

Zegen on
28/6/83

Question 1

Bill joined the army, what was then called the Militia about 1940 I think. He transferred to the 2ND A.I.F. in June 1941 & I joined the A.I.F. the same time. My regimental number was WX14294. Bills WX14368. Bill went to the 10TH light Horse Reg. Later 10TH Armoured Reg., They stayed in W.A. for a long time, then went to Pucapunyaal camp in Victoria. I believe their gear was being loaded on a ship to go to Malaya when Singapore fell & they stayed at Pucka. He became a member of unit 2ND 4TH Armcd. Reg. Wick General Grant 30 Ton tanks & small Gybensen Diesel light tanks,

2ND Pent,

I went to Naval base camp for a fortnight & then to Northam, & became a member of the 13TH Reinforce ment to the 2ND / 32ND Infantry Battalion then fighting in Tobruk. On the 7TH November 1941 we boarded the "Queen Elizabeth" liner in Gage roads. (what a magnificent piece of work. (85000 tons) & I was very sad when she was burnt cut & cut up for scrap in Hong Kong harbour some years ago)

And sailed for Port Tewfik, in
the Middle East. We camped at a
place called Ismalia, ^{IN PALESTINE} & were
attached to the 9th Division, the 6th
Division was also in Egypt. The
2/32nd was pulled out of Tobruk
for a rest & rebuilding. It had a
member in James Gordon who won
a VC. in Syria some months before.
In my tent was Talbot Gordon
Jim's younger brother who joined
with me, & Jimmy came to
see him one day, & it was
great. Then early in March 1942, the
powers that be cut in half all
reinforcements to the 9th Div. sent
one half to the 6th Div & left
the rest to the 9th Div. I was one
of those for the 6th Div & was
sent to the 2/3rd Pioneer Battalion
The Japs were menacing Aussie &
the 6th Div was sent home. The
9th Div went on to make History
at El Alamain under Montgomery.
Talbot Gordon was with many
other of the ~~chaps~~ I joined
with, & killed at El Alamain, &
right now believe it or not I
have tears in my eyes. We went
back to Aussie on an armed
Yankee Merchant Cruiser "USS. West Point"
of 28000 Tons. & there were 6000
troops on board!! & arrived at

Free mantle about 28th March 42. We went on to Sydney & camped at Campbelltown. We then shifted to Queensland & from there I got a transfer to Bill's 2/4th Amid, up at Pucka. We shifted from there to the Narrabri plains in NSW. & stayed there a long time. Changing to Infantry "Matilda" Tanks of 28 Tons top speed 15 M.P.H. we trained with them & left for New Guinea in January 1945. on the "Westralia." Arriving at Madang on the North coast we set up camp. then a few months later we shipped off to Solomon Islands arriving at Terekina on the South Coast of Bougainville. Terekina was held by the Japs, & we took over from them & with Aussie Infantry began to push down the Buin Road & we were still pushing down there when they dropped the Atomic bomb on Hiroshima & the end of war began. Bill was sent home before me, & was a circus again when I was discharged at Karakatak on 8th January 1946. I guess some of this is useful to you.

but Pick out what you want.

P.S. Although Both of us were taught to drive several types of tanks, scout cars, trucks, semi's, operate radios, Morse code etc etc. neither of us rose above the rank of Trooper. (Equivalent to infantry private.)
(Dumkoffs !!)

Quest 3. Kathleen Maud Nichols was a trainee ~~was~~ nurse at Mount Hospital Perth. Joyce Grose was also there & she lived at Cannington. Kath was a friend of Joyce's & she used to stay at Joyce's place a lot & go to the local dances. We met at the Cannington Agricultural hall one dance night.

Quest 4. Between 1938 & 41. Bill & myself used to knock around with a fair crowd of others at Queens Park. Peg & Joan Scott joined this mob & that's how they met. Going to local & Perth dances & local do's.

Quest 5. Kath's birthday 28 May 1927.
Maurice at St Peter's Church. Vic Park
on 13. January 1951.

Quest 6.

When first married we lived at Queens
Park for a short while. Then
shifted to Northam for 9 months.
From there to Bunbury.

Quest 7

Joined P.M.C. (New Telescom) on
22ND February 1971
Retired on 7TH October 1982,
11 years 7 months 15 days.

Dear Carol & Alan.

Hope you are both
well, & of course Melanie. Hope
the info provided will be of some
use for your family tree, &
apologies for not providing it sooner
but seemed to always be putting
it off to play golf!!! or do
nothing.

