than never to have loved a tall.

# HMAS Wort

by Ian Hughes

A series of cartoons which appeared in *Navy News* in the 1980s & 1990s.



At Wright-Patterson Air Forcer base near Dayton, Ohio, a newly assigned colonel walked into his office and asked the cute young stenographer, "What is the normal complement of this office?" "Why, Colonel," exclaimed the girl, "I reckon the most normal is 'Howdy, honeypot, you're sure lookin' luscious this morning'"

# Student Peace Corp. Visit

From Pukyon National University, South Korea, at the Stella Maris, 2 Feb. 2018



The students talked with, interviewed and photographed a good selection of veterans at the Stella Maris after the monthly Committee meeting. Thereafter followed lunch; a trip to the Shrine of Remembrance at 2pm where they met with Dr Ian Jackson, whose speciality is Korean history; the Bentleigh RSL, and finished at John Moller's house for afternoon tea and cakes.



## ANZAC DAY 2018

This is the KVAA's second biggest day of the year. If you can, make the effort to join the march; if you can't march, try to get to the Stella Maris for the post-event meet up.

The muster area for Korea War veterans is Swanston Street West (between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane), just down a bit from the jump off point for the last few years. X marks the spot.

Muster at **1000** hours with step off time at **1030** hours – but it could be earlier, depending on the number of marchers in earlier groups. For the civilians reading this it's **10 a.m.** with step off time **10.30 a.m.**

As the Anzac Day March is an Act of Remembrance and Commemoration, dress should reflect the dignity of the occasion. NO back packs. NO football attire; NO children under 17 years of age (unless Korean in national dress). NO prams (wheelchairs are fine), photos or political banners. Association members will MARCH, in step, no chatter, no falling out for photos. Remember why you are there.

As usual, a car will be provided for those who can't march but don't want to miss participating. A bus will be available at the conclusion of the ceremony to take participants from the Shrine to the Stella Maris Seafarers Centre at 600 Little Collins Street for a light lunch.

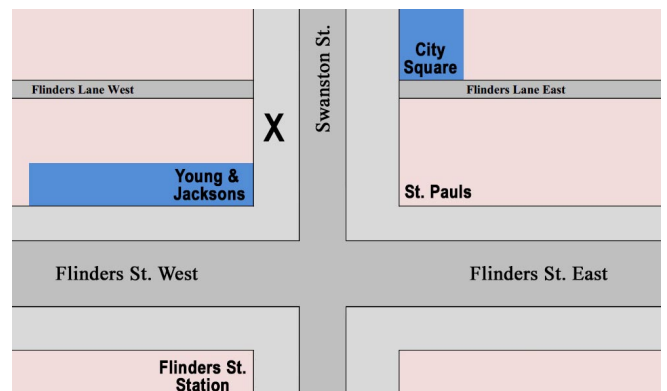
### Costs:

Veterans – Free.

Visitors, wives, guests – \$20.

Under 18s – Free.

(includes 2 free drinks per person)



## From the Vault...



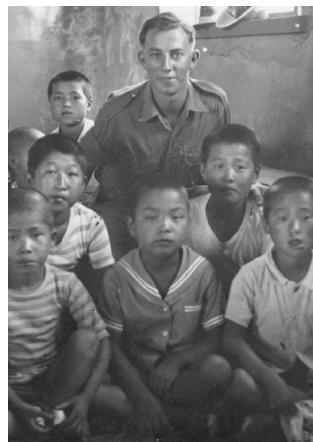
Though on first impression, this looks like a hardened criminal working on a chain-gang, the photo was actually taken at Puckapunyal in 1952 (probably not in winter). The featured 'digger' is none other than John Brownbill – yes, *that* John Brownbill. Leading from the front, Lt. Brownbill issued an 'excavation' challenge to his platoon to encourage what today would be called a 'good work ethic.' Nice idea; wrong time of year, as the ground was like concrete.



Charlie Company, 3RAR, 14 May 1953, having its daily "O" Group when all information regarding Battalion events, patrols, and the like is given out to Platoon Commanders. (L-R) Captain John Morahan; Major Ralph Sutton (Company Commander); Major W. H. Wansley (shortly to take over command); Lieutenant R. F. Freeman; Lt. A Weaver; Lieutenant John B. Brownbill – Yes, *that* John Brownbill – and the Company Sergeant Major, Leo Walsh. Note the sandbagged dugout behind them.

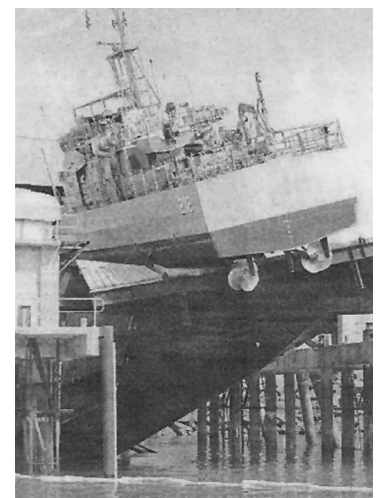


The other ranks did absolutely no work on Christmas Day, 1953, at Support Company, 3RAR, in Korea. Here the officers and NCOs arranging the spread for the Diggers' midday meal are (l-r) Sergeant C. W. 'Nipper' Race; WO2 Jack Stafford; Sergeant C. 'Browny' Brown; Lt. John Brownbill – yes, *that* John Brownbill – and Sergeant Bill Jarrett. This photo was featured on page 4 of the 1 January 1954 edition of *The Sun* (now *The Herald Sun*).



This, believe it or not, is the KVAA's Riverina delegate, John Munro, in Korea in 1954. The two on the left were taken at an orphanage in Seoul, and the one on the right, John with a telephone, while on active duty at the DMZ tower.

Before you judge someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you judge them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes.



Out of its depth? *HMAS Gawler* in November 1997 in a position no ship want to find itself in. The result of a tsunami? Nope. Winching accident.

## Farewells

Allen John Bailey, 26661, 3RAR & 1RAR in late February 2018

C. Geoffrey Binder, 3400075, 3RAR on 8th July 2017

Alexander Ouchirenko, 45480, *HMAS Arunta* on 23 February 2018

Jack K. Spooner, 36045, *HMAS Bataan* and *HMAS Shoalhaven* on 23 Jan. 2018

## The Ode

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning  
We will remember them.

LEST WE FORGET