

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS ASSOCIATION (W.A.) INC.



Signallers of the Anzac Mounted Division operate a wireless station during the Amman operation of March 1918, AWMP02952.003.

WAVELENGTH

MAY EDITION - 2015

This newsletter is the official journal of the ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS ASSOCIATION (W.A.) INC. Meetings are held on the last Thursday in February, March, June (AGM), August and October at 11.00 a.m. at the Cannington/Victoria Park R. & S. L. Wharf Street, Cannington. General enquiries may be directed to the committee members who are listed herein.

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS ASSOCIATION (WA) Inc

PATRON – COLONEL PHILLIP SKELTON AM

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DISCLAIMER.

Thoughts expressed in articles in WAVELENGTH are those of the writers/contributors and not necessarily those of the Association.

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The next Meeting is the Annual General Meeting and it will be held on Thursday, 25th June, 2015, at the Returned & Services League Club, Wharf Street, Cannington, commencing at 11.00 a.m. A light luncheon will follow the meeting and we would like to see as many members as possible to attend.

Signals transmission in Palestine depended on a system of communication that involved many techniques and technologies. At the regimental level communication was at its most basic, relying largely on voice, field signals, field messages, runners and riders, and the heliograph (signalling by mirrors). Further up the chain of command there was a greater emphasis on heliograph and telephone communication, while at divisional and higher levels, wireless was a vital technology, particularly during mobile operations.

During the Megiddo offensive of 1918, for example, Chauvel could only keep in contact with his rapidly advancing cavalry divisions by wireless and aircraft, the organised force of message riders and their horses having been worked to exhaustion within the first day. Aircraft communications were facilitated by special equipment that enabled aircraft to pick the messages up. Motor cyclists and pigeons were also employed frequently.

Signals intelligence played an important part, and British signals detachments intercepted and read Ottoman Army communications regularly.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

Welcome to our June 2015 edition of Wavelength, we have a fair bit to cover so we will start with A N Z A C Day which was a huge success. Starting with the Dawn Services at the various locations around Western Australia where crowd numbers reached new records. The Dawn Service at Quinns Rocks had over 4000 people in attendance as well as 250 School children. The Service was outstanding and was appreciated by all of the community as evident by their letters of appreciation that appeared in our community newspapers.

The ANZAC Day March in Perth was the largest attended for many years, just trying to walk around made one feel sorry for the sardines in their tins. Just trying to carry our banners up St. Georges Terrace was a mammoth job on its own, but we managed despite the very cold strong wind. The appreciation displayed by members of the public with their signs /posters was great to see.

As usual we were the guests of 109 Signal Squadron for the annual ANZAC Day reunion. This is always a very enjoyable afternoon as it gives us the opportunity to mix with today's Signallers and to swap tall tales but true. Major Hooper and his members excelled themselves this year with their welcome to the Association members we really appreciated your efforts.

Before leaving the reunion at 109 Sig. Sqn. I would like to comment on the complaints regarding access to Irwin Barracks on ANZAC Day. I am sorry to inform you that due to the efforts of a few clowns out there in the community the Department of Defence have order that security on all Defence Establishment will be tighten up. All our Members have to do is phone Cathy or myself and supply us with your name and the names of your guests, it is that simple. And let's face it I would rather spend the afternoon with 109 Members than to stand in a hotel in Perth waiting to get served.

Now that we have completed the 30 Signal Company project, we are now turning our attention to completing the Special Wireless Group project. We will be having a new plaque manufactured that will be weather protected and will last for many years. Besides having a new plaque installed on the Memorial, we will have the Memorial Re-Dedicated. The delay has been brought about by trying to find a foundry that manufacture Plaques, not have them computer imposed as is the current trend. But rest assured we will succeed and the Members of the Special Wireless Group will very happy indeed with our efforts.

After reading the limited information concerning the Special Wireless Group that is available, I am surprised that an ex-member of this special unit has never thought of writing the unit's history. I know that the unit was Ultra-Secret, but so was Bletchley Park, yet the book entitled Code Breakers was printed.

