

KAYROOZ, Lisha Selim (30.6.1918-22.12.1989)

Rank: Lieutenant

Position: Fullback/Wing three quarters

Born 30.6.1918 at Atherton, Queensland. Was the son of Elsie Tamar and Selim Lisha Kayrooz, whose family migrated to Australia from Lebanon in the 1880's, He was a powerful swimmer and a Bronze Medallion-qualified life-saver and excellent football player. He enlisted in the Army at Townsville as a private soldier probably in 1939 and was allotted to the 31st Battalion (Royal Queensland Regiment) at Miowera, Qld. By May he was promoted to Sergeant. He represented the 31st Battalion at Rugby League as fullback with varying success. He was highly regarded by his fellow soldiers of the 31st battalion. The 31st Battalion was amalgamated on 12.4.1943 with the 51st Battalion (*Far North Queensland Regiment*), to become the 31st/51st Battalion, (*Burla, Robert 2005*). *Crossed Boomerangs: The History of All the 31 Battalions*).

Lisha was commissioned a Lieutenant, prior to being transferred to the 55/53rd Battalion on 20.12.1943. (*55/53 Bn War Diary 20.12.43 APOQ38*), and became Platoon Commander for 12 Platoon, B Company which was extraordinarily unusual for a newly-commissioned officer. He was Commanding Officer material. During his time with the 55/53rd Battalion he played a critical role in training the soldiers into success of the football team. This in turn raised the morale of the soldiers following the great losses at Sanananda. He was Commanding Officer material. Lisha married on 9.9.1944 (*QLD BDM. Reg. details: 1944/C/3899*), to Leila Moody which quickly ended in divorce. Following demobilisation Lisha returned home to the Herbert River (Ingham) and recommenced his amateur football career, playing for Ingham and later Innisfail, including playing full-back against the touring French side in 1948. He died at Ingham on 22.12.1989 and was survived by his second wife and one son.

McDONALD JOHN WOODROW (Jack) (6.2.1919-29.4.2009)

Rank: Sergeant

Position: Five-eight or Full-back

Jack McDonald was a junior league player at West Wyalong alongside Jack Bray. Jack McDonald was born in the Nyngan district on 6.2.1919. His mother was Agnes. Father not recorded (NSWBDM: 18865/1919). He enlisted in the Army at Berrima on 9.7.1942. Would have been a replacement soldier 55/53rd Battalion 1943. During 1958 Jack married Ellen Marjorie Grintell at West Wyalong (NSWBDM: 14031/1958).

Prior to WWII he had a promising career with his local West Wyalong Team, playing first grade at an early age.

His address in West Wyalong was 120 Operation St. In the 1990's when he was a member of the Battalion Association.

He died on 29.4.2009 at Yallambie Lodge Gosford, N.S.W. (*West Wyalong Advocate 1.5.2009*)

MOORE, JOHN GREGORY (Jack) D.S.M. (3.8.1916-3.8.1910)

Rank: Sergeant

Position: Half Back

John was born at West Maitland on 16.7.1916 eldest son of Arthur Moore and Harriet Greedy of Lorne, near Maitland on the Hunter River; was employed at Messrs. Mears and Twyford's store at Lorne before his enlistment. He played football with Maitland Rugby Union team. (*Newcastle Morning Herald 17.9.1945*)

John Moore enlisted at West Maitland on 6.8.1940 and was allocated to the 53rd Battalion. He disembarked from Sydney at Port Moresby on 3.1.1942 and served there, unloading ships and digging defensive positions. In mid-August 1942 sent to Queensland to Small Arms school and returned to New Guinea on 4.2.1943. Transferred to the 55/53rd Battalion in October 1942. Returning to Australia with the 55/53rd Bn in March 1943. Jack was with the unit when transferred to Jacky Jacky in July 1944: he was Orderly Sergeant. Unsuccessfully applied for a commission in February 1944. Later served in Bougainville where he was wounded and awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

In 1965 he was living at 52 Lynwood St., Blakehurst NSW. Jack Moore died on 3.8.2010; his remains lie at Woronora Cemetery, NSW.

