

**Earl Symonds Army Platoon 1941-1945**

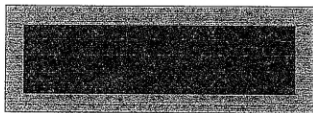
**HISTORY**

**OF**

**2<sup>nd</sup> AUSTRALIAN**

**ARMY TROOPS COY**

**RAE AIF**



## **2nd AUSTRALIAN ARMY TROOPS Coy ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS A.I.F.**

The 2nd Aust. Army Troops Coy R.A.E. was raised in Western New South Wales as a Militia Unit.

Formed at Narellan NSW on the 1st October 1941 recruitment took place at various Country Towns, Parkes, Peak Hill, Forbes, Trundle, Condobolin, Molong, Yeoval, Bogan Gate, and adjacent areas. On arrival this advance party erected tents surplus in an area vacated by an Infantry Unit who had recently embarked for the Middle East.

They were issued with their "kit" the next day and promptly told to get into their gear for a "parade" by 10 o'clock - a "parade" it certainly was, divided into groups of 11, and that was the "unit" they were told. Then followed the usual health check up, short arm parade, inoculations etc, introduced to the Major, Captain, Sgt Major and so on..

The **First Parade** was a scream to put it plainly all in new gear and decked out as "real soldiers"

A second intake joined the Unit on the 5th November 1941 by recruits from Nyngan, Narromine, Trangie, Nevertire and other country towns in those localities.

Personnel were required to report to their local Railway Station on a certain date and time, where they were met by a Regular Army Sergeant who assembled them and checked their names on arrival, then given a cut lunch and soft drink.

Travelling by "Troop Train" (dog boxes) to Liverpool and then conveyed by trucks to the Narellan Camp ( out from Campbelltown and near Camden ) a journey of over 11 hours.

The Company's strength of 260 included 52 brothers. Of these 6 sets came from Narromine a record that is perhaps unique in the annals of the A.I.F.

Several others from other areas such as Wagga Wagga, Queanbeyan, Leeton, Murwillumbah, Wollongong, Cocoma, Blackheath, Goulburn, Orange, were taken on strength at Narellan

They were joined by several "City Slickers" from early 1942. Building Tradesmen such as Carpenters and Joiners, Bricklayers, Plumbers, Refrigeration Engineers, Motor Mechanics etc. in all I would say they constituted about 10% of the Unit.

**2nd Aust Army Troops Coy R.A.E. A.I.F. consisted of Headquarters Section and 5 Platoons:**

**Headquarters Section: Orderly Room, Q.M.Store, Postal Section ,  
Architectural and Engineering Drafting.**

**No's 1 and 2: Transport, Qualified Mechanical Electrical and Refrigeration Engineers, and other Certified Tradesmen.**

**No's 3, 4, and 5: Construction Platoons. comprised of Building Tradesmen Carpenters, Bricklayers, Plumbers, Stone Masons, Miners and Electricians.**

When the Coy was formed it was Camped at "A" Block on the corner of Northern Road and Cobbitty Road, Narellan and moved to the "Ghost House" in late 1942. Headquarters was established in a deserted farm house "Orieliton" rented by the Army from a Mr Swann, but to the members of the Company it was known as the "Ghost House" ( Warwick Fairfax later Sir) after the war bought the property from the Swann Family for about 60,000 pounds . It is now a large housing development and Lady Mary Fairfax can expect in excess of 1 Billion Dollars ) "you talk about Capital Gain??"

Major Carr DSO was the Coy's 1st Commanding Officer. and whilst under his command the Unit carried out various jobs important, but unspectacular. Working parties of the 2nd Army Troops were dispatched to several locations around Sydney and in the Country Area.

Gun emplacements were installed on Georges Heights and Middle Head. Nicholson Land Mines were prepared at Narellan. The mines were made out of 4 gallon petrol drums were laid at Mascot, Evans Head (no tucker) Nabiac, Coff's Harbour and on drones along the South Coast of NSW. Road blocks were prepared under South Coast bridges.

Gun emplacements were camouflaged on South Head, Cape Banks, North Head, Georges Heights and West Head. (Commodore Heights) Victoria Barracks, Malabar Coastal Artillery Station, Tunnel gauges at North Ryde Army Vehicle Park. Horse Stables at Randwick Racecourse converted into Detention Cells.

Some of the mines were not a success, moisture effected the gelignite with which they had been charged, necessitating their removal about September 1942 They were effective however at the time they were laid -- and that was in the dark days of late 41 and early 42 when the Japanese were advancing south from their Asian strongholds

Working parties also carried out construction work at Studley Park 2nd Army. Headquarters.

Bangalore Torpedoes manufactured at Narellan were made out of 3" galvanised pipe filled with gelignite and end-capped to be used as Road Blocks. One could only work for a short period of time on filling the pipes because the smell of gelignite caused headaches.

Sgt Tom Burkner and his Platoon were burning off moisture damaged gelignite taken from a road block on Bulli Pass when there was an explosion that killed Sgt Burkner our only casualty whilst stationed in New South Wales.

