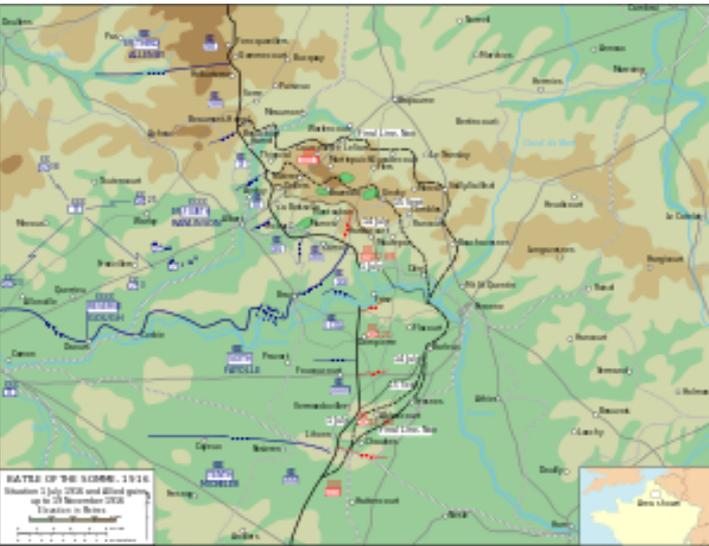


U3A NUNAWADING MILITARY HISTORY GROUP

Battle of the Somme July 1-November 18, 1916

The Somme offensive, also known as the battle of the Somme, is the term given to series of battles fought between 1 July and 18 November 1916 along the Somme Valley in France. It was the main Anglo-French offensive of 1916 and was originally planned as part of a wider strategy of attacking Germany simultaneously on the Western and Eastern Fronts, with the aim of destroying Germany's reserves of manpower. The massive German attack launched on the French fortress of Verdun on 21 February 1916 significantly reduced the French contribution, and the Somme offensive was partly intended to divert the German forces from Verdun.



The initial day of the offensive, 1 July 1916, remains the most costly day in the history of the British army. It suffered almost 60,000 casualties, a third of whom were killed, and the name "Somme" has become synonymous with slaughter. The attack 1 July, and the operations that followed, were undermined by a failure to appreciate the strength of the German defences, and the relative ineffectiveness of the British artillery against them, and a lack of confidence in the abilities of Britain's volunteer army, which meant there was a distinct lack of imagination or innovation in the tactics

employed.

When exhaustion, and the cloying mud of a particularly wet autumn, caused the offensive to be abandoned in November, the allied forces had managed to advance only 12 kilometres. The strategy of attrition upon which the offensive was founded proved a double-edged sword. It had resulted in around 500,000 German casualties, and the German army never recovered from its losses of experienced junior officers and NCOs on the Somme; however, this had come at a cost of 420,000 British and Dominion, and 200,000 French casualties. The offensive destroyed Britain's mass volunteer army, and for the rest of the war it would rely on conscription.

The major contribution of Australian troops to the Somme offensive was in the fighting around Pozieres and Mouquet Farm between 23 July and 3 September. Australian troops also launched several ill-conceived and ultimately futile attacks around Flers in November. Like their British allies, participation on the Somme put the first strain on Australia's voluntary recruitment system, and led to the first unsuccessful referendum to introduce conscription.



2016 Program for Term

Remainder Term 2 & Part Term 3 Program

May 26: Transitions – Propaganda, Mapping, Photography– Harry Spiess

June 2: Transitions – Military Intelligence & Communications - Michael Lewino and Aviation—Trevor Thomas

June 9: Transitions - Rail Transportation—Albert Isaacs and Troopships and River Transport—Rob Ellis

June 16: Transitions—Food Provisioning Armies - Reg Roberts

June 23: Transitions-Small Arms-Aldo Pitre

July 14: Unusual Aircraft - Rob Ellis

July 21: Battle of Britain - Michael Lewino

July 28: Transitions - Merchant Naval Shipping Rex Gilmore and WW11 a personal account by a guest speaker Ern Baddeley

August 4: WW1 Trench Raiding - Mel Green

August 11: New Guinea after Buna & Gona

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Call for 2016 Contributors

Military History Group Members are invited to consider presentations you might like to give or hear during the year. Please also let the Convenor, Rob Ellis or Committee Members know of guest speakers who could be invited to share military experiences which would be of interest to our Members.