NEVIN, PATRICK EDWARD (Pat) (6.8.1922 - 15.12.1991)

Rank: Sergeant

Position: Half-Back - Five eight

Pat Nevin was born in Sydney on 6.8.1922, a son of Thomas and Mary Nevin of Camperdown. Pat Nevin was a brother of Tommy and Bernie Nevin who were first grade players for Newtown.

Pat enlisted at Forest Lodge, Sydney on 27.10.1941 and joined the 55th Battalion. He was one of the originals and one of the few who served with the 55th & 55/53th Battalion through to the end of the war. After returning from Rabaul he was discharged with the rank of Sergeant on 30.7.1946. He was a member of the unbeaten battalion Rugby League team. He probably played Half Back or Five-eight.

On returning to Sydney after the war Pat played a number of trial matches for Newtown in March 1946 as did Bruce Ryan and six others. (Daily Telegraph 4.3.1946). Pat was not graded into first grade: Bruce Ryan was graded. Little is known concerning Pat Nevin's football career after this date. He transferred to Western Suburbs in 1947 and played a number of games in Reserve Grade. He was described as "*Pat Nevin, brother of ex-Newtown five-eight Tom Nevin, is showing good form in the reserves. Pat is very nippy and throws a good pass to his centres*". (The Rugby League News Vol. 28 No 4. (10 May 1947) p.7).

He married Patricia Brodie at Annandale in 1949 (NSWBDM 9472/1949). They had three children. He died on 15.12.1991 at Kingsgrove on 15.12.1991. He was a member of the Battalion Association from the 1950's.

SHEEHAN, LESLIE HAROLD (Les) (27.10.1916-Jan.1992)

Rank: Lance Corporal

Position: Front Row

Les Sheehan enlisted in the army at Toowoomba on 8.4.1942 he was aged 25 years 5 months, the son of Ada and John Sheehan of Toowoomba: born at Toowoomba 27.10.1916. He married 5.11.1937 Marjory Catherine Buchanan. They had two children. His occupation was labourer. Les was transferred into the 55/53rd Battalion on 9.11.1943 at Sellheim Qld. and served with the unit until his discharge. Les was wounded in action in Bougainville during the Mother's Day attacks against the Japanese on 10.5.1945; he received shrapnel wounds to his left arm. Les was discharged from the 55/53rd Battalion with the rank of lance Corporal at Redbank Brisbane on 29.4.1946, having served 1212 days.

Les was a member of the 55/53rd Battalion Rugby League team which was unbeaten right up to the last matches when most of the players were already home. He was a prop forward.

Following his discharge, in the year 1946 he was coach and sometimes captain-coach for the Clairmont Queensland Rugby league team, west of Rockhampton, playing as a front rower.

Les Sheehan died in January 1992 late of Redcliffe Nursing Home formerly of Indooroopilly. Funeral took place on 24.1.1992. Fred Denny has many good memories of Les.

SMITH, CHARLES NORMAN (Charlie) (12.9.1920-5.4.1998)

Position: Front Row

Rank: Sergeant

Charlie was the son of Rosina Agnes Smith. Charlie joined the 55 Battalion in January 1942 and served with the unit (55/53 Battalion) until wars end, being discharged in June 1946 having served at Port Moresby, Sanananda, Gona, Bougainville and Rabaul. Charlie's nick-name was 'BULL' and played in the Front Row in the Battalion teams. Before enlistment Charlie played Rugby League with Blacktown 'A' Grade and also in lower grades for Western Suburbs.

Following discharge Charlie joined the NSW Police Force and continued playing for Blacktown and Parramatta district clubs well into his 40's. Charlie served in 55th Bn Tank Attack Platoon, H.Q. Company. Charlie did not marry but maintained a strong bond with his family and his mates in the unit Bill McLeod and Charlie Glover. Both also joined the NSW Police Force. (Thankyou to Peter Beacroft – Nephew of Charlie Smith for his story).

RUSSELL, ERNEST ARTHUR (Porky) (7.9.1923-17.12.1991)

Rank: Private

Position: Forward

Fred Denny remembers 'Porky' Russell but did not remember his first name.

Porky Russell was born in Sydney, NSW on 7.9.1923, son of Frederick Russell of Cabarita, Sydney NSW. He enlisted in the Army on 27.10.1941 at Burwood, NSW and allocated to the 55th Battalion. He served his entire war service in the 55/53rd Battalion. Porky was wounded in action at Sanananda on 7.12.1942. On 26.3.1944 he was in A Company and as Regimental Aid Post Orderly.

