



# TRACK

June 2009



**Royal Australian Armoured  
Corps Association Inc.**  
Victorian Branch

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## ANZAC DAY IN MELBOURNE



*(Photo by T. Murphy)*

*Enjoying some after March tall tales are (l to r) Jim De Francesco, Godfrey Camenzuli,  
Martin Close and Andy Marshall*

### Welcome to the Crew

Brian James Heenan James R. Amos Glenn Tingle

## TAKING A LONG LOOK ...

**Victorian Branch committeeman WO2 Chris Morris** is currently enjoying a four month stay in the UK on a familiar exercise to many known as Exercise Long Look. This long standing exercise involves a two way deal with the British Army whereas a number of selected officers and soldiers of both armies are exchanged for about four months and are generally embedded into similar units in the host country.

WO2 Morris took the opportunity over the ANZAC weekend to visit the **battlefields of Normandy, France**.

With the **65th anniversary of Operation Overlord** fast approaching, several committee men including Tom James, Rod Westgarth and son James are currently visiting the **locations pictured below**.



*Overlooking Gold Beach*



*Concrete bunkers at Longues overlooking Omaha Beach*



*Bayeux War Cemetery Normandy*



*Memorial at Arromanches*



**Over the next two newsletters we will publish a most fascinating account of his 2008 pilgrimage to the battlefields of Gallipoli, the Middle East and the Western Front by former State Branch President, historian and author Dr David Holloway. It is a particularly poignant tale of service and sacrifice by ordinary Australians which is unfortunately lost on the majority of 'ordinary' Australians today. Please enjoy this most evocative narration.**

## A Pilgrimage

By Dr David Holloway

**During April and May last year**, my wife Karen and I undertook a journey that I had been promising myself for more than forty years. We had three specific intentions – find the grave of my uncle, Captain Clarence Luxton, 6th Battalion, **AIF, killed in action, 26th April 1915**; attend the unveiling of the Light Horse Memorial at Beersheba on 28th April; and find and photograph as many of the graves of **4th Light Horsemen** as possible across the three Australian theatres of operations, with the intention of publishing some or all of them in my forthcoming history of the old 4th. With a bit of luck we should also manage to visit my sister who lives in Europe and divides her time between her home in northern Italy and the family hotel in eastern Germany.

**We decided to use frequent flyer points**, it costs less, but there is a downside – you get to go via the cape on occasions. For instance, to travel from Melbourne to Istanbul we left Melbourne at 1420 on Thursday 17th April and arrived in Istanbul just before midnight on Friday 18th, a total, including airport stops in Sydney, Tokyo and London, of 37 hours; no wonder we didn't wake up until 10.30 am on Saturday morning, in time to join our tour group for a cruise on the Bosphorus. Next day we toured Istanbul – the Blue Mosque, the Roman Hippodrome, Santa Sofia and the Turkish Military Museum. Meals in local cafes were good and not too expensive – we had lunch, for example, in the Sultan Pub. **The local beer, EFES, pilsen or dark, is good.**

**Monday 21st found us on the five hour drive to Canakkale**, on the Asian side of the Peninsula, across the narrows. The drive takes you down on the European side to Geliboli (the Turkish name for the town of Gallipoli), where we had lunch on the waterfront. A ferry carries you across to the Asian side for the trip down to Canakkale where the hotels are. There is almost no accommodation on the Peninsula itself as it is a national park. There is a large naval museum and fort at Canakkale, well worth the visit. It is here that the Turks commemorate their victory, not on land, but at sea, on 18th March 1915 when the British and French warships were sunk by mines in the Narrows; the consequence of which was the **decision to land an army on the other side of the Peninsula.**

**At our hotel, about 10 minutes drive beyond Canakkale**, towards Troy, they were expecting us – four stubbies of EFES and you won a t-shirt welcoming the Aussies to the 93rd anniversary of ANZAC – yes, we all have a t-shirt now! After a good meal and a sound sleep we were ready for our first day on Gallipoli, crossing from Canakkale to Kilitbair by ferry, something we would do a number of times in the next three or four days – if you do it, **try the coffee but avoid the loos, they are foul!**

**After visiting the statue of Corporal Sayid** whom legend has it carried single handed the gigantic shell that was fired and sank HMS Ocean – he's the Turks equivalent of Jacka or Simpson – we continued on southward to the first of many cemeteries – Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery. As I wrote in my diary: "Suddenly you begin to feel something, to have a sense that you are somewhere that is special, important" and that was just after stopping in the village of Alcitepe – means nothing? **Try its Greek name, as it was in 1915 – Krithia.**

**The drive southward continues** until you reach the massive British monument at Cape Helles, and for the first time you begin to realise that so many were killed and never recovered, their burial places unknown. Amongst them are so many Victorians, those 2nd Brigade boys sent southward by Hamilton after he and the other generals thought the Anzac beachhead was secure. **They were simply slaughtered in their forlorn push across open ground.**

**Then we walked around to V Beach**, the spot where the *River Clyde* was grounded and the poor Munster and Dublin Fusiliers were mown down on the morning of April 25th. We were supposed to eat our packed lunches there, but none of us seemed very hungry. The row upon row of names in the V Beach Cemetery was **scarcely conducive to good digestion**.

