

THE EXHIBITOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ARMY MUSEUM OF SOUTH Australia



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History Lunch May 2024.....

Remember Long Tan!

Inside this issue

Museum volunteers and GRes staff pitched in to plan and deliver another successful lunch to 130 visitors to the Museum during the SA History Festival. We had three excellent speakers chaired by Helen Meyer who spoke about our Keswick Barracks—Past and Present. Annette Summers AO RFD spoke about the Repatriation Hospital and its staff, James Bateman spoke about the buildings and their historical use with John Spencer OAM RFD rounding up with some anecdotal stories about life at Keswick during the 60's and 70's.



Patrons at the lunch enjoying the talks.

Our thanks go to Darian and his helpers for the preparation and serving of the meal, some able bodied volunteers who set up the hall and reconditioned the stores after the lunch and to the GRes staff for their support. Patrons were invited to view the exhibits in the Museum after the lunch. As we are continually updating the various displays we encourage visitors to visit the Museum every year or two to see the changes. Our website will advise you of the lunch to be held in May 2025.

By Nick Williams, Editor



Our speakers and chair.

The History Lunch helps the Museum in its fund raising to support the upgrading of exhibits and the purchase of materials to support the displays.

Our Saracen comes alive!.....



Well, it has taken a lot longer than originally planned, but the interactive exhibit in the

Saracen armoured vehicle is now in a condition where we can say that it is "finished". The main reason for the delay is the fact that earlier modifications to the vehicle (including the removal of the roof hatch) resulted in a number of serious leaks that had to be identified and fixed. Several kilos of pitch, putty and silastic combined with a good many attempts finally reduced the leaks to an acceptable level.

All that aside, the exhibit provides an inside view of a venerable Saracen armoured personnel carrier. With a crew

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2024 ACTIVITIES

Veterans Health Week

Oct 2024 date TBA

Keswick Barber



Pay week Thurs
& Frid 7.45—
11.30am

Mon & Tues in
off week 7.45—
11.30am

\$20 per person!

Saracen Display

of two (commander and driver) and seating for a section of ten soldiers with weapons and combat gear, the vehicle (and indeed lifestyle) was not for the claustrophobic. Manufactured by Alvis (a British car and engineering company) between 1952 and 1976, the FV603 Saracen has been used by a variety of operators around the world and is still in use in secondary roles in some countries. Australia purchased and operated thirty of these vehicles (serial numbers 115361 through



Oscar Wayland and Greg Rosser using the buttons to tell the story of the Saracen.

115390) in the period mid 1950's to mid 1960's until they were superseded by the American M113A1 Armoured Personnel Carrier. This particular vehicle is owned by the South Australia Mounted Rifle Association. The narratives for the push buttons were recorded by Brig. Ellis (Oscar) Wayland and provide a very interesting, firsthand insight



into the characteristics, capabilities, foibles and limitations of the vehicle. I recommend that you pause on your way to or from the Museum and have a look/listen. My

sincere thanks to SAMRA, Oscar Wayland, Bob Fraser, John Claxton, Graham Janz and his team for their help in making the idea a reality.

Please enjoy the exhibit.

Secrets unearthed in the Uniforms Department....

While checking through the Len Opie uniform collection Lisette discovered some very strange lumps and crumbs in the pocket of one of his jackets. Speculation was that perhaps it was something metallic which had oxidised and possibly hazardous. Rolf (our resident archaeologist) very bravely put his hand into the pocket and removed a black lump.

"It's jellybeans!" he announced! The glucose content of jelly beans is well known and they may have been to give him an energy boost, but more likely Len had a sweet tooth and a fondness of jelly beans in particular.

From the Uniforms Crew



Dikko.....



useum Work Experience 2024.....

GRes staff and volunteers hosted 4 work experience students in a week of training and development in the operation of the Army Museum. At the end of training the students were presented with certificates of achievement and they were asked to prepare a presentation on their experience at the Museum. Presentations were delivered in

the Officers Mess to both staff and some parents as the audience. The students were grateful for the time and effort put in by staff at the Museum in assisting them to pursue their interest in military history. Maybe Defence will see a recruit of two from this type of initiative?



9 Brigade Exhibit—Naval, Military and Air Force Club...

AMOSA was commissioned to provide an exhibition on the Army Birthday on the night of 1 March for a cocktail party held at the prestigious Army, Navy and Air Force Club in the CBD. The brief was to provide an exhibition of army soldiers in South Australia through the ages with an indigenous representation present.