About this time 4 Sappers and Cpl Charlie Magee were sent to Cowra P.O.W. Camp to supervise construction of Huts and Kitchens for about 5 - 6 months.

17.8.42 It was at this time No 3 Platoon were dispatched to Marrangaroo (West of Lithgow) a very large Ammunition Depot where disused railway tunnels were used to store various types of ammunition and explosives. Quite large ammunition storage buildings were constructed over a period till 9.1.43 when the platoon was transferred to "Old Camp at Kelso (out from Bathurst) where Huts, Wash Rooms and Latrines were constructed, following this the Platoon went to the RAEME Depot close to Bathurst Racecourse where they erected a Officers Mess, Sleeping Huts and a Motor Bike workshop building.

When No's 2 and 5 Platoons went to Muswellbrook about the end of January 43 to build the Ammo Depot and on their return they moved to Randwick to work on the construction of the Marcus Clarke Hostel.

No 4 Platoon proceeded to Kapooka Army Camp Wagga Wagga to build the Bomb Disposal School, whilst here they participated in bridge construction training

It was whilst at Narellan that the Darwin and New Guinea Details were on ??.. selections were made "on parade" when personnel were required to number "off" and if your number came up you were on your way to Darwin or New Guinea, no one looked forward to the going on parade on these particular days.

On Easter Monday 1943 the Unit received notice of movement. There was much speculation as to the destination. Optimists declared that they were getting a "break" at last and that they would be moving north to the big green island of New Guinea. Delay followed delay, much to the disappointment of personnel eager for overseas service.

It was this time that either the 2nd or 3rd Army Troops would be sent to Port Moresby, however due to the advanced ages of Major Webster and Captain Lindsay the 3rd Army Troops Coy were selected.

Major Webster an Officer of the Permanent Forces left the unit to become Engineer Officer at Duntroon.

Major Stafford out of New Guinea and dressed in jungle-greens arrived on the scene and "took charge". To the khaki-clad members of the Unit he became known as "Green Pants" later changed to "Green Hornet" The name is said to have been borrowed from a serial picture being shown in Camp Cinema at about that time. Extensive training took place in the way of many Route Marches along the Old Hume Highway to the "Penfolds Wine" Sign, also how could one forget the "The Bull Ring".

**17.7.43** 2nd Army Troops Coy were entrained at Narellan at 0.30 Hours, destination unknown?? hopes ran high we would be on our way overseas "oh no". The Troop Train travelled to Alice Springs (3 days) through Albury, Spencer Street Melbourne, Tailem Bend and overnight at the Staging Camp at Goodwood Showgrounds Adelaide, then through Quorn (where we were served in the early hours of the morning by the C.W.A. Ladies with Hot Tea and Cakes they were very acceptable) arriving in Alice Springs on **20 7.43**. after a long and weary journey

On arrival we were taken to our camp which was established at the base of Anzac Hill. The Q Store, Officers Mess, Lecture Room were constructed, as well as a "Tennis Court" for recreational purposes. Our Football Teams took the honours in many of their games, and other personnel excelled in Athletics and Boxing.

Routine engineering work and various building projects was undertaken in Alice, one particular one was the sinking of a 56 ft. deep well for fresh (Bore) water to augment Alice Springs town water supply. At the hospital a "hobbies hut" was built for the patients, as well as a Canteen (Sydney Williams pre-fabricated building).

No 4 Platoon was dispatched some 3 days after arriving in Alice to Mt Isa to build wells for water for Army Transport crossing from the East Coast to Darwin, by way of the inland road They also extended the local abattoirs, made alterations to the local hospital, extended the Army Store buildings and carried out engineering works as well as setting up communications..

It was whilst in Alice that the Unit organised a "Grand Concert" for (3,000 Troops), no spectacular but "well received" by those in attendance. The organisers Roy Woodbridge and Tom Willcockson engaged performers at "high expense"

**16.8.43** The whole of the 2nd Army Troops Coy marched through Alice Springs with Lord Gowrie taking the salute

The main party of the unit left Alice Springs by road convoy on Wednesday **3.11.43** stopping at various Staging Camps on the way to Katherine. Ti Tree Well **3.11.43**, Banka Banka **4.11.43**, Elliott **5.11.43** Larrimah **6.11.43** On the **7.11.43** we boarded the Train (Cattle carriages) for Katherine where we set up camp and was joined by No 4 Platoon on their return from Mt Isa. Whilst in Katherine Staging Camp Huts (Sydney Williams prefabricated buildings) and Ammunition Huts were constructed..

An advance party including No 5 Platoon entrained at Birdum and travelled to Noonamah where they disembarked and erected tents in preparation for the arrival of the "Main Party" of the Unit.

Leaving Katherine on 26.11.43 by train through Pine Creek, Adelaide River arriving at Noonamah ( 29 Miles south of Darwin) a Base Camp was set up very close to the Strauss R.A.A.F. Strip and near to where the Railway Line crossed the (The Track) Main Highway

A Squadron of English Spitfires were based at Strauss Strip one of which crashed landed within yards of the Main Camp the pilot parachuted to safety.