U3A equipment can be organised and assistance in the preparation of presentations can be given if required.

World War 1 Timeline - June 1916 to September 1916

June 24, 1916 - The Allies begin a week-long artillery bombardment of German defensive positions on the Somme River in northern France, in preparation for a major British-led offensive. Over 1.5 million shells are fired along a 15-mile front to pulverize the intricate German trench system and to blow apart rows of barbed wire protecting the trenches. British Commander Douglas Haig believes this will allow an unhindered infantry advance and a rapid breakthrough of the German Front on the first day of battle.

July 1, 1916 - The British Army suffers the worst single-day death toll in its history as 18,800 soldiers are killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. The losses come as 13 attacking divisions encounter German defences that are still intact despite the seven-day bombardment designed to knock them out. The British also attack in broad daylight, advancing in lines shoulder-to-shoulder only to be systematically mowed down by German machine-guns. The Somme offensive quickly becomes a battle of attrition as British and French troops make marginal gains against the Germans but repeatedly fail to break through the entire Front as planned.

July 10, 1916 - The Germans attack again at Verdun, using poison gas, and advance toward Fort Souville. Four days later, the French counter-attack and halt the Germans.

July 13, 1916 - The British launch a night attack against German positions along a 3.5-mile portion of the Somme Front. After advancing nearly 1,000 yards, the advance is halted as the Germans regroup their defences. Two days later, the British once again penetrate the German line and advance to High Wood but are then pushed back.

August 27, 1916 - Romania declares war on the Central Powers and begins an invasion of Austria-Hungary through the Carpathian Mountains. The Romanians face little opposition initially and advance 50 miles into Transylvania.

August 28, 1916 - Kaiser Wilhelm appoints Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg as Germany's new Chief of the General Staff, replacing Erich Falkenhayn following the disappointment at Verdun and recent setbacks on the Eastern Front.

August 28, 1916 - Italy declares war on Germany, thus expanding the scope of its military activities beyond the Italian-Austrian Front.

August 29, 1916 - Germany's entire economy is placed under the Hindenburg Plan allowing the military to exercise dictatorial-style powers to control the labour force, munitions production, food distribution and most aspects of daily life.



WW1 Romanian Cavalry

Editor's Note

Articles in all editions of the Military History Group Newsletter have been sourced from the Australian Government, Army, Navy and Airforce newspapers, the Australian War Memorial Canberra via their web site, the Shrine of Remembrance web site and other various public information sites. Most articles have been precised to enable them to fit our publication.

Air Force KC-30A Transfers Fuel to C-17A



Refuelling Taking Place Over California

The first air-to-air refuelling from an RAAF KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) to a C-17A Globemaster III occurred on February 10 over Edwards Air Force Base in the United States.

The five-hour sortie was conducted by members of the RAAF's Air Warfare Centre Aircraft Research and Development Unit, 86 Wing and the United States Air Force (USAF) 418th Flight Test Squadron. During the sortie approximately seven tonnes of fuel was successfully transferred from the KC-30A Advanced Refuelling Boom System (ARBS) to the C-17A.

Air-to-air refuelling of a C-17A significantly increases the aircraft's range, making it capable of carrying heavy payloads further.

"The Air Warfare Centre's, Test and Evaluation Directorate, has a vital role driving integration with our coalition partners to enhance warfighter effects. The tests with the C-17A are one part of the Air Warfare Centre's Flight Test Program. The next steps are Air to Air refuelling trials with the USAF's F-15 and F-16 aircraft," he said.

Group Captain Adam Williams, the Officer Commanding of Number 86 Wing said this is a major achievement for the KC-30A MRTT.

"The KC-30A is an outstanding platform and we are seeing it work towards full maturity as we expand the list of receiver aircraft types," Group Captain Williams said.

