



File No.

Part  
No.

**FILE**

FILE  
419/112/27

419/112/027

RDA 11104,

Archival Action

## HISTORICAL RECORDS DONATIONS BY RICHARD (R) WOERNER

Richard WOERNER



- Indicate next movement and forward file to the Registry.
- Advise the Registry if file is passed direct to another Officer.

Destroy

Review

Retain

| Folio No.               | Referred to     | Date            | Cleared and Date | Folio No. | Referred to | Date | Cleared and Date | Folio No. | Referred to | Date | Cleared and Date |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|------|------------------|-----------|-------------|------|------------------|
| M Piggott               | 26/8            | 27/8            |                  |           |             |      |                  |           |             |      |                  |
| <del>R. Gilchrist</del> | <del>27/8</del> | <del>10/9</del> |                  |           |             |      |                  |           |             |      |                  |
| D. HAWKEN               | 17/10/89        | 21/11/89        |                  |           |             |      |                  |           |             |      |                  |
| P/A                     | 6/1/89          |                 |                  |           |             |      |                  |           |             |      |                  |
| TIM ROBERTS             | 8/2/06          | 11/8/06         |                  |           |             |      |                  |           |             |      |                  |
| PA                      |                 |                 |                  |           |             |      |                  |           |             |      |                  |

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Ref: 419/112/27

9 September 1987

Major C J Taylor  
Army Office  
Department of Defence  
Russell Offices  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Major Taylor

Thank you for your letter of 21 August 1987 enclosing the nominal roll forwarded by Mr Bessell-Browne. The Memorial has written a separate letter of appreciation to the donor.

Yours sincerely

RG

Ron Gilchrist  
Curator, Private Records  
for Director



Ref: 419/112/27

9 September 1987

Mr I J Bessell-Browne  
67 Esplanade  
NEDLANDS WA 6009

Dear Mr Bessell-Browne

We wish to acknowledge formally receipt of your generous donation of records to the Australian War Memorial.

The nominal roll pertaining to the service of the 6th Battery, 2/3rd Field Regiment, AIF will be accessioned into the Private Records collection at PR 87/173 and, with your permission, will be made available to researchers.

The nominal roll will be a valuable addition to the collection. The Memorial does not hold substantial records related to the campaign in Crete. The special circumstances under which the material was returned forty six years later will be of particular interest.

In order to facilitate our accessioning procedures, we would be grateful if you could complete the attached forms. The blue receipt copy should be returned together with the Private Records Schedule in the free post envelope provided. The white receipt is your record of donation and should be retained. The three questions which appear at the bottom of the Private Records Schedule are most important as they enable us to administer the collection in accordance with the wishes of the donor. Please consider your responses to these queries carefully.

A separate letter of acknowledgement has been forwarded to the Army office.

Thank you for making these records available to the Australian War Memorial.

Yours sincerely

RG

Ron Gilchrist  
Curator, Private Records  
for Director





Australian War Memorial

GPO Box 345 Canberra ACT 2601 Telephone (062) 43 4211

# Incoming receipt

Incoming receipt ..... 22733

Interim receipt .....

File no. .... 419/112/27

Order no. ....

Accession no. .... PR87/173

The historical material listed and described below and/or in the attached schedule(s) has been received by the Australian War Memorial subject to the conditions printed on the back of this receipt.

Owner:

Surname ..... RESSELL-BROWNE ..... Mr ☒ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Ms ☐ Other .....

Given names ..... I. J. ....

Address ..... 67 Esplanade .....

..... NEDLANDS W.A. 6009 ..... Telephone .....

Collection(s) ... Private Records .....

Material relates to .....

Description (if applicable, see also attached schedule(s) ) ..... Nominal Roll of the  
6th Bty, 2/3rd Fld Regt, 2nd AIF, WWII. ....

Physical condition .....

Restrictions or other comments .....

Acquired by:

Gift ☒ Exchange ☐ Transfer ☐ Copying ☐ Recording ☐ Purchase ☐ Price A\$ .....

Received by ..... Ron Gilchrist .....

on behalf of the Australian War Memorial ..... Date ... 26 August 1987 .....

## Acknowledgement by owner

IMPORTANT: Please sign this receipt and return the blue copy in the "Freepost" envelope provided.

The owner/agent/transferring agency acknowledges that the historical material described on this receipt and/or in the attached schedule(s) has been deposited with the Australian War Memorial subject to the conditions on the back of this receipt, unless varied as specified under restrictions or other comments above and/or in the attached schedule(s).

Signature ..... Date .....