He played Rugby League for the battalion. He was called upon as replacement for Aubrey (Mousey) Ball who was injured in a match between 55/53rd Battalion and Railways. On 18.6.1944. Porky was also injured and sent to hospital after the match.

Porky was a member of the battalion association. He lived at 28/559 Anzac Pde., Kingsford NSW 2032. Later his address was 4 Larool Ave., Bribie Island, Qld 4507. He died at Bellara, Bribie Island, Queensland, on 17.12.1991.

TUTTLEBEE, ARTHUR (2.7.1922-3.7.1971)

Rank: Corporal

Position: Forward (probably lock)

Arthur was born at Rose Bay, Sydney the son of Francis and Minnie Tuttlebee on 2.7.1922. Occupation 'Grocer'. He enlisted on 12.1.1942 and transferred to the 55th Battalion on 14.5.1942 10 days before embarking for Port Moresby on 24.5.1942. Arthur served with the unit at Port Moresby and Sanananda and Thursday Island, Bougainville and Rabaul. His service records omit his movement with the unit to Sanananda. Only reference found is when on 25.12.1942 admitted to 46 Camp Hospital. He was a member of the Rugby league team and named in Keith Shepherds photo. He was a red head. He was probably standing in the back row third from left.

An entry in the Grenfell Record on 1.7.1946 reported on a football match between Cowra and Grenfell, which Grenfell won 16-6. Arthur a member of the Cowra team scored a try (Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser 1.7.1946).

He was discharged on 24.7.1946. He died at his home at 48 Forest Rd., Ryde, NSW on 3.7.1971 aged 48 (SMH 5.7.1971).

WATT, FREDERICK GEORGE (Ted) (6.4.1922- 10.6.1975)

Rank: Lieutenant

Position: Winger

Ted Watt was born in Sydney 31.1.1922 son of Frederick and Lilian Ruby Watt. His Aust. Military Force Mobilization attestation form states he enlisted at Armidale NSW on 30.10.1941. He was probably a student at the Armidale Teachers College. When Ted joined the A.I.F. on 6.4.1943 he is described a School Teacher had completed a technical course in Wool Classing and a diploma of teaching – residence Bankstown (his father's address).

He was appointed Lieutenant 2.7.1943 and then transferred to the 55/53rd Battalion on 11.9.1943. He was an exceptional athlete. Excellent swimmer; winning the 33 yards swimming race and 66 yards breaststroke at the 1943 Christmas Day swimming Carnival at Townsville.

He served as platoon commander for 8 platoon A Company. A Company, 8 platoon and a Troop-Deck officer on the Taroona on the voyage to Thursday Island 30.6.1944. This was an interesting experience as the Taroona broke down on leaving Townsville resulting a few thousand frustrated soldiers on board.

His height of 6 ft 2 ins would have made him an excellent Rugby League winger.

The 'Match Report' covering the game against Railways on 18.6.1944 recorded "*On resumption, the Army winger Watt. limped with a heavily bandaged ankle*". The Army No 6 Team i.e. 55/53rd Battalion won a hard-fought match 13-7. (Townsville Daily Bulletin 20.6. 1944.)

Other than the above newspaper report there is nothing else to add as far as his career as a League player.

Ted's appointment was terminated 22.2.1946. Did he continue to play football? He died on 10.6.1975 late of 10 William St., Wyong. He left a widow and a small family. (Sydney Morning Herald Archive, Thursday, June 12, 1975).

OTHER FOOTBALLERS STORIES

The following biographical stories are of soldiers not found to be listed in any team lists. They may have been. The four below were representative players, who played the game at the highest level either before or after WWII. They were first grade players in Sydney and English Teams: including two 'Kangaroos'.

KENNEDY, CLEMENT MICHAEL (Clem) (25.11.1921-17.12.2010)

Rank: Private

Position: Half Back

Clem Kennedy was an Australian former rugby league footballer of the 1940s. He was born in Sydney, New South Wales. He played first grade Australian club football for the South Sydney Rabbitohs along with a brief stint for the Newtown Jets. Kennedy also played for both the New South Wales and Australia representative sides and served Australia during the Second World War which saw him serve in the Kokoda Track campaign. Kennedy signed for the South Sydney Rabbitohs for the start of the 1939 New South Wales Rugby League premiership where he quickly cemented his place in the sides starting thirteen and became known as 'The Mighty Atom' or 'The Little Bully' because of his small stature, rough play and ability.