A Dutch Squadron was based in close proximity to the Main Camp as well as Australian and American Bombers at Batchelor.

Aircraft movements were constant day and night over the camp

It is recorded that when those members of No's 1 and 2 Platoons who had moved with the Unit were detailed for work at Adelaide River, on the morning following their arrival, they listened to a Japanese bomber circling overhead for hours waiting for a break in the clouds. The break came, the bomber descended dropped its bombs and hurriedly departed, it was the last raid on Adelaide River.

Whilst in camp at Noonamah we built Tropical Huts, C.R.E Officers Sleeping Quarters, Latrines, Woodshed, Freezing Works. . On the 15.12.43 No's 2 and 3 Platoons transferred to Darwin (Vestey's Meatworks) where sections damaged by Air Raids were rebuilt and returned to Noonamah on the 30.12.43. Whilst in Darwin work was carried out at Larrakeyah Barracks, General Allen's N.T. Force Myilly Point, carried out repairs to Cottages and Houses damaged by bombing.

During the Unit's stay at Vestey's and Noonamah dog fights between Spitfires and Japanese Zeros were witnessed , as well as bombing raids on Darwin.

No 1 and No 2 who had remained at Alice Springs after the main group left in November joined up with the Unit on Christmas morning 1943 and the Coy was again at full strength

No's 4 and 5 Platoons worked on the RAAF hospital on Berrima Road. also construction installation of machinery in freezing works ( 3 chambers) adjacent to the main camp at Noonamah, pumice stone for insulation purposes being carted from Vestey's Meat Works in Darwin. A Railway Unit diverted the rail line into the works.

No 5 went to Berry Springs to build a Rest camp for Women's Services and work at the 8 Mile Peg.

Several projects such as camp kitchens, tank stands, storage buildings for medical supplies, and the building of a hospital were some of the tasks undertaken by the unit.

For a time, practically the whole of the Coy. was working at Berry Springs and on the Southport Road, building food preparation huts and installing reticulation systems in anticipation of the arrival of Divisions from the South. "The Grape Vine" had them in a "push up" through Java and Sumatra. The Divisions never came. The Coy. was bitterly disappointed that their many week's long arduous toil had been futile after all.

Sapper P.F.Cusack declared bitterly **"THIS IS A BLUE DUCK SHOW"** and that name, idly given has been accepted since as the 2nd Army Troops Coy.s unofficial title.

The Blue-Duck was the name of the fishing boat built by No 5 Platoon during their sojourn in Darwin.

The football team - a pretty good team too - was known as the "Blue Ducks"

**31.12.43** No 3 Platoon was transferred to the Adelaide River Camp which was adjacent to the Southern Bank of the river, adjacent to the C.C.C. Workers Camp.

Whilst in Adelaide River constructed a 30,000 Gallon Water Tank on the Hill in the west side of the railway line having Timber Walls, lined with flat sheeted galvanised iron to floor and walls all joints were soldered by hand, the roof over was constructed of timber and metal sheeting. This was a major job and greatly supplemented the water supply in the Adelaide River and surrounding Army Camps and R.A.A.F. Bases. Huts were built at Batchelor Airforce Base Workshops, Latrines, Huts at the Hospital. At the same time the Unit took on a vigorous training schedule.

**23.9.44** The whole of the 2nd Army Troops left the Darwin Area and travelled south overland to enjoy a well earned leave.

**14.11.44** After having leave the Blue Ducks assembled at Petrie near Brisbane under the command of 1 Army Base Sub-Area who were to follow the 9th Division into Tarakan 4 days after the landing had taken place.

Whilst at Petrie the Coy. underwent training and were re-equipped.

It was at Petrie that the Unit participated in a March Past together with the 9th Div when General Morshead took the salute

The Commanding Officer at Petrie Lt Col.Poole CRE, better known as "Butch" raised strong objections to the Coy. using "The Blue Ducks" for a name. He forbade its use.

None of the lads knew his grounds for objection and at the most, they could only hazard a guess. The name applied to the Unit and not to the Lt. Colonel. It was merely a coincidence that nature had endowed the C.O. of the Blue Ducks with a very conspicuous thatch of red hair.

Weary of the mainland the Coy still hoped for overseas service. It came at last: 25.2.45, a month or so before 1 Aust base Sub-Area moved out, the BLUE DUCKS embarked for New Guinea, and out of all the areas to which they could have gone, it turned out to be LAE far from the Jap activity. The Blue Duck Show still justified its name.

Lae was intended as a temporary stopping place, but old-stagers of the Coy. knew what "temporary" means when used by the Army.

At Petrie the Unit split with a majority going north to Townsville to do further jungle training and subsequently embarked on 2.3.45 on the MV Taroona for Lae New Guinea (encountering a submarine scare whilst in the Coral Sea, resulting in "Action Stations" and the Taroona zig zagging at top speed for the next 12 hours) before arriving on the 7.3.45

An advance party of Lt.Davis, Sgt Press and 4 other personnel of the Unit arrived in Lae on 1.3.45 and prepared to set up the Main Camp at the Junction of the Butibum and Busu Roads about 2 miles out from Lae.