Owner copy: white Return copy: blue File copy: yellow Curator copy: green Registrar copy: pink





## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

ARMY OFFICE

RUSSELL OFFICES  
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600

A86-3425

IN REPLY QUOTE:

21<sup>st</sup> August 1987

Mr Michael Piggott *M.P.*  
Senior Curator Written Records  
Australian War Memorial  
GPO Box 345  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Piggott

Enclosed is the Nominal Roll of the 6th Battery, 2/3rd Field Regiment 2nd AIF dated the 20th May 1941. Attached also is correspondence which explains how this interesting item was returned to Australia from West Germany. The ex-Commanding Officer of the 6th Battery, Mr I.J. Bessell-Browne, requested that these items be sent to the War Memorial for safe keeping.

During our telephone conversation of the 13th August you indicated that you would write to Mr Bessell-Browne. I'm sure he would appreciate a note advising the safe arrival of the Roll. His address is:

Mr I.J. Bessell-Browne  
67 Esplanade  
NEDLANDS WA 6009

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Yours faithfully

C.J. TAYLOR  
Major  
for Director of Coordination - Army

*Helen, Ron  
Please recommend action -  
a personal donation from Warner?  
It must be receipted & acknowledged  
& accessioned.*

G3010188 D03





## Enclosures:

1. Letter from Mr Richard Woerner to the Australian Ambassador, FRG dated 25th February 1987 (and translation)
2. Letter from Colonel D.L.H. Buring, Defence Attache, Bonn to Director of Coordination - Army dated 27th February 1987
3. RSL Circular dated 8th April 1987
4. Letter from Mr I.J. Bessell-Browne dated 17th June 1987 in response to RSL Newspaper item
5. Letter from COL D.L.H. Burning to Mr I.J. Bessell-Browne dated 3rd July 1987
6. Letter from Mr I.J. Bessell-Browne to Mr Richard Woerner dated 29th July 1987 (and translation)
7. Letter from Mr I.J. Bessell-Browne to Major C.J. Taylor dated 3rd August 1987 enclosing original of 6th Battery Nominal Roll dated 20-5-41



25. FEB. 87

Richard Woerner

8751 Sulzbach, den 20. Febr. 87

Kurmainzer Ring 41

An den Botschafter  
Exzellenz Ashin<sup>w</sup>  
der Australischen Botschaft  
Godesberger Allee 107  
5300 Bonn 2

Sehr verehrte Exzellenz Ashin<sup>w</sup>,

gestatten Sie mir, daß ich Ihnen eine Sache vortrage, deren Anlaß viele Jahre zurückliegt.

Es handelt sich um folgendes:

Am 20. Mai 1941 begann der Kretafeldzug. Ich war damals Bordfunker bei einer Transportstaffel, die Fallschirmjäger über dem Flugplatz Malemes absetzte.

Im Verlauf der weiteren Ereignisse flogen wir auch andere Flugplätze auf Kreta an, so auch Rethimnon. Dort kamen wir in ein Zeltlager einer australischen Einheit, das erst kurz zuvor verlassen wurde. In einem Zelt fand ich eine Personalaufstellung, datiert vom 21.5.41. Diese, sowie ein Buch über Trigonometrie nahm ich mit.

In den letzten Tagen fand ich zufällig die Aufstellung und das Buch wieder.

Meine Bitte ist nun, ob es mit Hilfe Ihrer freundlichen Unterstützung möglich ist, die damalige Einheit ausfindig zu machen, damit diese Aufstellung dem Kriegstagebuch beigegeben werden kann.

Besonders freuen würde ich mich, wenn der Besitzer des Buches ermittelt werden könnte und er noch leben würde.

In der Hoffnung, daß Sie meine Bitte unterstützen werden, möchte ich mich schon vorab sehr bedanken.

Mit ergebensten Grüßen

Richard Woerner



Translation of Herr Woerner's letter dated 25.2.87

Allow me to put before you a topic whose origin lies many years ago. It is about the following:

The Crete campaign began on 20 May 1941. At the time I was an aircrew radio operator in a transport squadron which dropped paratroopers at the Melemes airfield.

In the course of subsequent events we flew into other airfields on Crete, including Rethimnon. There we arrived at the recently vacated tented camp of an Australian unit. In one tent I found a nominal roll dated 21 May 1941. I took this away, as well as a book on trigonometry. A few days ago, quite coincidentally, I found the roll and the book again.

My request now is whether it is possible with your friendly assistance to identify the former unit so that this nominal roll can be included in the war diary.

I would be particularly happy if the owner of the book could be ascertained and if he is still alive.

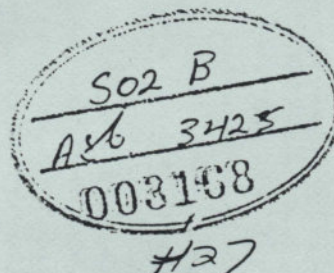
In the hope that you will support my request, I thank you in advance.