We are keeping well &
hope it stays that way. Won \$38,000
in lotto last week so am in
the money.

Best regards to you all.
Bet & Kath.

X X X

Armoured heroes

Australian tanks had a bloody birth

WHEN Australians these days talk of waiting Matilda they are referring to that jolly swagman humpbacked fellow whom Banjo Paterson wrote so poignantly, but the Matilda the men of the 4th Australian Armoured Brigade talked about in World War Two was something much more menacing than a tramp's swag.

The Matildas they became so attached to were the 25 tonne British designed infantry tanks which they used in the war in the Pacific.

Australian armoured regiments these days are highly mechanised, but our country's introduction to this type of warfare was a much more humble and bitter affair.

Our troops had their first experience of tank support in 1917 when the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade was assisted by one British tank company when it attacked a 4500 metre stretch of the Hindenburg Line near Bullecourt.

Lives lost

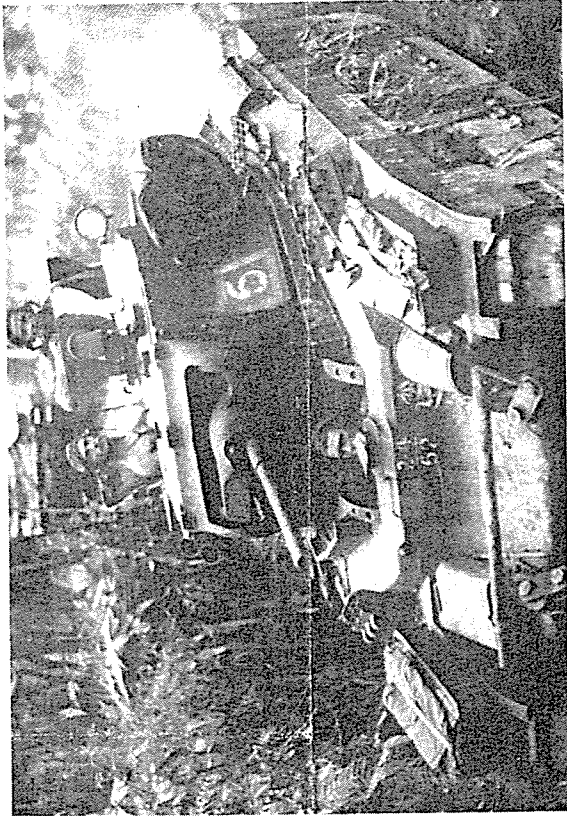
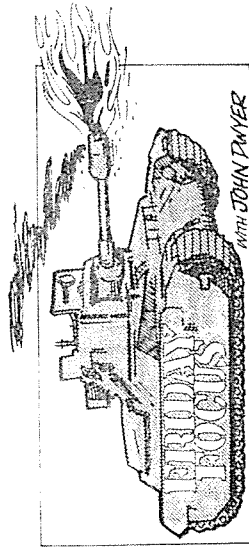
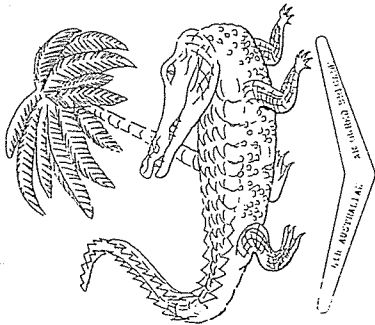
Sadly, the Australians lost 2250 officers and men out of 3000 and as a result the 4th division would never again rely on tanks, an attitude which was maintained in the AIF until 1918.

Australia's next big tank effort came in the battle of Amiens in August, 1918, and this had better results when the corps on a two division front was supported by three tank battalions.

The preparations this time were careful and thorough and took the Germans completely by surprise.

Actually, the Australian military forces had gained their first mechanical unit as early as 1908 in the form of the Australian Volunteer Automobile Corps.

Its personnel were all officers who had to be in possession of "an efficient and reliable automobile" and were required to be qualified drivers.



ABOVE: A Matilda tank of the 2/4th Armoured Regiment crosses the Sindou River on the Buin Peninsula, Bougainville, April, 1945

amount of organisation.

In his book *Australian Armour*, Major-General Ronald Hopkins said an armoured division alone, which included six armoured regiments in two armoured brigades, needed 274 officers, 788 non-commissioned officers and 3390 troopers.

All needed training in driving and maintenance of tracked vehicles, tank gunnery or tank wireless.

Officers, in addition, required a general course in tank tactics and leadership.