**Then, as we trekked up from the beach**, we were reminded that, next morning after the *River Clyde* debacle, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Hotham Montague “Dick” Doughty-Wylie, VC, CB, CMG, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, who had been the British Consul in Mersina, Turkey before the war, led a charge of those who were able to come ashore from the boat during the night. Up from the beach, toward Sedd-el-Bahr and its old fort, they ran. The charge succeeded and the high ground was taken, but **Doughty-Wylie was killed – he was awarded a posthumous VC** – and he lies buried where he fell, in the only isolated grave on the whole Peninsula. His action was all the more courageous, or foolish, when you realise that he carried only a walking stick as he led the men uphill. He had befriended many a Turk during his time there earlier and wished them no harm! To balance our experience, we next visited the massive Turkish monument above the straits, below the Narrows, which, as with everything in modern Turkey, whilst defining the great naval victory, above all glorifies Mustafa Kemal, Ataturk. Completing the day’s excursion we visited the almost forgotten Redoubt Cemetery, where lie some 20 Victorians, amongst them **Lt-Col Robert Gartside**, the 2I/C of 8th Battalion who was temporarily commanding 7th Battalion when he was mortally wounded in the attack on Krithia on May 8th. After this we re-crossed the Narrows and returned to our hotel. Some of our touring party qualified for more t-shirts before and after dinner.

**Wednesday 23rd April had us back again** on the car ferry and thence to ANZAC. If you are Australian and if you know anything about your history then this moment has to have an effect. You are there, where they were, and suddenly it almost comes to life. You see the enormity, the impossibility of the task they were set – and that’s in **daylight with no-one shooting at you and it still looks impossible**.

**We drive around that road that was the cause of some controversy** recently but which in reality is probably necessary if we are to explore, as I believe we should, all that those young men undertook. We pass through the area at North Beach being prepared for Friday’s Dawn service and on to **No 2 Outpost Cemetery** where the poor blokes from 7th Battalion whose boats went off course and foundered are buried. They never even got ashore. Next it’s Ari Burnu Cemetery and the headstones show a lot of 8th and 10th Light Horse fellows are buried there. **They didn’t make it after the Nek**.

**After that it’s Beach Cemetery at Hell Spit**, the water of the Aegean gently lapping the sandy shore. And here we find the first of the boys from the old 4th – Atkinson, Inglis, Bailes and Gorrie. We laid a poppy beside each one; but most of the crowd want to see a different grave – **John Simpson Kirkpatrick**. It doesn’t do to dwell too long beside any one grave; it’s best to keep moving. And so to Shrapnel Gully. I know there are a couple of boys from the 4th here but the group is being hurried along and I can’t find them. Instead we are off to the Hotel Kum, the only hotel actually on the Peninsula, booked out by the people from the War Memorial and other important people. **We did have a good lunch there though**.

**Back to the battlefields and Lone Pine**. Here the view is terrific; all the way back to the beach, then away across the ridgelines, where it is quickly apparent that even up here the boys still had further, higher ridges to take if they were to achieve their objectives. It becomes increasingly obvious that they were never likely to do so. Here, almost beneath the tree itself, **lies one 4th Light Horse boy, Reg Williams**. All the others at Lone Pine are listed on the wall of the memorial, an indication that their bodies were never recovered although they lie hereabouts; all 14 of them. **We gave them poppies too**.

**From Lone Pine we travelled what today is such a short distance**, especially on a bus, to the Nek. From there the view across to Suvla Bay is magnificent. So clearly can you see the ridges in between, up which the **Kiwis and Monash’s 4th Brigade were supposed to climb** to get round behind the Turks before coming to the objectives beyond Baby 700, objectives they would never reach. But what strikes you most about the Nek is that the area over which those Victorians of the 8th and West Australians of the 10th Light Horse, had to charge is so small and that beneath the very spot where you are standing so many of them lie buried. **You cannot help be moved at this spot**.