The balance of the Unit went south to Sydney to embark 4.3.45 on the S.S. Charon a Dutch ship of 4,000 Tons and arrived in Lae, New Guinea on 11.3.45. It was at this time that the Bush Telegraph worked overtime, we were headed for Borneo to participate in the beach landings on the various islands as you see this did not eventuate.

After its arrival in New Guinea a "Blue Duck" became the Units unofficial insignia, but Col McGillicuddy CRE forbade its use and ordered its removal from vehicles etc. However, Major Solomon now C.O. and acting CRE raised no objections to the Coy's wishes and the BLUE DUCK, whilst not approved officially, now was accepted as the 2nd Army Troops insignia.

A "Duck" cut from a sheet of flat galvanised iron, painted Blue and inscribed with the Coy name, marked the entrance to Headquarters on Busu Road, another surrounded the screen at the Coy's picture theatre.

When 230 personnel celebrated the Unit's 4th Anniversary on 1st October 1945 after 4 years of solid and faithful service in uninspiring areas, the Mess Room was decorated with a large Blue Duck and numerous Ducklings.

At Lae work was undertaken on various projects, Workshops Buildings, Additions to the 2/7 Hospital, Tank Stands, Accommodation for Japanese Prisoners, Saw Mill (1st Aust Army Troops) Canteen, Seats at Outdoor Pictures.

Lining walls of a hut at H.Q. with sago palm matting and other work for the visit of a V.I.P. (Duke of Gloucester) was an appropriate task for the Royal Australian Engineers for Royalty.



As well as the base Camp at Malahang the Unit spread itself around various areas around Lae, Salamoa ( building a Dam and pipe line to Barracks), Gorroki, Reinstatement projects in the Markham Valley ( box girder bridge over the Erap River), Yarloo River (cooking school). Nadzab and at Wau.

The 2 Football Teams formed in Lae acquitted themselves very well with many wins.

Over the years several former members of the unit were transferred to other units and it is good that contact has been maintained with them over the years.

However, the war was over. The Blue Duck is cooked. The men who have served in the 2nd Army Troops are looking forward to the day when they return to their homes on the Mainland.

After hostilities had ceased, a number of the Company were sent home for discharge. The remaining personnel Lt Swan, Kevin McClure, George Campbell, Bert Balcome, Jack Buchanan, Frank Short, Neil Rogerson and Maurie McDarmont. "The Blue Duck" Camp was evacuated and took over the Field Park Engineers Camp further up the road, where we were brought up to full strength with Troops from all over New Guinea. Lt Swan was promoted to Captain and was C.O. and Maurie McDarmont Staff Sgt and acting Coy Sgt Major. At this stage orders were given for Bills of Lading to be made out for equipment to be returned to the mainland and personal were evacuated from the camp.

Sgt Harry Moles, Reg Sweikert and others members of the Unit volunteered to join the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF) and served in Japan.

**May 1946** the Company embarked on the S.S. Ormiston to return to Australia on their way home at last?? Not to be. The ship sailed east to New Britain disembarking at Rabaul. It was here members of the Coy. sat in at a Military Court hearing for the trial of some Japanese Officers for atrocities they had allegedly committed. Those found guilty were executed.

After a period of time at Rabaul personnel re-embarked on the S.S. Ormiston and after refueling further up the coast and then headed for Sydney where Troops were given leave.

After leave some members of the unit were transferred to the 23rd Mechanical Equipment Coy R A.E. A.I.F. based at Leichhardt and Granville. The last personnel were discharged on the 1st July 1946.

In the future, when members of the Blue Duck Show forgather for their re-unions in the towns of the Central West of New South Wales or in the City, they'll be able to recall the days of arduous toil, the fun they had, the spirit of comradeship that will ever make them proud of having served with the 2nd Army Troops Coy RAE. AIF.

Looking back at the time we spent in the 2nd Army Troops we should feel very proud as we carried out our duties with great pride and to the best of our ability, no one can ask for anything else.

## Officers and N.C.O's 2nd Aust. Army Troops Coy R.A.E.

<b>Colonel</b>	D.R. Solomon		
<b>Major's</b>	N. Boydall G. Watson	Reg Carr J Webster	G.P.Stafford
<b>Captain's</b>	D. Lindsay	D. Tandy	
<b>Lieutenant's</b>	P. Anderson D. Flanier M. Llyod Danny Tier	W. Cook T. Francis Mc L Shaw H.Watson	Frank Davis R. Ginn H. Swan
<b>Staff Sergeant's</b>	Bede Larkin (Quarter Master)		Maurie McDarmont
<b>Sgt Major.</b>	Vince Kelly		
<b>Sergeant's</b>	Roy.Balzer Jack Carpenter Doug Cox Col Forrest Jack Hoskin Ken Lee Jack McNamara Harry Press Noel Rogerson John Tinson Doug Willard	Col Barnard Gordon Carruthers Nelson Donnelly Bill Friday Jim Knight Bill Lidster Les Modini Everett Pout Eric Rowlings Keith Tomsett	Tom Buerckner Bernie Cronin Bill Ford Don Grady Peter Kondilios Cyril Lyons Harry Moles Bill Robertson Bill Sturmer Ron Trudgen
<b>Corporal's</b>	Jack Acret Doug Bennetts Gordon Carruthers Don Doust Bruce Gilmour Alan Kafner Charlie Magee Bert Pengilly Ray Wright	Ralph Amos Errol Braddock George Chandler Geoff Druitt Jack Holman Geoff Kelly Charlie Nangle Ken Starr	Ray Arnaudon Joe Bruce Jack Cunningham Bill Ford Tom Judd Bill Lowe Tom Patterson Ray Wagner