He served during the Second World War from 1941 (53rd Battalion. 39th Battalion and 55/53rd Battalion – very likely played league with the 55/53rd Bn league team), to 1944 before returning to the Rabbitohs where his performances earned him a call up to the New South Wales side in late 1945 and the following year earned his debut cap for the Australian side even though his club failed to earn a victory in the entire season; further international honors eluded him however due to a string of injuries. The Little Master 'Clive Churchill' was one of his prodigies.

He was also the most successful Presidents cup coach ever, coaching some pretty handy players in the early sixties, the likes of McCarthy, Coote, Stevens, Simms, Longbottom, Piggins etc. (South Sydney Rabbitohs on Sunday, 19 December 2010).

RIDLEY, ALLAN (Jink) (18.7.1910-24.9.1993)

Position: Winger

Rank: Sergeant

Alan Ridley enlisted in the Army on 2.3.1942 at Paddington and served in the 55th Battalion and 55/53rd Battalion. He embarked on the SS Taroon at Townsville on 20.5.1942 for Port Moresby. Persistent problems with his knee meant that he was not fit for Army and was forced to return to Australia on 6.10.1942. He was eventually discharged medically unfit on 11.4.1944. He did not play for the 55/53rd Battalion team as far as current research reveals.

Prior to leaving Greta for Port Moresby, Allan was given permission to play league for Eastern Suburbs, Newcastle.

Alan Ridley was born in Gulargambone on 18 July 1910 and played his early football with Queanbeyan Acton Rovers in the Canberra competition. His rise to international honours was meteoric and he developed into one of the greatest wingers in league history.

Alan was a big man at 14 stone and 6 ft. He won the 100-yard sprint for the Federal Territory in a time of 10.1 seconds, and he was the first sportsman from the Federal Territory to represent Australia in any sport.

He was the 'baby' of the 1929 Kangaroos and was highly acclaimed in England. In a match at Castleford which Australia won 53-2, Alan scored five tries, a feat that was not equalled until achieved by Terry Lamb in 1986. Alan Ridley moved to Orange when offered a position with Radio 2GZ in 1933. He continued to travel to Sydney each weekend to play with Wests until 1936. He played in all three Tests against England in 1936 and then retired just as suddenly as he had entered the game. (<http://www.orange.nsw.gov.au/site/index.cfm?display=168235>)

He married Edna Pritchard. Alan was Mayor of Orange in 1956-1957 and Allan died on 24.9.1993 at Hospital in Orange NSW. His death notice published in the SMH on 27.9.1993.

RYAN, BRUCE LOYOLA (7.7.1921-25.6.2002)

Position: Winger

Rank: Sergeant

Was a champion GPS sprinter used his speed to great effect on the wing for Newtown in the 1940's. Bruce was the younger son of William Joseph and Eva Ryan of Kings Cross N.S.W. He spent a short time with Toowoomba before the outbreak of World War II. Bruce and his brother William Joseph Ryan (Bill) joined the 55th Battalion later 55/53rd Bn., and served in Port Moresby. Bill was promoted Lieutenant, and Bruce served in the Transport Section. Transport drivers received absolutely no training in warfare. They were sent to Sanananda where on most of the transport section were killed. According to Reg Chard he was one of the few who survived. Bill, Bruce's brother who served in 'C' Company as 2l.C. was killed in minutes following the first attack on the Japanese on the 7th December 1942.

Following his return from New Guinea in March 1943, Bruce received permission to continue to play Rugby League for the Newtown Jets. It is very unlikely that Bruce played for the 55/53rd Battalion Team.

Bruce played 10 games for Newtown Jets between 19.4.1941 and 21.6.1941 prior to his enlistment in Sydney on 8.10.1941. His first game for Newtown was against Eastern Suburbs which was comfortably won 22 – 3. During the 1943 season he played 9 games for Newtown including the 1943 Grand Final against North Sydney at the S.C.G. on 4.9.1943 when they thrashed their opponents 34-7. (Bill Ryan also played 12 games for Newtown during 1941).