"The ARBS is a key enabler for the Air Force with most of the RAAF's future fleet requiring boom type refuelling rather than hose and drogue"

"The successful refuelling with a USAF C-17A paves the way for trials with our own C-17A's from No 36 Squadron in the near future."

RAAF C-17A crews will soon begin refuelling trials with the KC-30A, having trained in the role in late 2015 with a Republic of Singapore Air Force KC-135 tanker.

One KC-30A from Number 33 Squadron, RAAF Base Amberley, is currently deployed to the United States to conduct these trials. More trials between a KC-30A and a USAF C-17A aircraft are scheduled to occur over the coming days, along with refuelling trials with USAF F-15 and F-16 fighters.

The RAAF operates five KC-30A MRTTs, with two more joining the fleet from 2018. The KC-30A has a fuel capacity of more than 100 tonnes, allowing it to fly up to 1800 kilometres from its home base and offload up to 50 tonnes of fuel for four hours.

The RAAF also operates a fleet of eight C-17A transport aircraft, the latest two examples of which were delivered in 2015. These aircraft are extensively employed in support of Defence operations abroad, and are currently conducting missions to Antarctica for the Australian Antarctic Division. The KC-30A's ARBS is also compatible with refuelling the F-35A Lightning II, as well as the E-7A Wedgetail, P-8A Poseidon, and other KC-30As. Each KC-30A is also equipped with two hose-and-drogue refuelling

Special Forces soldiers parachute into Exmouth



A company of Army commandos has parachuted out of three Air Force C-130J Hercules aircraft and into waters off Exmouth, Western Australia, to fight and defeat a simulated enemy during the inaugural Exercise Northern Shield.

The Special Forces contingent descended into Exmouth against the setting sun, loaded into zodiac watercraft and moved to a beach landing site, before conducting a late night raid to clear role player combatants in several buildings near a Defence facility.

Army and Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets conducted visual sweeps of the area prior to the mission, while the 2nd Commando Regiment soldiers called in Super Hornet jets from Darwin to confuse the enemy threat.

Colonel Brett Chaloner, Exercise Controller, said the Special Forces operation was successful and marked the start of Exercise Northern Shield.

"Last night's operation has set the conditions for conventional forces to insert and commence clearance and security operations across the coming days," Colonel Chaloner said.

"Exercise Northern Shield 2015 is about projecting a large force in a very short time to a remote area in North West Australia.

"It's testing our ability to move here rapidly but also orchestrate actions against a realistic threat using airborne insertions, amphibious operations, airmobile operations, fast jets, reconnaissance teams and long distance strategic lift."

MAJ R, lead planner for the Special Forces serials, said the parachute drop and night raid were highly successful.

"We conducted an airborne insertion via a Parachute Load Follow (PLF) where Commandos parachute out of multiple aircraft first, and Zodiac boat bundles follow," MAJ R said.

"Once they hit the water, the Zodiacs were inflated and the Commandos rapidly infiltrated to the beach to reconfigure for their mission and subsequent action against the enemy.

"The Commandos then conducted a clandestine approach to the objective at night, cleared a number of buildings and neutralised the simulated enemy threat.

"This activity was an excellent way to confirm and maintain our Special Forces capabilities and further enhance our ability to respond quickly and lethally within a period of darkness."

Exercise Northern Shield involves about 1000 personnel from the Army and Royal Australian Air Force



Badge of the 2nd Commando Regiment

RESPONSES TO THE U3A MILITARY HISTORY GROUP NEWS LETTER QUESTIONNAIRE

There were many complimentary responses on the Newsletter and encouragement that it should continue. Also many offers for assistance should it be required, these are not included below. The Military History Support Team met and discussed the following responses.

Comments and Responses as follows as follows;

- **Short biographies of class members.**

It was thought that not all members would wish to contribute to such a scheme, however those members that would like their biography published should write to our Convenor Rob Ellis for consideration.