The inside story of Bletchley Park has been printed and is not a bad read at all. The story of S W G is something special and after all these years nobody is going to get hurt no wonder we are the Silent Service or quicker by post, you must be joking .

On the Social Seen your Committee is thinking of holding a "JIMMY'S Signallers get together in JULY. The function would be held at the Cannington R. & S. L. Club rooms Wharf Street, Cannington on Sunday 26th July, 2015 commencing at 1230 hours (12-30 pm). Depending on the number of supporters will decide the type of catering arrangement that can be made. Therefore, if you are interested please phone Cathy or myself on (08) 93051303 and we will book you in, family and friends are most welcome.

SIGNALS ASSOCIATION WEBSITE.

I have just received an E-mail from our very good friend in South Australia Bob Long concerning the status of our National R.A Signals Website, which has been out of date for some time now. Bob has come up with the idea of each state having to pay an annual fee to bring the Website up to date and be maintained with current information regarding the various State activities. I believe that this is the way to go for the Association. I would like to hear from you with any suggestions. By the way the cost would be between \$75-\$100 per year.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Yes it is that time of the year again when our Members are able to move out of Perth quicker than the Grey Nomads going north for the Winter. But I can assure you that it is not that bad, we would like to see you at the AGM. If you would like to help us out on the Committee, then we would like to have you come on board, if not then that is fine. We don't believe in dragging people onto the Committee, if you have any suggestions that you feel may assist our Association, then we would like to hear from you, do come along to the AGM and stay for lunch.

Receiving the Wavelength Electronically

To update the manner in which we post out the editions of Wavelength, it has been suggested to us that a number of the Members would prefer to receive their newsletter electronically rather than by mail. If you would like your Wavelength electronically all you have to send us an e-mail so that we can register your e-mail address in our file. You can be assured no-one will have access to your e-mail address without your approval. Some of our Members have already sent us their e-mail address, could I ask them to send us their address again. Our E-Mail address is as follows- signals@eftel.com.au for those Members who prefer the Mail- Way, you don't have to do anything, and you will still receive Wavelength in hard copy format.

SIGNALS REUNION IN VIETNAM 2016.

Once again we are going to have a REUNION in Vietnam. For those who are thinking of returning to Vietnam for the first time, you will not find a better tour and value for money. You will be among friends and will have plenty of time to enjoy the tour and yourself. You will be welcomed by the Vietnamese people who still have the upmost respect for the Australians. I can assure you and your partner that you come back after having a great time. For more information go to the Signals

Reunion Vietnam 2016 web-site for full details. By the way you don't have to have to have been a signaller to come along and join the Reunion. But as numbers are limited, you will have to register your details as soon as possible.

Well folks I will close for now, don't forget the get together book early.

Regards

Peter

**RECORDS OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN CORPS OF SIGNALLERS
IN WORLD WAR 1 – Part 3
By Graham Donley**



10854 SAPPER FRANCIS CURTIS TUCKETT MM had no previous service experience as, even when he enlisted, he was in fact well under the enlistment age. He enlisted on 28th December 1915 at Perth when he gave his age as 18 years, which was under the required minimum age of 19 years, and on 9th March 1916 was posted to Number 4 Section of the 3rd Divisional Signal Company, Australian Engineers and on 27th May 1916 embarked on H M T "Ascanius", disembarking in England on 18th July 1916. He was ill and hospitalised on 19th September 1916 rejoining his Unit on 7th October 1916. He embarked for France on 22nd November 1916, had leave in France from 25th January 1916 until 1st February 1916. He was awarded the Military Medal on 1st February 1918 when the recommendation read: -

On 4th October 1917, East of YPRES, he displayed conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in action. This man was stationed at the Forward Relay Post in the midst of the enemy's barrage. After laying 880 yards of wire, he returned through the barrage counting 16 breaks and again returned. Finding that it was impossible to keep the line in repair, he got another linesman to assist in laying the line by another route. During the whole time the Brigade was in action, he not only kept the line in repair, but when runners became casualties he volunteered for this work on several occasions. His coolness under fire and his devotion to duty were an inspiration to the other men working with him on the lines.