ROLL CALL — 2nd AUST. ARMY TROOPS COMPANY R.A.E. A.I.F.

Abbott J.	Acret J.	Amos R.	Anderson P.
Arnaudon R.P.	Ashdown F.	Ashdown J.	Ashdown M.
Ashdown T.	Atkins T.	Atkinson A C.	
Bailey V.	Bamblett P.	Balcombe E.	Balzer R.
Barber N.	Barker W.	Barling Ron	Barling Ross
Barnard C.	Beaman J.	Bell A.	Benrose C.
Bennett W.	Bennetts D.F.	Bernado M.	Betts R.V.
Bing W.	Birch H.	Black L.	Blake N.
Blake R.	Boatswain M.	Bourke A.	Boydall N
Braddock F.W.	Bradley C.	Brennan F.	Brightman G.
Brown H.	Brown J.	Brown R.	Brown T.
Bruce J.	Bryant W.	Bryden H.	Bryden J.
Buchanan J.M.	Burke A.	Butcher P.	Buerckner T.
Burns L.	Byrnes L.	Byron J.	
Campbell G.	Carpenter J.	Carr R.	Carruthers G.
Carter R.	Carter W.	Ceeney G.	Chad K.
Chamney G.	Chandler G.	Chandler W.	Charters K.
Chennell J.	Christian B.	Clark A.	Coen H.
Coen J.	Colbran C.	Collie G.	Collins R.
Cook W.	Cooper B.	Cox D.	Cox A.
Corbett L.T.	Creamer J.	Crook R.	Cronin B.
Crowe A.	Cullen J.	Cunningham N.	Curnow G.
Cusack P.			
Dacey C.	Davey H.	Davis F.	Davis W.
Denham W.	Denman R.	Denning G.	Dodson W.
Donaghue J.	Donnelly N.	Drake A.	Drew H.
Druitt G.	Druitt W.	Doust B.A	Do ust D.
Doust J.	Doyle T.	Du Chateau G.	Dugan C.
Dunn F.	Dunstan T.	Dwyer C.	
Edmed W.	Eldred S.	Eliasson R.	Eldridge S.
Elliott F.	Elliott G.		
Firbank J.	Fitch E.	Flack H.	Fleming M.
Flew H.	Ford R.	Ford W.	Forrest C.
Foster G.	Francis T.	Frazier L.	Fredricks B.
Friday W.	Fuller M.	Furner G.	Fydock W.
Gainsford W.	Gilmour B.	Ginn R.	Gosper E.
Gosper L.	Gould W.	Grady D.	Graham R.
Grant R.	Grant S.	Gleeson D.	Greenhalgh C.R.
Griffiths W.	Gunning J.	Gwynne G.	

Haines C. Hannon B. Hausler A. Hill M.C. Hoskin J.	Hall J. Harding R.. Hay G. Herridge T. Hutchins A.	Hanna G. Hardy K. Head J. Holman J.	Hangan J. Harris M. Hendy S. Hope R.
James M. Johns R.	Jarvis J. Johnson T.	Jeffries G. Jones R.	Jeffries J. Judd T.
Kable J. Kelly V.W. Kinsella P. Kondiliios P.	Kafner A. Kent R. Kinsey R.	Kearney P. Killeen H. Knight J.	Kelly G. Kilman J, Knight L.
Lae P. Lawler M. Lidster W, Lowe W.	Larkin B. Leach P. Lindsay D. Lydford R.	Latham B. Lee K. Lockwood A. Lyons C.	Latham E. Leonard J. Longton K. Lyons J.
McAuliffe D.M. McCulloch W. McNally N. McRae D.	McCarron J. McDarmont M. McNamara J. McRae K.	McClenahan R. McGowan G. McPhee D.	McClure K. McGuinness J. McPherson G.
Madgwick H. Marsh C. Modini L. Munday V.	Magee C. Martin G. Moles H.G. Munday W.F.	Manhire C. Mason L. Moore C. Murray J.K.	Marks P. Meagher C. Mossman A.
Naden C.	Nagle C.	Norris J.	
O'Brien E. O'Donohue J.	O'Brien L. O'Leary T.	O'Brien W.	O'Bryan A.
Palmer P. Peacock R. Phillips J. Pout E.L.T.J.J.H.P. Price S.	Papworth W. Peasi H. Phillips R. Powter D. Priday F.	Pascoe J. Pengilly B. Pittman J. Prescott D. Pritchard W.	Patterson W. Perkins M.D. Platt R. Press H.
Ratford P. Richards K. Robinson J. Rolin W.. Rowlings E.	Radomi C. Riley J. Rodda E. Rollinson W. Russell R.	Reynolds A. Roberts E. Rogerson N.R. Rollinson J. Rutgerson C.	Reynolds T. Robertson K. Rogerson R. Rosser J

