

MARCH 2022

THE BRIBIE "BUGLE"

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Produced and edited by Graham Bradshaw

IT HAPPENED IN MARCH

March became a month known for ships sunk, towns bombed and Victoria Crosses won.

HMAS PERTH WAS SUNK

in the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra on the **1st of March 1942** with 353 lives lost. The USS Houston was also lost in that Java Sea battle. Previously,

HMAS Perth in Sydney Harbour

Photo: AWM—0002240

HMAS Perth was a Light Cruiser



1941, HMAS Perth had been involved in the evacuations of Crete and Greece and during that period was severely damaged by bombing. She returned to Sydney and was refitted before operating patrols in the Pacific and finally moving to Indonesia to escort ships of the Dutch East Indies where she was eventually sunk.

HMAS YARRA WAS SUNK

south of Java on the **4th of March 1942** and only 13 survived from a compliment of 151. Previously, during 1940 and 1941, she carried out patrol and escort duties in the Middle East and Mediterranean waters.

Photo: AWM—301768

HMAS YARRA WAS A NAVAL SLOOP



BROOME and WYNDHAM BOMBED

These two West Australian towns were bombed on the **3rd of March 1942** and around 90 lives were lost as evacuees from the Dutch East Indies crowded Broome. Japanese planes destroyed 16 flying boats refuelling on the Bay, plus another six aircraft on the ground. They also shot down a DC3 carrying refugees and a Liberator carrying wounded Americans. The exact death toll was not known. The Wyndham bombing was confined mainly to the airfield.

Photo: Netherlands Institute of Military History.



Result of bombing in Broome—burning fuel in the Bay

HORN ISLAND BOMBED

The Torres Strait island of Horn was bombed on the **14th of March 1942** for the first of nine times which makes it the second most bombed Australian site after Darwin. Horn Island was becoming an Advanced Operations Base for the RAAF. Another raid occurred on the **18th** and Katherine, NT was bombed on the **22nd of March 1942** in what was the deepest incursion into Australian territory (200 km).

FORMATION OF THE AIR FORCE

The Central Flying School had been formed at Point Cook in 1914 and had soon expanded to become the (AFC), The Australian Flying Corps and operated as such throughout the first World War as part of the AIF. On the **31st of March 1921** it became the Australian Air Force and the prefix "Royal" was added on the **13th of August** that year. Of course the Centenary was only last year.

NSW CONTINGENT TO SUDAN

On the **3rd of March 1885** a Battalion of NSW Infantry and a Battery of Artillery departed Sydney to serve with British forces in the Sudan. They arrived on the **29th**, however, their stay was short because the British abandoned further action and the NSW Contingent returned home in late May suffering few casualties.

AUSTRALIAN FORCES TO IRAQ

The **20th of March 2003** saw 2000 Australian Navy, Army and Air Force personnel join the US led coalition to invade Iraq. Units involved included HMA Ships, Anzac, Darwin and Kanimbla, 75 Sqn. RAAF FA-18 Hornets and ground troops from number 1 Sqn. SAS, 4RAR, The Aviation Regiment and various other units.



Photo: Aust. Dept. of Defence

75 Sqn., F/A-18 Hornets



Photo: RAN.gov.au

THE FIRST BIG MAC ARRIVES



General Douglas MacArthur arrived at Batchelor Airfield south of Darwin on the **17th of March 1942** after fleeing the Philippines. He was to take up his appointment as Supreme Command of the South West Pacific Area and he arrived in Melbourne on the **26th**.

THE 1st. BATTLE OF GAZA

The advance through Palestine had reached Gaza by **March 1917** and the first battle to take the Turkish garrison commenced on the **26th of March 1917**. The attack was made by two British Infantry Divisions supported by the Mounted Desert Column. The attack floundered because the British Infantry advance was tardy and even though the Mounted troops had reached the heights above the town the attack had to be called off. A second attack was made in April. This also failed and Gaza was not finally captured until the 3rd battle in November.

JAPANESE LAND IN NEW GUINEA

Japanese forces landed at Lae and Salamaua on the **8th of March 1942**. They also landed at Finschafen on the **10th of March 1942**. These were to be their bases and build up for the planned attack on Port Moresby. Heavy rain troubled the landings and slow progress gave allied carrier groups time to attack the Japanese. It would be a long, arduous twelve months before these Huon Peninsula towns were recaptured by the Australian and American forces.