His father, Lieutenant Francis John Tuckett, MC, was killed in the same action during which he was awarded the Military Medal, and as a result the fact that he was under age was brought to light – in fact he was only 16 years of age when he had enlisted.

With two brothers (his father and his uncle) having now been killed in action, it was requested that Sapper Tuckett be returned to Australia and discharged, as in addition to the fact of the loss of two family members, he was still under the enlistment age of 19 years.

On 24th April 1918 he was transferred to Administrative Head Quarters in London and returned to Australia per D22 "Arawa" for discharge, which was effected in 5th Military District on 27th November 1918.

He was apparently disaffected with all that had transpired, with the loss of two family members then having been discharged against his will and he did not apply for his World War 1 medals until 8th November 1941.

To be continued

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

I wish to draw your attention to that the Annual General Meeting of this Association which, will be held on Thursday, 25th June, 2015 at the Cannington/Victoria Park R. & S. L. Wharf Street, Cannington, commencing at 11.00 a.m. Your Committee would like to see as many of our members as possible in attendance to show your support for the work undertaken by your volunteer Committee Members. You can be assured that your presence will be appreciated along with any suggestions you may wish to put forward to enhance our Association. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

A hot lunch will be available follow the meeting at \$5.00 per head.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 25TH JUNE, 2015.

AGENDA.

The Agenda of the AGM shall be:-

1. Confirm the minutes of the previous A.G.M.
2. The presentation and acceptance of the audited financial statement of the Association.
3. The presentation and acceptance of the President's Report.
4. Confirm the minutes of the previous General Meeting.
5. Correspondence and General Business.
6. Verifications of Subscriptions.
7. Election of Committee.

COMMITTEE.

The Committee of the Association shall consist of

President

Vice President

Immediate Past President

Honorary Secretary

Honorary Treasurer

Honorary Editor and a minimum of six other members.

MEMORIAL PLAQUE, WORLD WAR 1

By Graham Donley

From an Australian perspective, the horrific conflict of 1914 to 1918 (The War to end all Wars) resulted in the loss of 59,342 killed (over 6,000 from Western Australia) and 152,171 wounded (15,900 from Western Australia), many being wounded more than once. Australians had "rushed to the Colours", with 416,809 entering the services and 331,781 of these taking the field, from a male population of 2,583,981 in 1914. However, it must be kept in mind that close to 9 million personnel from the then British Empire were involved in the armed forces in those years.

In late 1916, the British Cabinet realised that the casualty figures were extremely high and they decided that some form of official recognition should be presented to bereaved families. The British Government announced in August 1917 that an open competition would be held for the design of a plaque to be given to the next of kin of the officers, petty officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Navy or Army who had fallen since the 4th August 1914. Women were included as they had served under direct contract with the War Office as members of the Nursing Services and the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps. The prize was, for that time, a huge 250 Pounds and some 800 entries were received from all corners of the then British Empire. The successful design was submitted by Mr. E. C. Preston of Liverpool who also designed the Distinguished Flying Cross; Distinguished Flying Medal; Air Force Cross; General Service Medal 1918 – 1962; War Medal 1939 – 45 and the British Korea Medal.

The plaque is quite large at 120 mm in diameter and cast in bronze. On the Obverse Britannia stands at the left, facing right and holding a trident in her left hand and a wreath in her right hand. Below the wreath is a rectangular tablet on which the deceased person's full name is cast in raised capital letters. To the left and right of Britannia are dolphins, to represent the sea power of Britain, and in front is a standing lion. In the exergue, the British lion is depicted defeating the German eagle. See illustration.