Scanlon R.P.	Shalvey S.	Shaw L.	Sherrin F.
Short C.	Short F.	Short H.	Short M.
Stillar P.	Smith B.	Smythe C.	Snowden D.
Solomon D.R.	Southwell M.	Stafford G.P.	Stanford W
Starr K..	Stillar R.	Stokes W.J.	Sturmer W
Swan H	Sweiket R J	Symonds F	
Tandy D.	Tanswell R.L.	Tayada J.	Taylor F.
Taylor J.	Teer D.	Thomas J.	Thomas N.
Thomas R.	Tinson J.	Tognella W.	Tomsett K.
Torrens M.	Torrens W.	Towsend I.	Trudgen R.
Turton J.			
Vass J.	Vass R.		
Wade D.	Wagner R.	Wallace J.	Walsh J.
Walters J.	Warren G.	Warren J.	Watson C.
Watson J.	Watson H.	Webster J.	Weeks A.
Weeks F.	Wheatley J.	White C.	White K.
White L.	Whitty K.	Wiggins C.	Wiggins F.
Wilkinson E.	Willard D.	Willard P.	Willcockson T.
Williams A.	Williams C.	Williams H.	Williams R.
Wood D.	Woodbridge R.	Woodhouse C.	Wright R.
Wythes I.			
Yates W.	Young S.		

**Appreciation** is recorded of the contribution former personnel of the 2nd Aust. Army Troops Coy have made to enable this history of "The Blue Ducks" to be prepared after such a long period of time.

A history "The Blue Duck Show" previously prepared by an author unknown has been the basis in the preparation of this history of the 2nd Aust. Army Troops Coy R.A.E. and has been most invaluable.

**Acknowledgement:**

Poetry from: Jim McCarron and Eric Latham,  
Guinea Gold "extract" Ron Barling,  
Unknown contributor of the Concert Programme.

**Contributors:**

<b>Headquarters</b>	NX 171134	Cpl	Roy Betts
	NX 147575	Cpl	Errol Braddock
	NX 168689	Cpl	Bruce Gilmour
<b>No 1 Platoon:</b>	NX 168700	Spr	Leo Corbett
	NX 145623	Spr	Ron Barling
	NX 144216	Spr	Henry Drew
	NX 123210	Spr	Marty Perkins
	NX 167502	Spr	Ian Wythes
	NX 123741	Spr	Stan Young
<b>No 2 Platoon</b>	NX 123201	Sgt	Harry Moles
	NX 145623	Spr	Ron Barling
<b>No 3 Platoon</b>	NX 171128	Spr	Wally Bennett
	NX 92631	Cpl	Doug Bennetts
<b>No 4 Platoon</b>	NX 135427	Cpl	Maurie McDarmont
<b>No 5 Platoon</b>	NX 171144	Spr	Merv Hill

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September 1998

**GRAND CONCERT**

**ALICE SPRINGS**

**PROGRAMME:**

1. ORCHESTRA Theme Song
2. BRACKET by BAND
3. SONG Bede Larkin
4. SKETCH Herbie Flack and Colin Dwyer "Doctors Scene"
5. PIANO SOLO Merv Hill
6. SKETCH Tom Willcockson and Ralph Amos 'Parson and Dave'
7. SONG Harry Birch
8. SKETCH Tom Willcockson and Ralph Amos "Play the Game"
9. VIOLIN SOLO Dick Johns
10. SKETCH Tom Willcockson and Roy Woodbridge  
"Drunk in the Nude"
11. BRACKET by BAND
12. SKETCH Herbie Flack and Colin Dwyer "Uncle Henry"
13. FINAL Chorus

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## THE BLUE DUCK

We received a little notice "you're wanted down below,  
To form the 2nd Army Troops, now called the 'Blue Duck Show',  
We gathered at the station, a cut lunch in our port,  
There was lots of celebrating "six months is only short".

They took us to Narellan, that's where they broke our heart,  
"You're in the 'bloody' Army, it's time you made a start.  
Now line up at the Q Store, get issued with your gear,  
You're quite a time to spend with us, we want you happy here".

A "Lance jack" bossed us round a lot, I thought he was a "Lieut".  
We got our gear and blankets, and the 'glamour suit'.  
With 'Twinkle Star's" a wee bit short, and "Johno's" maybe long,  
The trousers legs all wrinkled up "the dam things cut all wrong."