Included in the totals were 200 fitters and mechanics, 700 wireless operators and nearly 700 other specialist tradesmen.

A support group of motorised infantry and divisional troops including artillery, engineers, signals, medical, supply and workshop units also formed part of the armoured division and needed specialised armoured training.

It was to carry out this type of training that places like Singleton, Puckapunyal and

2/5th and 2/6th regiments of the 4th Armoured Brigade were stationed at Southport.

These two latter regiments at this time were highly trained and poised to undertake further operations should they be required.

They were to have formed part of an Australian mixed brigade group with the likely task of clearing the Japanese from Java.

Fortunately, although there was a great deal of disappointment among the men, they did not get away to see the action.



General Sir Thomas Blamey inspects the 2/4th Armoured Workshops at Nerang in July, 1944 with Brigadier D. Macarthur Onslow.

100 NAME 11

ROAR OF THE GARDNER HAS FADED.

RATTLE OF TANK TRACKS HAS TOO.

DOWN THE BRIGHT LANE OF OUR MEMORIES.

SOUND FRESH AS THE MORNING DEW.

BARRELS AND BREECH BLOCKS HAVE RUSTED.

IN EXPERT HANDS WITH THEY FEEL.

YEARS JUST GO ON A TURNING.

THERES NO BRAKE YOU CAN PUT ON THAT WHEEL.

LIFELINE, THE "A" SET NOW IS LIFELESS.

SIGNALS WITH THE EARPHONES GIVE OUT.

HANDS THAT ONCE FONDLY CARESSSED THEM.

NOW SINCE SCATTERED, EAST WEST AND SOUTH.

THEIR SEAT IS NOW COLD AND EMPTY.

LEFT AND RIGHT PACKUM ARE STILL.

THEIR HANDS THAT ONCE FIRMLY CONTROLLED THEM.

ARE QUITE ENOUGH OF THEIR FILL.

NEW LEADERS PERCH IS NOW VACANT.

TURRET IS CLOSED DOWN FOR GOOD.

3 GONE WITH THE THOUGHT OH SO SURELY
JOBS DONE, WERE NOW OUT OF THE WOOD.

REPEAT FIRST VERSE

W.L.

THEY WERE TO BE SEEN NOW IN APPEARANCE
WAS SEEN WITH THE WINDS BLOWING OUT
THE WINDS THAT WERE BLOWING THROUGH THE
THE WINDS WERE BLOWING WEST AND SOUTH.

DRIVERS WERE NOW COMING TO ENTRY.
LEFT AND RIGHT WINDS WERE STILL
THE HANDS THAT WERE FINALLY CONTAINED THEM
HARDLY QUITE ENOUGH OF THE REAL.

W.L.

oughty Matildas

Carnarvon Lad ippers "Black Swan"

BUGAINVILLE, May 5—Austrian tanks on the Buin Road in northern Bougainville proved that the destruction of a Japanese 75mm tank yesterday was no fluke by repeating the performance today.

This morning it was the Matilda tank, "Black Swan," skippered by John Marmion, of Carnarvon, that won the duel. The tank, moving along the track ahead of our forward infantry units on an armoured road, was ambushed by the gunners who fired two high-explosive shells at the tank from a distance of 70 ft. The shells struck the tank but did no more damage than to put out of action a light machine-gun.

The "Black Swan's" first shot.

"BLACK SWAN" CREW

CREW COMMANDER.

CORPORAL J. E. R. MARMION

DRIVER

TPR W. H. DOYLE

GUNNER.

TPR A. G. DOYLE

GUN LOADER.

TPR R. WILKINSON.

18th June 1945.

LC. Col. Mills, MC.
2/4 Aust. Armd. Regt.

The completion today of the relief of B. Sqn. of your Regiment has prompted me to review the record of that Sqn. since it has been under my command.

Approximately ten weeks ago B. Sqn. first went into action as part of this Division. On that occasion it played a deciding part in a memorable battle which resulted in victory of which every member of this Division will always be proud: the victory at SLATER'S KNOLL. ~~Along with it has been in the forefront of an advance which has carried us from the PYRIATA to the KOBIAI.~~ And not only has it been in the forefront it has made the advance possible and prevented heavy losses of valuable lives.

I would appreciate your action in passing this expressions of my thanks to Major Arnott and all ranks under his command with the expression also of my admiration for the courage, devotion to duty and skill in operations which he and all his officers and men have shown on all occasions.

Signed.

W. Bridgeford. Maj. Gen.
G.O.C.
3rd Aust. Div.
A.I.F.