TOL PLANTATION CAPTURED



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P09455.001

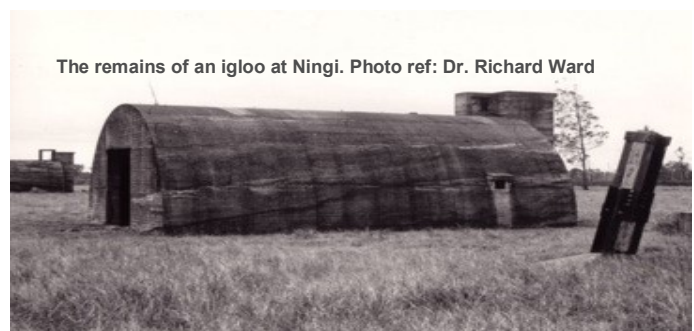
Photo: Ref. AWM P09455.001

The Japanese forces had taken Rabaul in January 1942, (see January Bugle), and then committed mass murder in early February when they took small groups of Australian prisoners into the jungle and then bayoneted 150 to death in what was the Tol Plantation mas-

sacre. Their remains were left to rot where they were killed. The 5th Australian Division captured the Tol Plantation on the **23rd of March 1945**.

TOORBUL RADAR ON AIR

Although the RAAF 210 Radar Station had been under construction and testing for several months during 1943 it was not until the **9th of March 1944** that the Station became fully operational. It was based on the British Advanced Chain Overseas Radar Stations which had served England well during the Battle of Britain. There were two towers and two igloos, one for the transmitter and one for the receiver situated off Voltz Road, Ningi.



The remains of an igloo at Ningi. Photo ref: Dr. Richard Ward

A VICTORIA CROSS MONTH

Captain Percy Herbert Cherry, 26th Battalion AIF, was awarded the VC for his actions at Lagnicourt, France on the **26th of March 1917** when he and his Company held their position against a de-



termined counter attack after they had earlier taken the village from the Germans. Late in the afternoon Capt. Cherry and several other men were killed by a German Shell. Capt. Cherry had served at Gallipoli and earlier in France where he had won the Military Cross for his actions at Warlencourt.

He had been wounded at Gallipoli, Pozieres (severely), Warlencourt and Lagnicourt.

Lieutenant Francis Hubert McNamara, a pilot with 1 Squadron AFC received his VC on the **20th of March 1917** in Palestine when he rescued a fellow pilot who had crashed. The Turkish cavalry were fast approaching, however, Lieut. McNamara, who had a leg wound



still managed to land his aircraft and Captain Rutherford, the downed pilot climbed onto the wing. During the attempted take-off they crashed but managed to scramble into Rutherford's Aircraft (which was a two seater) and cleared the area before the Turkish cavalry arrived. McNamara was the first Australian Airmen to receive a Victoria Cross. He continued serving and by WW2 had risen to the rank of Air Vice Marshal.

Sergeant Stanley Robert McDougal with the 47th Battalion AIF was awarded his VC at Dernancourt,



France, on the **28th of March 1918**. When Sgt. McDougal saw that the Germans had entered the lines he charged the 2nd wave coming in, stopped their progress, and then turned against the enemy already in the lines killing many and aiding the capture of about 30. This effectively stopped the attack on his position.

Eight days later he repelled another attack in the same place. For that action he received the Military Medal.

Flight Lieutenant William Ellis Newton was flying a Boston Bomber of 22 Squadron, RAAF, attacking Japanese positions at Salamaua, New Guinea on the **16th of March 1943**. He was wounded when his Boston was hit by flak but he still managed to get back to Port Moresby. Two days later whilst flying another raid on the



same Japanese positions his aircraft was hit and he was wounded again. He managed to fly the crippled Boston away from the enemy and crashed it in the sea where he and FSGT Lyon got to shore where they were captured by the Japanese. Sadly, the brutal Japanese beheaded

both airmen. Flight Lieutenant Newton was executed on the **29 of March 1943**.