After a reconnaissance of the venue, it was decided to provide 4 mannequins and 2 portable display cabinets. The display cabinets were to feature artifacts from PTE Russell Bosisto, a SA soldier from 10 Bn AIF who was killed in France in 1917 and posted MIA until his remains were discovered by a French farmer in 1998. One display cabinet would feature actual artifacts recovered with PTE Bosisto and the other would cover his reinternment ceremony. The mannequins would cover the following:



a. WWI soldier in Pattern 1908 field gear and peaked cap, representing PTE Bosisto as he would have looked at the time of his death.

b. WWII Australian Women's Land Army dress uniform

c. Vietnam – Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) uniform belonging to CAPT Len Opie, a SA soldier who started his military career in WWII in New Guinea and went on to do 2 tours of Korea, 3 tours of Vietnam with AATTV, and 1 tour of Kashmir with the UN before becoming a volunteer with AMOSA in his twilight years.

d. Current – soldier dressed in latest issue Australian Multicam Combat Uniform (AMCU) and Soldier Combat Ensemble (SCE).

Having indigenous representation was a little trickier, as we had nothing on hand. Fortunately, we managed to source a display specifically on indigenous servicemen which could be borrowed from History SA!

The overall display elicited a good response and the Curatorial Team look forward to its next challenge!



By Adrian Li, Curator

The Repat

The Beginnings of the Repatriation General Hospital started during WW1 at Keswick Barracks. Originally called No 7 Australian General Hospital and it is the building to left as you come into the Barracks through the main gate off Anzac Highway. Then called Bay Road. The two storied building was built in 1913 as a hospital. It was presumed that only fit young men would be patients, so there was no lift, toilet facilities or running water on the top floor.



Repat Hospital 1915 taken from the Parade Ground.

As WW1 progressed there were a rising number of wounded men returning to Adelaide, especially from the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, and the hospital officially became 7 AGH. The building itself was too small so buildings across the Bay Road were allocated to 7 AGH to manage the influx of patients. Also tents and buildings around the hospital were used, including the stables.



The first Commanding Officer of the 7AGH was Dr Richard Sanders Rogers he remained the CO from 1914 to 1919, he had served in the South African War. The first matron was Miss AM Hancock RRC (Royal Red Cross) AANS, and the first Principal Medical Officer was Dr Herbert Henry Ernest Russell.



*"The Staff" - Standing: S Sgt Bennett, Misses Roberts, Shepherd, Phillips, Ashton, Smith, Col Grant.
Sitting: Lieut. Milliken, Matron Hancock RRC, Colonel Russell OBE, Colonel Rogers, Major Rice.*

After the war in 1921, 7AGH became the Repatriation Hospital Keswick, which followed the Repatriation Act of 1917-1918. The Australian Imperial Force (AIF) administration had virtually ceased to exist, and the Repatriation Department progressively took over the administration of all military hospitals. The Act enabled many servicemen, women, and their families to be assisted through the Repatriation system for health and other pensions. From the beginning of the Repat system, it was determined to ensure that it was seen as a civilian organisation. As such the day before the change over from 7 AGH to the Repat at Keswick an instruction was sent out that said,

As the Administration of the Repatriation Hospital Keswick will be conducted on a civilian basis as from 1/4/21 you are advised that from that date the practice of treating ex-commissioned officers in separate wards will be discontinued and no discrimination between rank and file will be permitted.

By 1924 the RGH Keswick had a formal establishment of 100 beds and there were approximately 100 repat patients in other repat facilities, including, Parkside mental hospital, Lady Galway Red Cross Hospital and tubercular patients at Bedford Park and Myrtle Bank.

It was clear that the accommodation at Keswick was not going to be sufficient and in 1925 there was a detailed plan to establish a new hospital at Myrtle Bank and then at Kapara, which was a convalescent hospital during the war, but these did not eventuate.



There was much discord between the Army and the Repat administration at Keswick about the use of buildings. The hospital needed to be extended into buildings under the control of defence and not the repat administration. Confusion reigned with buildings given and then taken away. Some years later a fence was erected to demarcate the two components of Keswick.