**To complete the day we ventured up to the New Zealand Memorial at Chunuk Bair**, the place that celebrates the Kiwis great achievements of 6th – 10th August. It is ‘interesting’ to note that the Turks have erected a massive statue of Ataturk very close by, almost overshadowing the Kiwi monument and not, according to our Australian guide, quite in keeping with the spirit of arrangements in the Gallipoli park. As we headed back to Canakkale, reflecting on all that we had seen, it was impossible not to think of those young men, normal blokes of their time, but somehow different to us, who had seen that they had a job to do and done it to the best of their ability; so many of them paying a fearful price. **We must always be grateful to them.**

**The procedure for Anzac Day apparently changes from year to year** and is becoming increasingly ordered and controlled. The extent of preparations on the site meant that it was difficult if not impossible for us to return to Anzac on the 24th. So, instead, after a return to the Naval Museum at Canakkale for a closer look within the old fort, we journeyed down to legendary Troy, the site that was once on the sea and is now miles inland and in reality, unless you are an archaeologist, basically a pile of old rocks, stones and bricks – **interesting, but not riveting.**

**After dinner and a glass of red**, we dressed and readied ourselves for another ferry crossing and the return to Gallipoli. We were to spend the next many hours huddled in seats, or on lawns, depending on how lucky you had been with your arrangements and the good graces of the **Department of Veterans Affairs**. Wherever and whatever, it was cold, bone chillingly cold. We even bought blankets from the local hawkers in an effort to keep warm, but it was still bitter and despite the variety of entertainment – not rock bands, but episodes of “The Anzacs”, interviews with historians and musical interludes from frozen bandsmen, **all displayed on two giant screens, we froze.**

**As dawn approached, lights flickered on the cliffs and crags and the Sphinx** rose with a sense of foreboding high over us. Minds wandered back across the years to those boys, together, yet alone with their thoughts, in darkness, in waters of unknown depths, against an increasing fusillade of foreign, unwelcoming bullets, against what proved to be completely unfamiliar terrain. Would I have faced it as they did? Would you? Now? I wondered, and **I hoped the answers were yes, but I was not certain.**

**As the dawn broke, the service began.** It might seem strange, and yes, it was moving; yet, there were disappointments. All those important people, all with something or perhaps not really much to say. I kept wondering if the boys were listening and giving the big knobs the raspberry, or as they would have done in their day, counting them out. I’d like to think they would. Then it was over and the crowd dispersed, all heading up the old **artillery track to Lone Pine or the Kiwi Memorial or both.**

**Karen and I went off in the opposite direction**, to Embarkation Pier Cemetery and there, in the still cold, clear morning sun I found Uncle Clarence, only the second member of my mother’s family ever to have found him. To quote from my son Justin’s words, some years before when he had been the first family member ever to see the grave, “I wanted to say something to him, but I didn’t know what, so I just stood with him for a while”. So did I, then “thank you” seemed as inadequate as a lame, “good bye”. **I hope he understood.**

**We returned back along the shore line**, past the dawdlers and one or two brave souls taking a dip as the boys had done, and then made our way up the artillery track, as far as Shell Green Cemetery. With ample time before the Lone Pine ceremony, we scoured the beautiful Green, **locating all 19 boys of the old 4th** buried there. Each I gave a poppy. Then on to the ceremony further up the track. It was still cold, but this ceremony, purely Australian, was better, more appropriate, although the political types still feel **compelled to say too much.**

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*Shell Green Cemetery*

**Back at our hotel a few hours later we tried to liven things up a bit**, at least the 10th Light Horse blokes from Perth attempted to get a swgy game going and brighten the mood, but for so many it had been such a tiring,

long and emotional day that a quiet drink and an early dinner seemed more appropriate. Next day we returned to Istanbul during the morning before visiting a carpet factory (where we bought a proper Turkish carpet – it better be, as it wasn't cheap), the Grand Bazaar and then being entertained at an authentic Turkish Restaurant where, to our horror we discovered, after we'd drunk it, the wine was not included and worked out at about \$10 a glass! Two of the boys who'd enjoyed the best part of a bottle each were up for about \$70 a bottle – **still cheaper than by the glass**. On Sunday 27th April we left Istanbul early in the morning to fly down to Tel Aviv, Israel, on Turkish Airlines. It's an interesting experience to fly, thankfully only for about an hour and a half, in an aeroplane when you don't understand a word of what's going on. Still we made it safe and sound, which was just as well as we needed to keep calm for Israeli security. I'd been to Israel before so knew what to expect, but it's difficult not to get a bit irritated, **although at least you are safe**.