With the exception of those plaques made in the Woolwich Arsenal, which bear their symbol, the Reverse of the plaque is blank. Casting of the plaques commenced in a London factory in December 1918, but as progress was too slow – keep in mind that each plaque had the name of the deceased person cast on it – the War Office subsequently transferred the task to the Woolwich Arsenal and to other former munitions factories in England.

Although they went to people all over the then British Empire, there is no known list of those to whom the plaques were presented, but the huge number of some 1.15 million were actually cast.

The plaques were posted in a folded cardboard box arrangement to the next of kin at the address shown on the original Attestation Papers. Regrettably, as this did not occur until 1922 there was a serious time lag which meant that many of the next of kin had moved from that address or even passed away, so many were not received by the next of kin. It is not known what eventually happened to those that were returned, although it is apparent that some were retained, as examples exist where the original cast name has been professionally removed and another name engraved onto the plaque."

It was intended that the plaque would be accompanied by a Scroll and a letter from King George V known as the "The King's Message" but as the plaques were not ready for issue, in Australia in 1920 a letter was sent from Base Records enclosing the documents and advising that the plaque would be forwarded when it was received.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

I join with my grateful people
in sending you this memorial
of a brave life given for others
in the Great War.

George R.I.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

BASE RECORDS OFFICE.

VICTORIA BARRACKS.

Melbourne,

Always state Regimental Number, Rank, Full Name, and Unit of Soldier in your Communications.

Next of Kin should always notify Change of Address to Base Records, Melbourne.

Dear

I am directed to transmit per separate packet post, the Scroll issued by His Majesty's Government as a memorial to those who lost their lives through the war of 1914-1918, and I trust it reaches you safely.

The King's Message, which is issued with the Scroll, is enclosed herewith.

Memorial Plaques are not yet available, nor is it anticipated they can be for some time, as the work has to be carried out in a special factory, and is necessarily slow on account of the large number to be manufactured. None has, so far, been received in Australia, but when available they will be promptly distributed, no application being necessary.

It is also to be noted that **the name inscribed** on these memorials is that in which the deceased served and died, and no variation to this rule is permissible.

The favour of the early return of the attached receipt form (which can be torn off) would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

J. McLean Major,

Officer i/c Base Records.

From the point of view of the bereaved next of kin, many did not feel that the plaque and its accompanying documents in any way replaced their loved ones, and the derisive terms of "Dead Man's Penny"; "Death Penny" and "Widow's Penny" were used.

The illustrations in this article depict plaques issued on behalf of a deceased British soldier and a deceased Australian soldier, but it is not possible to tell which is which by examining them. This anonymity is deliberate, as it was decided that no rank; Unit or decorations would be shown as befitted the quality of sacrifice made by all casualties.

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G v R I



HE whom this scroll commemorates
was numbered among those who,
at the call of King and Country, left all
that was dear to them, endured hardness,
faced danger, and finally passed out of
the sight of men by the path of duty
and self-sacrifice, giving up their own
lives that others might live in freedom.
Let those who come after see to it
that his name be not forgotten.

Pte. Alexander Laing
23rd Bn., A. I. F.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION

By Graham Donley

During, and for some time following the end, of World War 1, the Governments of Australia and New Zealand tried unsuccessfully to introduce some form of recognition of the sacrifices and hardships suffered by troops from these two Nations as a result of the campaign on the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915.

Finally it was mooted by the Australian Government that they would recognise the fiftieth anniversary of the Gallipoli landing of 25th April 1915, and in March 1966 the Minister for Defence announced that it had been decided by the Australian Government, in consultation with the New Zealand Government, to issue a medallion and lapel badge to the veterans of the Gallipoli campaign.