During the 1930s the depression led to a consolidation of repat services and Myrtle Bank closed, and the tubercular patients were relocated to Keswick. Which caused major upsets at Keswick, first they eyed off the Red Cross Recreation Hut for the patients, but the Red Cross refused to give it up and so the resident doctor, a

Repat (cont)....

Dr Sargent, gave up his quarters for the patients (he was then housed across the road) and then more room was made by the Matron giving up the sewing room. Myrtle Bank was then redesignated as an Old Soldiers Home and opened in October 1933.

Also, early in 1933 a fire destroyed the administration office, massage (physio) and occupational therapy rooms as well as much equipment and records. The buildings were all tin sheds and were replaced with additional facilities with a new brick building.

Before the outbreak of WW2 in 1939, there was a demand for a new hospital as the facility at Keswick was clearly too small and insufficient. In 1939 it was agreed that an extra 50 beds would be required and a further 150 in 1940. A site was selected for the new hospital at the corner of Goodwood Road and Daws Road on the Cudmore Estate. The cost of the new hospital was to cost £135,000. This hospital was now to be administered by the Army during wartime and revert back to the repatriation system after the war.

During WW2 the hospital was renamed 105 Adelaide Military Hospital and was eventually called 105 MH. But the beginnings of the new hospital were not smooth. In 1941 the hospital beds were intended to rise from 170 beds to 272 beds but in March 1942 there were only 90 patients. They needed to increase to 476 beds which caused great stress on the staff and more personnel were called up. The CO of the hospital, now army, LTCOL Frederick (Freddy) Le Messurier, was appalled to be told to house the NCOs and male patients in tents and for them to mess in tents. In April that year new buildings were erected to take an extra 136 beds, but a further 300 patients would be placed in tents. During the war many doctors and nurses either were staff at the hospital and indeed patients, and many of them have names remembered today. I knew several personally and were close friends like LTCOL Edith Butler and sister Gwen (Hendy) Henderson. After the war, the hospital reverted

back to the Repatriation system and became the hospital we knew up until a few years ago. The hospital at Daws Road because of its design was the best hospital in my view for low infection and low re infection rates and conducive to healing, mental and physical, owing to the access of gardens immediately outside every ward. I am proud to say that I was on a committee with Steven Marshall and Stephen Wade to look at ways to save the Repat. Because of that committee and because they got into government, we did not lose the repat but have it in a different form. Although I read in the paper that they are now adding more beds to the facility.



What about the hospital at Keswick. During the WW2 it remained a small hospital facility but after the war it ceased to exist as a hospital with patients. South Australia essentially became an Army Reserve state. 3rd General Hospital was set up at Warradale Barracks with 3rd Field Ambulance. The hospital and ambulance were training facilities for military professionals like me to be used in a time of need. In the late 1980s 3 General hospital became 3 Forward General hospital and was moved to Keswick where it still remains with a variety of different names. It has only been deployed once since WW2 as a total unit and that was for six months to East Timor in 1999/2000. Today it is called 3rd Health Battalion (3HB). I think others like me are sad to see the identity of a unit lost, but in today's world it can no longer be, and units are now given a functional name and provide a service nationally to support the defence of Australia.

By Annette Summers AO RFD

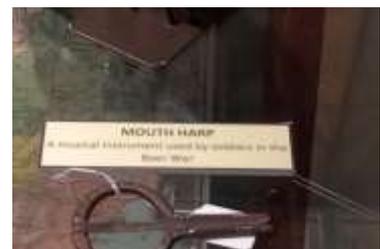
Mouth Harp or Jew's Harp.....

Whilst on my Wednesday guide duties some weeks ago, an elderly gentleman approached me and if I any further info on the mouth harp that is on display in the Boer War cabinet, our volunteer was unable to help the gentleman. He then kindly explained to me that it was used in Boer War conflict. He explained it was used as a form of communication or signal for movement. This information is yet to be confirmed Boer War Historians.

The Jew's harp, also known as jaw harp, or mouth harp, is

a lamellophone instrument, consisting of a flexible metal or bamboo tongue or reed attached to a frame. On display at the Army Museum.

From a Wednesday volunteer guide



useum
Photos at the Museum



New post box from July 2024



The Champ is finished!



JB and his new 'recruit', Barnie.



The birthday boys! Neil, Peter & Adrian July 2024



Museum thetrette Austin Champ below



Gatling Gun (Replica) Blackie below