**Unless you are on a tour the only way to get to Beersheba** – these days, Be'er Sheva – from the airport is by taxi, unless you want to muck about with occasional trains and two or three changes of line, so be prepared to part with about \$100 for the 110 kilometre trip, and a driver who, despite the fact that there is only one hotel in the whole town and it is 11 or 12 stories high, cannot find it. In the end we reached the Golden Tulip around mid-afternoon and had time to settle in and wander about, locating supermarkets and bars, and then visiting the Beersheba War Cemetery. There all the boys from the 4th and 12th who died in the Charge are buried. **So is Lt-Col Leslie Maygar, VC, Boer War veteran, former 2I/C of the 4th and CO of the 8th Light Horse**. Each one of them we gave a poppy. Not long after we returned to the hotel the tour group arrived. It included quite a few 4th/19th old and bold: former COs, **Peter Fernleigh and John Williams, David Purvis, Tony Peart, John Hopkins, Bill Maynard and John Baker**. We all had an enjoyable dinner together before some of us found a convivial little bar nearby and **settled in comfortably for a few hours**.

**During the morning of the 28th April** I hitched a ride with the tour group travelling to the scene of the Charge. It was quite something to stand beneath that old railway bridge, shown in all the photographs and to look back across the fairly flat land covered by the charge, and then to go out to Tel el Saba, Tel Shera as it now is, and to look from the little tower out across the expanse of the gently sloping ground, most of it then stony and uncultivated, **imagining those wild boys galloping flat out**, yelling their heads off as they swooped down on the Turkish trenches. Fairly made the hair stand up on the back of your neck. In the afternoon, all spruced up, sporting regimental ties and black berets we travelled first to the park of the new Light Horse Trail that wends its way from Beersheba to Gaza.

**At this stage we were not keen to go to Gaza, all things considered.** Then on to the Pratt Foundation sponsored Park of the Australian Soldier, and within it the Memorial to the Australian Light Horse. Besides the statue, there is a splendid park, in the very heart of the town, and amongst its main features is a children's playground, one designed to be enjoyed by all kids and **particularly those physically disabled.**



*Pictured at Beersheba on 28 April 2008 (l to r) John Baker, Bill Maynard, Tony Peart (obscured)  
Maj Gen David McLachlan, John Williams, Dr David Holloway and David Purvis (front).*

**The ceremony was terrific**, the guard from the two present day units, 4th/19th PWLH and 12th/16th HRL performed admirably in very hot and trying conditions. Honorary Colonel of 4th/19th, and Victorian President of the RSL, **Major General David McLachlan, AO**, was present and later joined us in a group photograph. The speeches by Governor-General Mike Jeffrey and **Israeli President, Shimon Peres** were impressive and appropriate, and the hospitality of the Pratt Foundation afterwards was, to say the least, thirst quenching. There was more than one member of the touring party reluctant to leave. Who said, as we went, "and now we'll have to pay for the next drinks?" Which we did; after dinner, when it was back to yesterday's bar, **by now running short of imported beers.**

**With the focus of our trip to Israel complete**, and as the touring party left for the Dead Sea and other aspects of Israel, we journeyed - another taxi, another \$100 - to Jerusalem where we spent two days wandering in the Old City, enjoying a bus tour around the whole city and visiting the Jerusalem War Cemetery, where we located another group of **4th Light Horse boys, each of whom received a poppy.**

**In the September edition of Track we will journey with the Holloways to Europe** and relive their experiences in France and Belgium and the **battlefields of the Western Front.**

## **The Victorian Branch Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donors**

Ray Babarikas Bruce Tarran M.R. King

# **CAMBRAI DAY COMMEMORATION DINNER**

**Saturday 21 November 2009  
1900 for 1930 hrs**

Hopkins Barracks Officers/Sergeants Mess  
Puckapunyal

**Guest of Honour  
Major General Craig Orme, AM, CSC  
Head People Capability  
People Strategies & Policy Division**

**Cost:** \$50:00 per head for members  
\$55:00 per head for non members/guests

This function is our premier event for the year and as usual we are providing a quality guest speaker for your enjoyment

**All enquiries to:**  
Daryl Pinner (H) 9359 4520  
Peter Branagan (H) 5793 8171

On Sunday morning enjoy a sumptuous cooked breakfast  
in the Officers Mess outdoor pergola area

**Dress:** Lounge Suit or Reefer Jacket  
Miniatures

**Tickets posted out early September**

RSVP by 09 November 2009

**Accommodation is limited**

## SOCIAL CALENDAR...

Mark your diary now for the **Children's Christmas Party** at the **Diamond Valley Miniature Railway** Lower Eltham Park (Melways reference map 21 H 10). We have booked **Meadmore Junction** (currently undergoing extensive refurbishment) for **Sunday 20 December 2009**.