## MINUTE PAPER

Reference 822/13/10

Subject: TRACING OF EX-SERVICEMEN



DCOORD-A (G-3-41)

For Information: PRLO-A (G-3-46)

1. The Ambassador here has asked me to assist with the following matter.
2. A Mr. Richard Woerner, who lives in Sulzbach am Main, has dug out of his belongings two items that he picked up in Crete in 1941. He found them in a camp site which had recently been vacated by an Australian unit. We gather he wants to return the items to their owners.
3. The first is a school text book - Colville and Anderson, A Numerical Trigonometry, Dymock's 1933, with the owner's name clearly inscribed inside the front cover:  
  
NX 3214 J.C. Allen  
F Troop, 1st Battery  
2/5 Reg, 2nd AIF.
4. The second is a handwritten nominal roll dated 20 May 41 of the 6th Battery (the regiment was not shown). It lists 162 names, with numbers, ranks and initials. The first four names on it are:  
  
WX8 MAJ I.J. Bessell-Browne  
WX9 CAPT J.B. Fitzhardinge  
VX211 CAPT C.A. Mott  
NX 3174 WO2 W.F. Walsh.

I suspect the BSM was the most likely minder of such a roll.

5. Could you therefore help find out for me whether these people (particularly Mr. Allen) are still alive, and what their addresses are. Success in this matter could lead to an item of news.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D.L.H. Buring'.

(D.L.H. BURING)  
COL  
Defence Attaché

27 February 1987



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

THE RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE  
OF AUSTRALIA

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

National President:  
SIR WILLIAM KEYS, O.B.E., M.C.

National Treasurer:  
JOHN S. SMITH

National Secretary:  
I.J. GOLLINGS



"The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance"

# 32  
Address all Mail:  
G.P.O. BOX 303,  
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2601

Telegrams and Cables:  
"HELLES", CANBERRA  
Phone: 48-7199, 48-7512  
Telex: AA61431

In Reply Please Quote:

IJG:BN  
B63/87

8 April 1987

LIST B - TO ALL STATE SECRETARIES

TRACING OF EX-SERVICEMEN

The Defence Attache at the Australian Embassy in Bonn, FRG, is trying to help a German ex-serviceman who wishes to return some items belonging to Australian ex-servicemen, which he found in Crete in 1941. The Australian ex-servicemen are:

NX3214 J.C. Allen, F Troop, 1st Battery,  
2/5 Regt 2 AIF.

|         |                           |   |             |
|---------|---------------------------|---|-------------|
| WX8     | Major I.J. Bessell-Browne | ) |             |
|         |                           | ) |             |
| WX9     | Captain J.B. Fitzhardinge | ) |             |
|         |                           | ) | 6TH Battery |
| VX211   | Captain C.A. Mott         | ) |             |
|         |                           | ) |             |
| NX 3174 | WO2 W.F. Walsh            | ) |             |

If any of these persons can be traced, would you ask them to write to:

Major C.J. Taylor  
Directorate of Coordination - Army  
Department of Defence - Army Office  
Russell Offices (G-3-39)  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Yours sincerely

IAN GOLLINGS  
National Secretary



# 43

386 2289

67 Esplanade,  
Nedlands, W.A. 6009

17<sup>th</sup> June '87.

Dear Major Taylor, Regarding the attached cutting from the R.S.L. 'MUFTI', I am unable to recall any items lost by me on Crete except a long barrel Smith & Wesson .45 and a pair of Zeiss binoculars. (These were my personal property and as they were brought back by my father

after World War I. they would have some sentimental value for my family.) However whatever the items may be which the German ex-service man wishes to return, they will be received with thanks and in the best spirit of cameraderie.

Sincerely,  
H. Bessell-Browne

EX - WX8. MAJ. I.J. BESSELL-BROWNE  
2/3 FD. REGT. 2/A.I.F.

Items from  
Crete

THE Defence Attache at the Australian Embassy in Bonn, West Germany, is trying to help a German ex-serviceman who wishes to return some items belonging to Australian ex-servicemen, which he found in Crete in 1941.

The Australian ex-servicemen are:  
NX3214 J.C. Allen, F. Troop, 1st Battery, 2/5 Regt 2 AIF, WX8 Major I.J. Bessell-Browne, WX9 Captain J.B. Fitzhardinge and NX 3174 WO2 W.F. Walsh of 6th Battery.

If any of these persons can be traced, would you ask them to write to: Major C.J. Taylor, Directorate of Co-ordination - Army Department of Defence - Army Office, Russell Offices (G-3-39) Canberra, ACT, 2600.