He was discharged from the Army on 31.1.1944 and rejoined the Newtown Jets, playing in the 1944 Grand Final against Balmain which Balmain won 12-8. Bruce remained at Newtown until 12.4.1947 when Newtown defeated Parramatta 34-12. Following that win he was being dropped from first grade: He had a fractious relationship with selectors.

He spent the 1947-48 season playing for Leeds in England and was later a first-grade coach at Norths (1956). Ryan was the arbiter of the Australian selection panel in the early 1970s. Bruce Ryan played for Hull from 1947 to 1950. Scored 60 tries in 84 matches. Transferred to Leeds in 1950 for a then record £4,750 and scored 42 tries in 57 matches over two seasons.

Bruce Ryan died 25.6.2002.

RYAN, WILLIAM (Bill) (24.9.1919-7.12.1942)

Rank: Lieutenant

Position: Front Row

Bill Ryan was the eldest son of William Joseph and Eva Ryan of Kings Cross, Sydney.

Bill Ryan was 13 platoon commander of C Company 55/53rd Battalion during the 1st Battle for Sanananda on 7.12.1942. Frank Budden recalled Bill Ryan in his book, *'That Mob'* on page 71.

"One of the officers to give his life on this day was Lieutenant W.J. Ryan, a well-known Rugby League player, a great loss to the battalion and to sport. The brother of this officer, Bruce Ryan, who was also serving with the unit at the time, was to survive the war and make a name for himself in sport". Very few from 13 platoon survived more than 15 minutes after the attack began.

Surviving diggers from 'C' Company had great respect and trust in Bill Ryan's leadership. Reg Chard in particular who was one of the survivors was one who has nothing but admiration and praise for Bill Ryan. I life cut short! He was a man of outstanding leadership capabilities, learnt from his time as a footballer for the Newtown Jets. Reg said Bill was a strong, powerful front rower in the mode of John Sattler of Souths.

Bill (William Joseph) Ryan was born at Petersham on 24.9.1919 the eldest son of Eva and William Ryan. Prior to enlistment he was a rising star in Rugby League and the Newtown Jets. In 1941 after playing in lower grades for three years he made it to first grade. That year, Bill played 12 games for Newtown in First Grade and scored 11 tries, and represented NSW City First on two occasions. Later in 1941, Bill was called up for training and appointed Lieutenant.



The article below was printed in the Orderly Room Report for December 1995. The words in some cases have been altered to assist people with understanding of army lingo.

ISSUE 3/95

"MICE OF MORESBY" - MEMBERS BULLETIN

THE STORY OF 53 YEARS AGO

The following article appearing in "HARRY PECKS" POST the official organ of the 2/5th Field Regiment association. Co-author Captain Fred Bastock is the nephew of Les Bastock (55/53) Killed in Action 19th December 1942: -

WHY WERE THE JAPS SO HARD TO DISLodge IN THE BUNA / GONA / SANANANDA AREAS?

One often wonders why the A.I.F. Militia and US. Army forces had such great difficulty and took such heavy casualties to capture Buna/Gona/Sanananda in Dec/Jan 1942-3. There are many reasons.

First you have to consider the terrain of the area. President, Ken Broadhead, and Secretary Fred Bastock (2/5 Field Regiment), went on separate trips to the Kokoda track and Buna/Gona areas last year [1994]. They both commented on the fact that even 50 years on, the whole Owen Stanley Range and Buna/Gona/Sanananda coastal area is a terrible place to even contemplate military operations in our current well equipped and well supported situation, let alone in the conditions which prevailed in 1942.

Basically Buna/Gona/Sanananda were 3 Government station/mission villages close together on the northern coast of New Guinea. The whole area, about 10 miles long, was fairly flat, was crossed by 3 rivers, innumerable creeks and much of it was swamp and this was the wet season. A few tracks led inland from the coastal villages but these were quickly impassable for vehicular transport. The vegetation was thick jungle, forward vision was poor and very short. The area was poorly mapped and commanders Forward Observer and Battery Commanders and gun areas had to make do with local improvements to aerial photographs. There was no infrastructure to support the logistics of a military campaign. A number of airstrips had been hastily prepared 6-10 miles inland to handle Dakota 47 aircraft. Sea-borne supplies and reinforcements ex-Port Moresby/Milne Bay were landed with primitive facilities at Oro Bay about 17 miles east of Buna and then a monumental struggle began to get supplies to the front.