Corporal Reginald Roy Rattey was awarded his VC at Bougainville on the **22nd of March 1945** while serving with the 25th Battalion. Their advance had been held up by extremely heavy enemy fire from several bunkers when Cpl. Rattey rushed the bunkers firing



his Bren and hurling grenades. This action completely surprised the Japanese. After destroying the first of the bunkers he raced back under fire and grabbed two more grenades and again rushed the remaining bunkers. He alone had silence all opposition and the Battalion advance was able to continue.

Lieutenant Albert Chowne was awarded his VC on the **25th of March 1945** for his fearless charge at Japanese machine gun positions which had halted the Battalion's advance at Dagua, New Guinea. He had knocked out two machine guns before he was killed. Lt.



Chowne rose through the ranks while serving in the Middle East at Tobruk and El Alamein with the 2nd/13th battalion. Lt. Chowne had already received the Military Medal a previous action. After returning to Australia from the Middle east he was posted to the 2/2nd Battalion and sent to New Guinea.

THE MEMORABILIA - PAGE

Compiled and Edited by Graham Bradshaw with the grateful assistance of Col "Taffy" Phillips, Memorabilia Curator

MEMORABILIA DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME—CONTACT "TAFFY" THROUGH THE OFFICE....YOU CAN VIEW DISPLAYS OF MEMORABILIA IN THE ANZAC ROOM AND THE GLASS CABINETS LOCATED ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

DONATIONS OF BOOKS ARE ALWAYS APPRECIATED. TO CHECK WITH ONLINE CATALOGUE. GO TO THE SUB-BRANCH WEBSITE AND CLICK ON LIBRARY.

Our monster for the month is the prehistoric looking collection of iron called a ship's anchor. We need

some help here because I have asked all the "old salts" around the place about what ship it came from and how it managed to get to the Toorbul Street park. So far no one seems to have any idea about its origin as no plaque had been attached nor records found. Any ideas??



Photo: Graham Bradshaw 2021



Machine gun tool pouch
marked WEEKES LTD, Sydney, 1910 T.A.G.A.
Courtesy: Unknown 2516



Horseshoe case
attaches to the saddle to carry spare horseshoes
marked 14" light horse and has had the sword frog (holder) attached
14LHR was issued with swords at the Beersheba attack of 31OCT1917
Used by 2585 Leslie Dunlop Cossart who served in 2/14 LHR 1934 to 1940
Courtesy: Leslie Cossart 1909

Above are two leather pieces of equipment used by the AIF in WW1. On the left is a machine gun tool pouch made by Weeks Ltd., Sydney and on the right is a horse shoe carrier used by light horsemen through WW1 and later years. This particular bag has accommodation for a sword frog holder. It was issued to Leslie Dunlop Cossart who served with the 2/14 Light Horse Regiment (QMI) from 1934 until 1940.

These are the WWI medals of **2374, Private George Gordon Gilbert**, a young Englishman born in Birmingham who joined the Australian Army and served with the 5th Australian Infantry Battalion. George was killed late in the War on the **22nd of August 1918** during the battles along the Somme which drove the German Army back to the Hindenburg Line.



There is no record of exactly where he was killed and the battles did move quickly after the last Battle Of Amiens. He may have died at Cerisy which the Australians had captured in August, because he is buried in the Cerisy Gailly War Cemetery, however, many were reburied at Cerisy from several other Somme cemeteries. This display contains the large round Memorial Plaque which became know as "The Dead Man's Penny". The regimental number on the card below the plaque is incorrect.



Many thanks go to Jan Frost of Bongaree who kindly donated her late husband's collection of several dozen books which are in excellent condition. The library is now overflowing into the bottom cupboards so urgent action is now needed to get more shelving built.

As with the anchor we need some information on the



Photo: Graham Bradshaw—20

thinks it came off a Caribou.

aircraft propellor which also sits in the park area near the road. There is no plaque attached to this item. Does anyone recall where it came from and which aircraft it belonged to. Taffy

I recently sent out a link to a DVA book titled "Audacity". Did anyone read it. I would like some feedback about the idea of sending out a link every 2 weeks or so. You can also access these PDF versions through the library link on the Sub- Branch web page.

MANY THANKS TO ALL THE MEMBERS WHO HAVE SAID (by email or in person) THAT THEY LIKE THE "BUGLE" AND ENJOY READING IT. If you would like past copies they can be emailed to you.