They marched us up, and down a hill, I still remember that  
We trod the top of every ridge, till now it's almost flat,  
With Watson yelling "Shake it up, Sergeant set the pace,  
Try and make them march a bit, it's not a "bloody" race.

"Slow down behind, pick up the step and march like soldiers do,  
You're pretty crude as rookies are but I'll take care of you".  
The big boots burned, the sun beamed hot, the sweat poured from  
our brow,  
They fed us stew you couldn't chew, how I longed for the old  
home now.

We never got far with Major Carr, he left us after that  
And Mr Royal and Major Boidle with his farm-yard on the flat.  
With Karney in charge of the cows and chooks, and Fuller his 2 I.C.  
It went with a swing till Mick cracked up, and went on a two days spree.

Then Stafford took the Old Blue Duck, he said "you'll have to fight",  
You've bludged around this place too long," we all agreed "he's right"  
So we packed our duds and away we went, to land at Alice Springs,  
Where the dust storms blow, and the smoke hangs low and the Kooka-  
burra sings.

Our stopping place was Darwin, a land of heat and rain  
Where many a man went Troppo, and all mad men go sane.  
Where the Mosquitoes roared like Zeros and the Fireflies shone all night,  
And the wild pigs ate the garbage, and went careering through the night.

The Sergeant-Major shudders, as he lies awake at night,  
And hears those voices yelling "come over Ned and fight".  
But Kelly never crimed a man, a record hard to beat,  
He's just the same old "Ned" to us, on parade or in the street.:

But now those days are over, the "Blue Duck's" almost through,  
It's four years since we started and never saw a 'blue',  
As the time draws near for parting, maybe you're feeling glad,  
But your thoughts begin to wander and think - it wasn't bad.

You met a lot of cobbers, and had a lot of fun,  
Men you're proud to call your mates, you name them one by one,  
So let's drink a toast and hope some day, on Civvie street we'll meet,  
Where we'll talk old times and drink our fill, and to hell with the  
flies and heat.

Sapper Jim McCarron - 1st October 1945.



2<sup>ND</sup> AUST. ARMY TROOPS COY. R.A.E.

The date is nineteen sixty four  
A few years after the war,  
Through the cemetery and headstone groups,  
Behold the graves of ARMY TROOPS.

Here lies the one with silver hair,  
He bossed the boys and didn't care,  
Till there came one night a Jap,  
And blew in half his forage cap,  
It may to you not seem a crime,  
but CYRIL was wearing it at the time.

Here lies the body of old BEDE LARKIN,  
No more growlin' no more squarking,  
Died of worry at the end of the war,  
Buried near the Q.M. STORE.

Here lies KELLY Sergeant Major,  
A gallant brave and good old stager,  
A ten inch shell had run amuck,  
and KELLY was the one who didn't duck.

Here lies the regimental LIDSTER,  
What a driver what a skidster,  
He died of awful cuts and scars,  
While driving MANLY midget cars.

Here lies the body of Sapper FITCH,  
Found in the city without a stitch,  
Some dame shot him for a lark,  
His body was found in Belmore Park.

Here lies the body of PERKINS MARTY,  
Killed in Darwin while wood cartin',  
Many wreaths of true contrition,  
All from Condo Abo Mission.

Here lies the body of old KATE LEE,  
A better Sarge you'll never see.  
We wish that he was still alive,  
To look after the bludgers of Section No. 5.

Here lies poor young Sgt. GRADY,  
Found among the trees so shady,  
How it happened, we couldn't guess,  
But it is extra work for HARRY PRESS

Here lies the body of Twinkle STARR,  
He got his stripe off Major CARR,  
Now he's up with old Saint Peter,  
Bitten by a dirty dengue skeeter.

Here lies the body of Harry MOLES,  
Found in the jungle full of holes,  
Rifle rags were made of his giggle duds,  
His tin hat was used to strain the spuds.

Here lies the dashing Cpl. AMOS,  
Nothing outstanding nothing famous,  
He now has gone as all men go,  
He'll no more trim his little mo.

Here lies good old Sgt. TRUDGE,  
Never liked to do a bludge,  
How he died would fill a book,  
For information see Lieut. COOK

Here lies the batman Snowy PRICE,  
He wouldn't take the doc's advice,  
"More pills" had been his doc's suggestion,  
But Snowy died of indigestion.

Here lies the body of Cpl. BRUCE,  
Used underpants for flag of truce,  
But Joe wasn't good as a message sender,  
As the Jap's thought is was no surrender.

Here lies a Sgt. Very great,  
Known as a bull from Bogan Gate,  
Twas late that night we heard him groanin',  
Shot in the A--- was Burnie Cronin.

Here lies the body of Sgt. POUT,  
His name you've no doubt heard about,  
His death was such a disappointment,  
Too much gas and not enough ointment.

Here lies Spr. DUNSTAN Tib,  
Always game and not a jib,  
His glasses were no good to him,  
As he forgot to use his Anti-dim.

Here lies the body of Spr. FULLER Mick,  
His soul has gone to see old nick,  
Found on the trail of famous BUNA,  
In one hand was an empty schooner.