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AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY

Telephone: BONN (02 28) 8103120  
Telex: 8 85 466 AUSEM D

OFFICE OF THE DEFENCE ATTACHE  
GODESBERGER ALLEE 107  
5300 BONN 2  
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

In reply quote: 822/13/10

3 July 1987

Mr. I.J. Bessell-Browne  
67 Esplanade  
Nedlands, WA, 6009

Dear Mr. Bessell-Brown,

As you probably know from Army Office, the Ambassador here received a letter from Mr. Richard Woerner, of Kurmainzer Ring 41, 8751 Sulzbach, FRG, passing on two items he had collected in Crete in 1941. One of these was a battery roll of the 6th battery (regiment not shown), which he found in a recently vacated tent at the Reithimnon airfield.

Mr. Woerner asked that the copy of the roll be added to your old unit's War Diary, which I presume is at the Australian War Memorial. I felt it might be appropriate to do that through you.

I have included the battery roll, and copies of Mr. Woerner's correspondence.

Since I understand Army Office passed on to you a copy of my initial request on this topic, if you have any clues on Mr. J.C. Allen, they would also be appreciated.

These snippets from the past have been one of the minor but fascinating parts of my work here. I hope this one brings back interesting memories for you.

Yours sincerely,

(D.L.H. BURING)  
Colonel  
Defence Attaché



67 Esplanade  
NEDLANDS 6009  
Western Australia

Nedlands, 29 July 1987

Herrn  
Richard Woerner  
Kurmainzer Ring 41  
8751 SULZBACH  
Bundesrepublik Deutschland

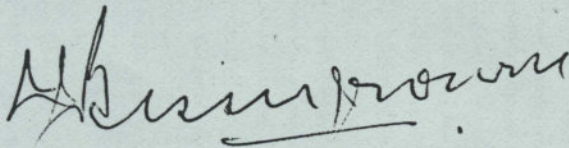
Sehr geehrter Herr Woerner,

Ich war der Kommandierende Offizier der 6. Batterie, 2/3 Feldregiment der Königlich Australischen Artillerie in Griechenland und Kreta im April/Mai 1941.

Durch die Australische Botschaft in Bonn wurde mir die Personal-aufstellung, die Sie in Rethymnon gefunden haben, zugestellt.

Wir wissen Ihre zuvorkommende Handlung sehr zu schätzen und sind Ihnen zu aufrichtigem Dank verpflichtet.

Hochachtungsvoll

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ian Bessell-Browne', with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

Ian Bessell-Browne



67 ESPLANADE  
NEDLANDS 6009  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

3.8.87

HERRN RICHARD WOERNER  
KURMAINZER RING 41  
8751 SULZBACH  
BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND

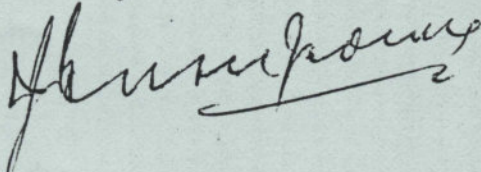
Dear Herrn Woerner,

TRANSLATION.

I was the officer commanding 6. Battery. 2/3 Field Regiment.  
Royal Australian Artillery in Greece and Crete in April/May  
1941 and I have received through the Australian Embassy in  
Bonn, the Nominal Roll which you found at Rethymnon.

Your friendly action in returning this document is  
appreciated by us all and I do sincerely thank you.

Yours truly



IAN BESSELL-BROWNE



67 ESPLANADE  
NEDLANDS 6009  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

3.8.87

MAJOR C J TAYLOR  
DEPT OF DEFENCE  
RUSSELL OFFICES  
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2600

Dear Major Taylor,

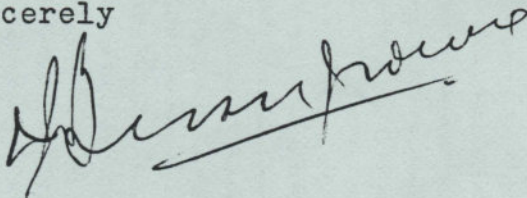
Enclosed is the original copy of a Nominal Roll of 6 Bty  
2/3 Fld. Regt. returned by the German ex-serviceman Richard  
Woerner, through the Australian Embassy in Bonn; also  
relevant correspondence.

It names the members who reached Crete from Greece\* and is  
dated 20.5.41 - the day before the German airborne invasion,  
so is of great interest to the Regt. Assn. for whom photo  
copies are retained.

I believe it will also interest the War historians and should  
be added to the Regt. War Diary.

May I have your assistance in ensuring that it reaches the  
proper hands.

Sincerely



IAN BESSELL-BROWNE

\* AND REMAINED THERE TO DEFEND IT.