Things were so bad Battalion and Battery ammunition resupply Jeeps were running on Metho and food and drinkable water were difficult-to-obtain items.

Next you have to look at the strength and the defensive preparations made by the Japanese. The Official War History states that 12,000 Japanese defended the area - 3,000 at Buna, 7,000 at Sanananda and 2,000 at Gona/ Ambagu/ Kumusi - that's a lot of Japanese and they were dedicated, desperate and well-armed with guns of many types, anti-aircraft guns capable of firing in the ground role, mortars and vast numbers of heavy to light machine guns. The 12,000 Japs had not been idle. It must have been obvious to the enemy from the start of the retreat from Imita Ridge on the southern side of the Owen Stanley Range that the coastal area would have to be defended against heavy attack. The number, strength and quality of the defensive position was quite staggering. A US Army training manual produced in 1944 shows the layout of the defence and describe in detail their method of construction and enormous strength.

In the Buna Village to Cape Endaiadere area alone, with a frontage of 5,000 yards x 1,500 yards in depth, there were 225 bunkers, each capable of holding a gun/heavy automatic weapon and 1 or 2 more machine guns and several crews to man each of the weapons, 66 fire trenches of average length 100 yards, 51 breastworks, 16 light-medium anti-aircraft gun positions all capable of low angle fire and 1,300 yards of barbed wire entanglements. All these positions of course had interlocking field of fire, were mutually supporting, were extremely strongly built, were well camouflaged and could only be destroyed by the penetration of heavy projectiles through the firing slits so that the detonation of the projectiles destroyed the weapons and killed the occupants. Another effective method was for our soldiers to fling hand-grenades through the firing slits into the interior of the bunkers. This required the soldiers to get right up to the outside of the bunkers first and many, many of our soldiers were killed or wounded trying to get that close.

Initially we had 2 Regiments (6 Battalions) of US 32 Division who were supposed to quickly knock out the Japanese forces at the end of November. The Japanese quickly showed how poorly prepared for battle the Americans were. The Australian forces consisted of those A.I.F. and Militia Battalions who had fought their way over the Owen Stanley Range, were lightly armed and had suffered considerable battle and sickness casualties. Apart from being exhausted many units of the 3 Militia Battalions were under half-strength.

The Australian forces closed up on the Buna/Gona/Sanananda area and were committed to digging out a large, determined, well-entrenched enemy force who had nowhere to go and were there to fight it out. Supporting arms were required quickly. Tom Hanson's 51 Bty of 2/1 Fd Regt was progressively flown in to Dobodura and Popondetta airstrips and thus a Troop of 4.25 Prs was available to support 32 US Division and another Troop to support the Australian forces! Aust. Mountain Battery were also supporting 32 US Division with 2x3.7 Howitzer (pre-WWI vintage). Armour was also brought in by sea - initially a platoon of Bren Gun Carriers (totally unsuitable) and later General Stuart Light Tanks (37mm gun) from 2/6 Armed Regiment. More artillery was fed into the campaign - 2 then 4 x 25 prs from 2/5 Field Regiment and 4X4.5" Howitzer (WWI vintage) from 13 Field Regiment when 3.7" Howitzer ammunition was exhausted and much later 2 Bty (25 Prs) of 2/1 Field Regt. Whilst our infantry battalions were strengthened with the 3" Mortars and Medium Machine Guns they couldn't carry over the mountains and were supported as much as possible by the General Stuart tank direct fire at bunkers and defended positions and our guns provided covering fire for their attacks. It really got down to a struggle between men in the open armed with rifles Light and Sub-Machine guns and grenades against a maze of heavily protected Japanese in bunkers who were heavily armed with guns, mortars and a large number of heavy to light automatic weapons. To make matters worse the dense jungle vegetation and the very effective camouflage screened many of the bunkers from forward troops and artillery observers and any open area was a 'killing ground' for the fire from many interlocking machine gun fields of fire.