- **Maybe add; Newspaper articles, Results of WW11, Book Reviews, Current Defence Operations, TV Programs.**

We do source information from a range of sources; "articles in all editions of the Military History Group Newsletter have been sourced from the Australian Government, Army, Navy and Airforce newspapers, the Australian War Memorial Canberra via their web site, the Shrine of Remembrance web site and other various public information sites. Most articles are préciséd to enable them to fit our publication. We do report on some current defence operations if we feel these will be of interest to the Group. Book reviews are an issue because there are hundreds to choose from every year, members who have a particular interest and have access to the internet can research sites on line. There are a number of book sellers who specialise in military publications. These can be provided if required. TV programs are difficult, the Newsletter is usually published quarterly and who knows what TV companies have planned that far ahead of time.

- **That there should be some focus on the group i.e. the new membership who they are etc.**

This is thought to be a good idea, probably not much point now as we are halfway through the year but will do something next year.

- **In short something about the group after all if no one attended there would be no military history group.**

Clearly the Group comes together to pursue the common interest in Military History and that is our key focus.

- **Whilst we do get presentations about World War 1 and Gallipoli it seems that World War 2 never occurred. In short too much emphasis about the former and nothing much about the latter.**

A key focus of the Newsletter since 2014 has been to celebrate on an ongoing basis the Centenary of the WW1, start to finish which is also why we also report Shrine of Remembrance celebratory events. This focus will continue through to the centenary of the Armistice in 2018. There have been 4 articles on WW11 or associated with WW11, Aboriginal participation was one of those.

- **There are very new weapons around and about now like drones, the new Russian tanks which are reported to be revolutionary, nuclear submarines in short something about what is happening now-a-days.**

We do run some articles on new equipment but mainly with a focus on Australian acquisitions. Our key objective is as a history group.

- **Try to get more people to do presentations.**

Agreed, many times each year we call for members who would like to make presentations to contact the Convenor with submissions for consideration. We also have members who can help with presentations if required. We also make a call for presentation on the front page of every Newsletter.

- **I understand the Transitions program but not everyone is au fait with the subject and others may well have something entirely different to offer which could be just as interesting. In short we must try not to become boring or prescriptive.**

The Transitions program is an initiative of our Convenor Rob Ellis. The program is designed to show the advancements made in a range of military areas since recorded time began up to the end of WW1. There are some exceptions to this for example Military Engineering and some others. Broadly this covers;

Size and Structure of Armies

Training and Organisation

Equipment, Food and Clothing

Mobility and Transportation

Communications

Naval Advances over a range of ship classes

Aviation

Reconnaissance and Intelligence

Artillery and Small Arms

Medical and Engineering

- **This is the first I have received, seems must have been left off the previous list even though I gave my email three times to different people.**

This is of concern, when dealing with multiple email addresses it is easy to make mistakes, if members are not receiving Newsletters they should put their hands up so we can fix issues. We will consider some new procedures for next year to improve this communication area.

Remembering the war in New Guinea Aitape–Wewak, 1944–45

The final campaign on the mainland of Papua New Guinea was for the Japanese base at Wewak. In April 1944, American forces bypassed the base with landings at Aitape and also Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea. Lieutenant General ADACHI Hatazo's 18th Army, which was contained between Aitape and the Sepik River, which the Australian 8th Brigade patrolled, launched counter-attacks along the Driniumor River. The Americans withstood them.

By October 1944, ADACHI's four divisions were each whittled down to the strength of a regiment. ADACHI positioned his 20th Division around But, on the coast midway between Wewak and Aitape, and the 41st Division in the Torricelli Ranges; the 25th and 51st Divisions were at Wewak, where ADACHI had his headquarters. Many troops were sick or physically weak because of shortages of food and medicines. A large proportion was engaged in gardening and fishing, and 3,000 base troops were dispersed to forage in the countryside. The Japanese also employed New Guineans as gardeners, labourers and carriers, and traded with them. Villagers sometimes suffered at the hands of the occupiers, but generally relations were acceptable to both parties. Many Japanese realised that the villagers could (and often did) help them survive.

New Guineans sometimes assisted the Japanese in capturing Allied airmen shot down or commandos infiltrating Japanese lines. Perhaps the best known incident occurred in September 1943 when Sergeant Len Siffleet, an Australian, and two Ambonese privates from the Dutch colonial forces, M. Reharin and H. Pattiwael, were attacked by about 100 villagers near Wantipi, inland of Aitape, and handed over to the Japanese. The three were executed on 24 October 1943.