Now here lies in this lonely grave,  
Spr. COPPER always needing a shave,  
The last on list of headstone groups,  
SO REST IN PEACE ARMY TROOPS.

ERIC LATHAM.



# IT'S OVER

## UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

WASHINGTON, Wed.: Japan has accepted unconditional surrender.

This was announced simultaneously from their capitals by the four Allied leaders at 0900 hrs. (NGT) today.

In Washington, President Truman called reporters to the White House, and told them he had received the Japanese reply. He said: "I deem this reply a full acceptance of the Potsdam declaration which demanded the unconditional surrender of Japan. There are no qualifications in the reply."

The President then announced that General Douglas McArthur had been appointed Supreme Commander of the Allied forces of occupation.

Emperor Hirohito will announce the news to Japan in a proclamation to be read over Japanese radio stations at 1 p.m. today (NGT).

The Japanese reply said that the Emperor Hirohito was ready to issue commands to the Japanese armed forces. In Canberra, the Prime Minister, Mr. J. B. Chifley, said: "The war is over. The Japanese Government has accepted the terms of surrender imposed by the Allied nations, and hostilities will now cease."

"The reply of the Japanese Government to the Note sent by the Governments of Great Britain, the United States, China and the Soviet Union has been received and accepted."

Victory will now be celebrated in Australia today and tomorrow in view of the fact that Mr. Chifley made his announcement before noon.

The announcements that Japan had accepted unconditional surrender came quickly on the heels of a record Super-Fortress strike against the Japanese homeland, in which 800 B29's and 200 fighters took part.

Six thousand tons of demolition and fire bombs were dropped on targets on the island of Honshu. Railway yards near Hiroshima, which received the world's first atomic bomb, oil refineries and industrial areas in Tokio, were worked over.

Although the Japanese people have not been told officially of the surrender, 15,000,000 leaflets have been dropped from Allied planes flying over Japan this week, telling of the Japanese peace offer and the subsequent negotiations.

In London, Mr. Attlee said: "Japan has today surrendered. The list of our enemies is laid low." He then read the text of the Japanese reply.

It will probably be some time before the peace can take effect in some Jap-occupied countries. Await the orders of the Commander of your area. Be careful.

*souvenir by  
Dapper Red Barling*

*NX 145623*

*2nd. Coast Army JAPS Coy*

*Red # AIF*

## SOME HUMOROUS HAPPENING IN THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ARMY TROOPS.

ADELAIDE RIVER:- SPR. ROY CROOK AND SPR. "DOC" O'BRIEN HAD ONLY BEEN IN CAMP AT ADELAIDE RIVER A SHORT TIME WHEN THEY NOTICED A JAP. RECONNAISSANCE PLANE FLYING VERY HIGH OVERHEAD. THE JAP. PILOT MUST HAVE NOTICED A CLEARED STRIP OF LAND NEARBY AND HE THOUGHT IT WAS AN AIRSTRIP. THAT NIGHT THE JAPS, CAME AND DROPPED THEIR BOMBS EACH SIDE OF THE STRIP, HEARING THE BOMBS, ROY AND "DOC" THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO BOMB THERE CAMP SO THEY TOOK OFF WITH AS MUCH SPEED AS THEY COULD MUSTER. THEY DID NOT TRAVEL VERY FAR BEFORE THEY RAN INTO A BARB WIRE FENCE, WITH VERY LITTLE CLOTHING ON IT TOOK SOME TIME TO GET THROUGH., THEN THEY DISCOVERED THEY WERE NOW IN THE AMMUNITION DUMP. BY THE TIME THEY GOT OUT, THE JAP. BOMBERS WERE RETURNING TO THEIR BASE.

NOONAMAH:- THE TOILETS CONSISTED OF 44 GALLON DRUMS WELDED TOGETHER IN ONE LONG LINE WITH A SEAT ON EACH DRUM AND FOR HEALTH REASON WERE BURNT EACH DAY WITH DIESEL OIL. CAPTAIN LINDSAY HAD HIS OWN TOILET AND IT WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF HIS BATMAN TO FIRE HIS TOILET EACH DAY. IT WAS SUGGESTED TO "TOGGY" BY HIS WOULD BE MATE? TO BURN THE TOILET LATER IN THE DAY WHICH HE DID. NOW CAPTAIN LINDSAY DID LIKE TO HAVE A DRINK OR TWO AT NIGHT AND THIS PARTICULAR NIGHT AFTER HE HAD CONSUMED HIS USUAL QUOTA OF LIQUOR WITH PROBABLY A DASH OF VANILLA ESSENCE HE PROCEEDED TO THE TOILET, PULLED HIS PANTS DOWN AND SAT ON A VERY HOT SEAT WHICH PROBABLY SOBERED HIM UP BUT DID SOME DAMAGE TO HIS BACK SIDE.

POOR "TOGGY" WAS SEVERELY REPRIMANDED AND WAS LUCKY NOT TO BE COURT MARTIALED.

( L/CPL ERROL BRADOCK REMINDED ME OF THIS INSTANT - MARTY PERKINS )