On 16th March 1967 the Prime Minister the Right Honourable Harold Holt, announced that a commemorative medallion and badge would be issued to surviving members of the Australian Defence Force who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula, or in direct support of the operations from close off shore, at any time during the period from the first ANZAC Day of 25th April 1915 to the final date of evacuation on 8th January 1916. *(These conditions are quite compatible with those relating to the wearing of the "A" on colour patches to signify the same service).*

From an Australian perspective, all members of the Australian Defence Force who served during the Gallipoli campaign, or their next of kin, were entitled to be awarded the ANZAC commemorative medallion, and in addition a lapel badge was awarded to those veterans who were still alive at the time of award. Members of philanthropic organisations and the Press who were accredited to the A I F and Australian members of the crews of merchant ships or hospital ships which operated in direct support in the defined area were also eligible.

The medallion has on the obverse the iconic image of Simpson and his donkey carrying a wounded soldier to safety (see *NOTE below*) over a laurel wreath above a scroll with the inscription "ANZAC". The reverse has a relief map of Australia and New Zealand superimposed by the Southern Cross over a wreath of New Zealand fern leaves with a scroll below in which the initials and name of the recipient are engraved. See illustrations.



Obverse

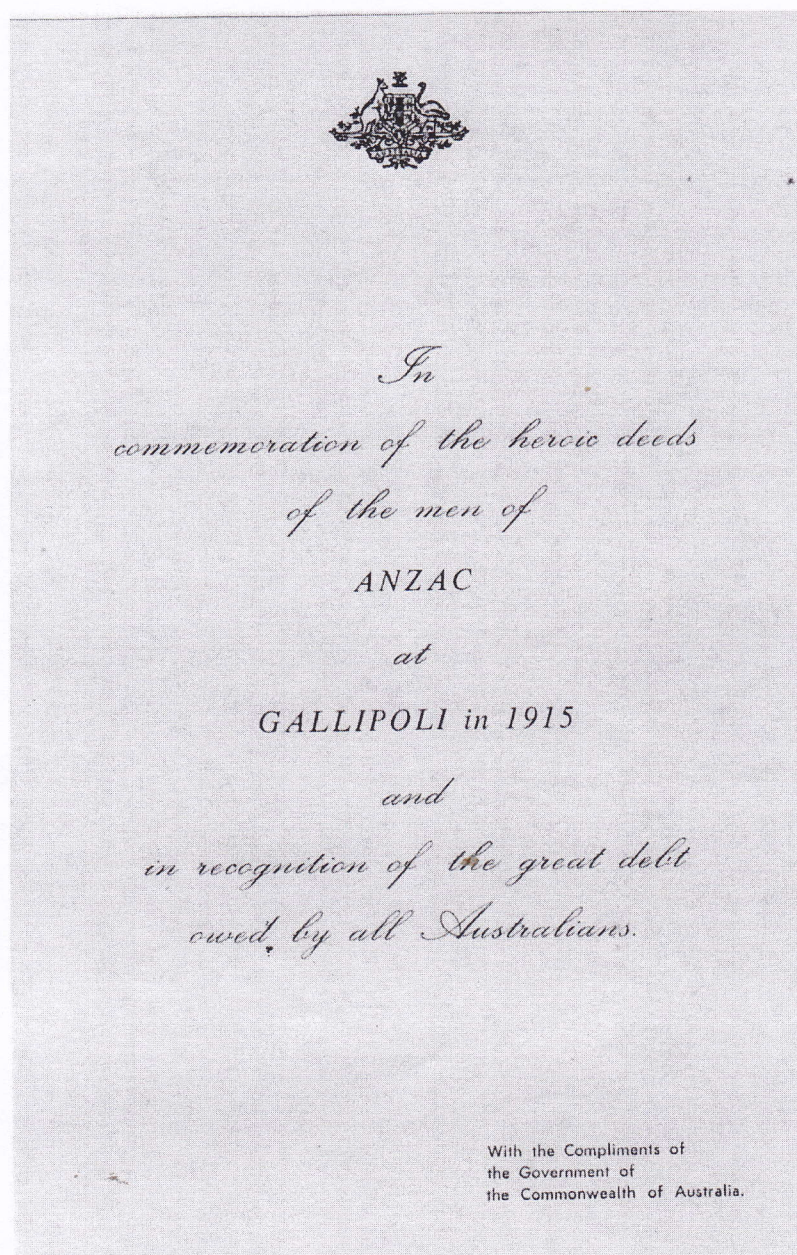
Reverse

The medallion is in bronze, 75 mm high and 50 mm wide and presented in a fitted leatherette case lined with a purple silk like material.