Patrols from the Allied Intelligence Bureau and Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit continued operating behind Japanese lines gathering intelligence and, particularly after April 1944, re-establishing an Australian presence. In several villages, trusted men were selected as "sentries" and trained in guerilla warfare. However, villagers in close contact with Japanese garrisons continued to provide food and labour, if only to ensure survival.

In mid-1944, the Allies reached agreement for an Australian division to take over at Aitape. Whereas the Americans were content to guard the base's perimeter, New Guinea Force planned an offensive. The 3rd Base Sub-Area was established to provide logistic support for the 6th Division, which arrived during September and October 1944. Its 16th and 17th Brigades had served in Papua New Guinea during 1942–43 but the 19th Brigade had not seen action since Greece in 1941. However, they had been training intensively for jungle warfare in the thickly timbered mountains of the Atherton Tablelands, Queensland.

The 6th Division's commander, Major General J.E.S. Stevens, started the campaign with vigorous patrolling. The 2/6th Cavalry (Commando) Regiment and 2/9th and 2/10th Commando Squadrons sent patrols along the coast and into the Torricelli Ranges. American inactivity had made the Japanese complacent, and the commandos ambushed several patrols. In late November, the 19th Brigade began advancing along the coast and the 17th Brigade trekked into the mountains. The 16th Brigade was held in reserve. The opposing 20th and 41st Divisions had stepped up patrolling and prepared defensive positions. On both fronts, the Australians made slow progress against stiff opposition, but their superior training and equipment showed. For example, the 19th Brigade's advance to the Danmap River, which it reached in late January, cost it 36 men killed (including several drowned in flooded rivers) and 51 wounded, but the Japanese lost 434 killed and 13 captured. Hundreds of men on both sides suffered tropical diseases, in particular malaria, which raged in the 'wet season'.

Wounded and sick men often faced harrowing ordeals. For the Japanese, it usually meant being left behind to make a suicidal stand. For the Australians, it could take days or weeks to reach a hospital. Along the coast, men were evacuated in small ships or landing craft but in the mountains it took at least two weeks to reach the coast by walking or being carried by New Guineans over rugged jungle tracks. Some men were too seriously wounded or sick to make the journey and were cared for by field ambulances until they recovered sufficiently or died. In April 1945, the 17th Brigade cleared a small airstrip at Maprik, which enabled Auster observation aircraft to fly casualties to the coast in two hours, which undoubtedly saved lives.

The Australians were afflicted by supply shortages—but not as badly as the Japanese, who were desperately short of food and, at times, ammunition. Allied forces had come to rely on transport aircraft to drop supplies but most had been sent to the Philippines or Netherlands East Indies. Often, only one or two Dakotas were available. In the mountains, drop zones were cleared and New Guineans carried supplies forward. On the coast, small ships could transport stores to the forward area and then Jeeps or New Guineans delivered supplies to battalions.

Beaufort bombers of 71 Wing RAAF played an important role. Initially, they flew about 500 bombing sorties per month but in 1945 the three (later five) squadrons were constrained by shortages of fuel and bombs. There was not enough shipping available from Australia to meet demand. At one point, the Wing used Japanese bombs found at Aitape. Often they 'softened up' Japanese positions about to be attacked. Beauforts also flew supply dropping and tactical reconnaissance sorties, making up for a shortage of Boomerang tactical reconnaissance aircraft.

Despite advancing, the Australians increasingly struggled to maintain good morale. It was obvious that Aitape–Wewak was an operational backwater, and many officers and men felt that the American policy of containing the Japanese had been sufficient. It was especially hard to see comrades killed for no apparent strategic gain.

By May 1945, survivors of the 20th and 41st Divisions had retreated to Wewak or split up into small parties tracked by Australian and New Guinean patrols. Sometimes, these patrols discovered Indian prisoners of war (captured in Singapore) who escaped from Wewak, where most of their comrades died from overwork and neglect.

There remained at Wewak many well-fed and capably led troops of the 25th and 51st Divisions. Opposition strengthened as the Australians approached the base but Stevens deployed the fresh 16th Brigade and on 11 May an amphibious landing was made east of Wewak. The Australians also employed tanks and artillery. By the end of May, ADACHI's force had retreated inland.