Our infantry casualties were extremely high. US and Australian casualties for the campaign Dec-Jan were 6,370. To make the situation even more difficult ammunition resupply was extremely erratic and rations and fresh water supply and casualty evacuation in forward areas was a continuing nightmare to bring up a 5 Pr Anti-tank gun from the rear.

What was needed was accurate heavy weapon support for the infantry and the ability to see the targets. The weapons which would have been effective against the bunkers were the 155mm guns with 44kg projective which had just been issued back in Australia to heavy Batteries (Coast) and the heavily armoured General Grant Tanks with their 75mm and 37mm guns which were held by the Armed Division in WA. Neither of the equipment were available in New Guinea and even if they were, would have been enormous problems getting to the region and getting ashore and then moving them.

The guns weighed 14 tons each and the tanks would have had similar difficulties. The campaign ground on, very much like WWI - attack after attack. for very small gains at extremely high cost in casualties and sickness.

The Japanese did not enjoy our Artillery poundings of their positions and staged a "FSN Coral-type raid" on Hanson's post at night and knocked one of the 4x25 Prs out for a short time (sic). The Japanese were pushed back and back to the sea and eventually Gona and Buna and finally Sanananda were captured.

Of the 12,000 defenders only 2,000 escaped the rest stayed permanently. From the Gunner's point of view, it must have been a frustrating campaign because our weapons could not do what was required to destroy the enemy bunkers - we tried everything at our disposal even 2/1 Anti-Tank Regiment to see if it was effective against the bunkers without success mainly because of inability to get the gun close enough to see the targets and till be able to operate the gun and also because the projectile did not have sufficient destructive force to destroy the bunkers or to do any real damage unless the projectiles were able to be put through the embrasures into the interior of the bunkers.

Because our forward observers could not see the fall of shot due to the dense jungle, they developed on site the first 'sound ranging' technique which became most effective, and this system was improved taught and practised at the School of Artillery and all tropics-bound Regiments in WWII and probably was the basis of procedures adopted by Royal Aust. Army regiments in Malaya and South Vietnam. The campaign was heroic but costly for the A.I.F. and Militia Battalions, many of whom had already done enough over the Owen Stanley Range without being asked to make this bloody sacrifice. For the record, the heroes of the campaign came from 39 Bn, 2/1 Bn, 2/2 Bn, 2/3 Bn, 2/14Bn, 2/16 Bn, 2/27 Bn 2/25 Bn, 2/31 Bn, 2/33 Bn, 2/7 Bn 3 Bn, 36 Bn, 49 Bn, 55/53 Bn, 2/6 Armed Regt, 2/9 Bn, 2/10 Bn, 2/12 Bn and the US Army 126, 127, 128 and 163 Regts.

In all, 17 Australian and 12 US Bns took part in what must have been one of the tougher campaigns for the Australian Army in WWII.

1946 Battalion Association Meeting

A public notice advising the 1946 meeting of the 55/53rd Battalion association was published in the Sydney Morning Herald on Wednesday 24 July 1946, page 5.

55/53 BATTALION: - A meeting of the 55/53 Battalion Association will be held on Tuesday, August 6, at 7,30 p.m., at the Maccabean Hall, Darlinghurst.

Also from Orderly Room Gossip 3/1995

VALE - BILL DAVIES - President 53 Bn WWI Association

It is with great sadness that we report the recent death of Bill Davies .. Bill was 96 and lived in the RSL Retirement village at Narrabeen. He enlisted June 1917 at the age of 18 and served with the 53 Bn 14th Bde 5 Div, was wounded in action (gassed in March 1918) and discharged November 1919. Bill represented NSW at the 'Return to the Western Front commemoration' in 1993. He will be sadly missed by those who knew him .. a legend in his own time! A wise and respected gentleman whose company was always valued as a special experience .. a proud teacher, most tolerant understanding, and always available with sound advice and encouragement.

FAREWELL TO A DEAR FRIEND

William Rees Davies was born at Woonona NSW. His army No 3615. He died 12.11.1994.

NOTICE

The association website 5553battalion.com has over three thousand files of the soldiers who served in the first world war—53rd Battalion and 55th Battalion. Many of the survivors from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd battalion were transferred to the 53rd and 55th battalion at Alexandria. With thousands of reinforcements they sailed to Marseille boarded trains to Paris and most were dead by the end of August 1916.

Why not have a look!!!