The lapel badge is 34 mm high and 23 mm wide with a fitting to be worn in the lapel of a suit coat. The Obverse is a replica of the Obverse of the medallion and on the reverse are engraved the initials and name of the recipient. The presentation of the medallion and lapel badge is first class. The inscriptions appear to be hand done, which I believe makes them more personal rather than reducing their appearance.

The medallions and lapel badges were produced by Stokes and Sons – medallions 16,591 for Australia; 4,000 for New Zealand; lapel badges 9,884 for Australia; 3,000 for New Zealand.

Included in the cardboard postage box was the following letter.



NOTE: "Simpson" is in fact 202 Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick, MID of G Section 3rd Field Ambulance, (*He enlisted under the name of "John Simpson"*) whose name is found on the National Archives site under "Simpson" while under the Australian War Memorial site he is found under "Kirkpatrick". He was killed in action on 19th May 1915 while transporting a wounded soldier on his donkey. He enlisted in Western Australia and trained at Blackboy Hill camp prior to embarkation.

Although he named his Mother as his next of kin, and an application was made in her name, the first ANZAC medallion produced was presented to his sister in England, under the protocol for issue of medals and the like to the relations of deceased soldiers.

The medallion arrived too late to be presented on ANZAC Day 1967 as had been hoped for, but was presented at Australia House in London by Lord Casey, the Governor General of Australia on 16th May 1967, which was quite fitting as Lord Casey was himself a Gallipoli veteran.

The medallion would have been engraved "J. SIMPSON", as would his medals, as these are issued in the name in which the serviceman enlisted.

The origin of the donkey, which he called "Duffy", is a little obscure, and while I had thought that he "souvenired" it from the Indian Mountain Battery, according to the excellent book "*Gallipoli The Western Australian Story*" by Wes Olson it is thought possible that the donkey was one of two from 16 Battalion that had been pushed overboard and swam ashore.

Napoleon to blame for meeting his Waterloo

PARIS: Napoleon brought defeat at Waterloo upon himself through arrogance, blunders and the use of a faulty map, according to a documentary that has shattered the French popular view that he was a military genius.

The program, broadcast by the France 3 channel, debunked the conventional wisdom that Napoleon lost to the Duke of Wellington in 1815 only because of a mistake by one of his generals, the Marquis de Grouchy.

L'Ombre d'un doute (The hint of a doubt) places the responsibility for the fiasco at Napoleon's feet, with French historian Franck Ferrand portraying the emperor as a waning and self-satisfied figure before the battle.

It said the emperor had never recovered from a suicide attempt a year earlier. Napoleon's life was saved but he never regained his strategic prowess.

His failings were highlighted by the inaccurate map he used to pinpoint British troops behind

Mont-Saint-Jean farm near Waterloo. The map put the farm on the left-hand side of a bend in the road, when it was on the right-hand side of a straight road. As a result, the French cannon balls fell short of the British positions.

"We realised that there was a printer's error," Mr Ferrand said. "The strategic tool used by the emperor in his ultimate battle was therefore false."

He had failed to ensure that the British and Prussian positions were known before the battle, and also failed to deliver a rousing speech to boost troop morale.

The emperor blamed the defeat on de Grouchy's failure to prevent Gebhard Leberecht von Blucher, the Prussian field marshal, going to Wellington's aid.

De Grouchy, who was at the head of 34,000 men, was bogged down in a fight with the Prussian rearguard kilometres from Waterloo, enabling Blucher to march on to the main battlefield.

THE TIMES