The campaign closed with the end of the war. In 10 months of campaigning, the 6th Division advanced 70 miles along the coast and in the mountains. It drove the 18th Army (or what was left of it) from 3,000 square miles of territory but 442 men were killed and 1,141 wounded. The RAAF also lost several aircraft and crews shot down or crashed. The Japanese lost 9,000 men with 269 taken prisoner, while others died of disease or starvation. The losses were a bitter pill to swallow for what many on both sides considered an "unnecessary campaign".

Shrine Of Remembrance Events

June to September 2016

- **Return of the Catalina (Screening)**

Thursday 16 June, 5:30pm

In 1942, Singapore fell to the Japanese and with it, the vital air route that delivered top secret communications between Britain and Australia. A group of aviators from Australia re-established the route flying unarmed PBY Catalina flying boats for up to 32 hours across enemy territory.

- **World War I - A Jazz Reflection**

Sunday 26 June, 12:00pm

Due to popular demand there will be an additional performance at midday.

A one hour program of music from the period of the First World War featuring original compositions dedicated to events of this time.

- **Battle of Long Tan: 50th Anniversary Reflections**

Wednesday 27 July, 6:00pm

In the lead up to the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, join 6RAR Platoon Commander Dave Sabben as he discusses his experiences at Long Tan where 108 Australian servicemen fought off 1,500-2,500 Viet Cong. Dave was called up in 1965, aged 20, for the first intake of Australia's National Service scheme. He served with 6RAR first tour and was awarded a Mentioned in Despatches which was later upgraded to a Medal for Gallantry (MG) for his service in the battle. His illustrated presentation will encompass the prelude to the battle, the tactics used, the Armour and Chopper support and the aftermath

- **Peacekeeping and PTSD: The Psychological Legacies of Australian Peace Operations**

Wednesday 14 September, 6:00pm

Over 65,000 Australians have served in more than 50 United Nations and other multilateral international peace operations since 1947. While many peacekeepers feel their contribution is important and rewarding, the capacity for some to develop mental illness after their service is well documented – often for reasons different than those found in combat operations. This talk will explore the unique characteristics and stressors of peace operations, and their potential psychological impacts on veterans and their families.

A Note from The Editor

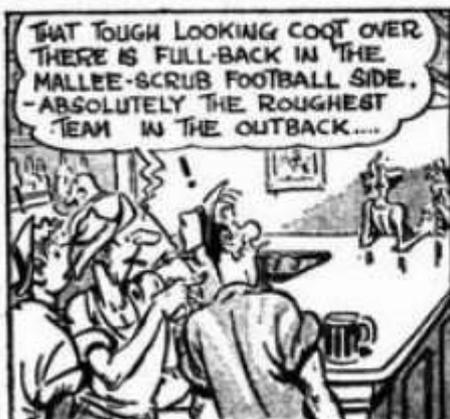
On the front page "Program Term 3" **July 28: Transitions - Merchant Naval Shipping by Rex Gilmore and WW11 a personal account by a guest speaker Ern Baddeley.** Ern is an ex Merchant Navy veteran who served during WW11. While Rex's "Transitions" presentation will target 1918 as the end of period the opportunity to hear a firsthand account from a veteran of the "Fourth Arm" was just too good to let go and should be a fascinating presentation.

Thanks to Harry Spiess for suggesting we ask Ern to tell us his story.

WW11 Cartoon - Bluey and Curley (Well now Demobbed!)

BLUEY AND CURLEY

A real sissy



THE MERCENARIES

***Know it! This is our trade
Shield and arrow, broadsword blade
And heavy armour, deftly made
To this end we direct our lives
Following the road the War-God drives
In the smoke of powder our spirit thrive
None for us sorrow, none will grieve
Do you care if in your cause we believe
Call the roll in our land of birth
Our creed is the same over all the earth
The fight, not the cause , is all our worth
Give us then our tools of trade
Rocket and shell—As long as we're paid
We will die, in your battle, unafraid***

Rob Ellis