As usual **Santa is timetabled to arrive by train at Meadmore Junction Station at 1300 hrs**. We have booked our first dedicated special to arrive at the picnic area **at 1100 hrs** with the afternoon service **at 1400 hrs**. Both these trains travel the extensive layout for 30 minutes and have proven very popular with all ranks in the past. If you miss the first boarding don't despair, the special will return to the Junction on the quarter hour for a change over of passengers. **Rod and Sharon Westgarth** put a lot of effort into organising this fun day, so come out to Eltham and **give the kids (from eight to eighty)** a great day out.

Remember **we provide soft drinks and bagged sweets, you provide a suitably wrapped and labelled present for Santa to give to your children**. We also provide **complimentary rail tickets** so you can take the family for a ride on their regularly scheduled trains at any time.

The now traditional **sausage sizzle** gives you the option of not having to pack a picnic lunch. **Rod and Sharon** will be only too happy to flog you a sausage or two!

**Remember** it is a condition of travel on the Diamond Valley Miniature Railway **that all those intending to ride the rails, must wear suitable enclosed footwear**.

**So come along and join the fun on  
Sunday 20 December 2009 from 1000 hrs.**

## AROUND THE ASSOCIATION...

### **RAACA Proposed Restructure – Progress Report**

At the 2008 RAACA Federal Congress a proposal was put to the Congress by the RAAC Corps RSM and the current President of the 1st Armoured Regiment Association. The proposal laid out a proposed path to restructuring the association on a national basis. It encompassed both RAACA state branches and unit associations. The Victorian Branch undertook to look at the proposal and its effects on the state branch and be in a position to report to the **RAACA Federal Congress on 10 October 2009**.

**At the time of writing the following actions have been taken:**

- a. RAACA Vic Branch formed a sub committee including Peter Still, Peter Branagan, Vin Brennan and Rod Westgarth.
- b. A timetable for reporting has been agreed to by the state branch committee.
- c. A request for comment from unit associations and individual members was put out in the December 2008 issue of Track.
- d. The 1st Armoured Regiment, 4/19 PWLH and 8/13 VMR Associations have been contacted to provide input to the discussions.
- e. An internal draft of a Transition Implementation Plan (TIP) has been produced.

**Next steps to be taken prior to the 2009 Federal Congress include:**

- a. Continue to receive comments/input from relevant organisations/individuals.
- b. Finish the draft of the TIP.
- c. Present the draft TIP to the Vic Branch committee and members and local unit associations.
- d. Present the draft TIP to the RAACA Federal Executive on 10 October 2009.

**Your input is welcome at any time!**

Ralph Eldridge, gentleman, soldier, sportsman, father and family man and, above all a great Australian. So wrote Major General C.M.I. 'Sandy' Pearson, AO, DSO, OBE, MC in his foreword to David Holloway's biographical tribute to the late Brigadier Ralph Trevelyan Eldridge, OBE. This tribute, simply entitled Eldridge is a fitting testimonial to the life and service of a quintessential Australian. Your association has a limited quantity of books available and are offering them at the bargain price of \$30:00 including postage and packaging.

Rush your order to Godfrey Camenzuli at P.O. Box 547 Coburg, Vic, 3058 or email him at glc.14@bigpond.com get in early and don't miss out on this bargain. A limited number of signed copies by the author Dr. David Holloway are still available.

## ANZAC Week in Melbourne...

Vice President Vin Brennan represented the association at the Austin/Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital ANZAC Day commemoration on 24 April. He reported that the ceremony was held in the Memorial Gardens at the old Repatriation Hospital, an area that has been developed over many years and is quite serene. Large granite stones are placed throughout the area with plaques dedicated to the RAN, Army, RAAF and Merchant Navy placed on them. The ceremony was conducted by the CEO Austin Hospital and several chaplains and was well attended by over 300 patients and visitors. An additional segment of the Spiritual Journeys Stained Glass Window was unveiled along with two new plaques – Greece and Crete ANZAC Corps 1941 and Gallipoli and the Royal Australian Navy.

President Daryl Pinner reported that our regular numbers were achieved on the Melbourne ANZAC Day parade and a number of members and friends enjoyed the hospitality at the Cricket Club Hotel in South Melbourne for lunch after the march.

On Sunday 19 April, the association was represented at both Coburg and Darebin RSLs for their pre ANZAC Day commemorative activities.



*(Photo by T. Murphy)*

*Pictured before the March are (l to r) Ron Lavars, Terry Cuthbert and Peter Martin*