

DUBBO & DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC



Newsletter 57– Nov-Dec 2021

Location: Ground floor – Two storey Community Arts Building Western Plains Gallery, Cnr. Gipps and Wingewarra Streets, Dubbo.

Opening hours: Tuesday 1.00-4pm, Thursday 1.00-4.00, Saturday 10.00-1.00pm

Society webpage: www.dubbofamilyhistory.org.au

Society email: info@dubbofamilyhistory.org.au

Postal address: PO Box 868, Dubbo. 2830 NSW

Society phone no: 02 6881 8635 (during opening hours)

Management Committee

Linda Barnes	68878284	martinandlinda@gmail.com	President/Librarian
Lyn Smith	68850107	baretsmiths@bigpond.com	Vice President
Ken Fuller	68818128	kefuller8@bigpond.com	Treasurer
Kathy Furney	68825533	kathyfurney47@gmail.com	Newsletter
Lesley Abrahams	68822242	ljabrahams@bigpond.com	
Di Chase	68829581	dmchase@bigpond.com	
Cathy Thompson	0492855952	caths714@outlook.com	
Colleen Braithwaite			

Management Committee Meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 11am (Covid allowing) in DDFHS Library. Members are welcome to attend these meetings, or simply contact any of the committee listed above if you have anything you would like discussed at the meeting.

Newsletter Information Please share any interesting information, news of an interesting website, or maybe a breakthrough with your family history, with other members. Contact Kathy Ph.68825533 or email kathyfurney47@gmail.com if you have anything that can be shared. We would love to print your item as it is exciting to hear about our members' research.

Website and Facebook Check out the website and Facebook regularly as there is often useful information on them. Regular updates, with information for our members, are being made to both, and always 'like' and 'share' our Facebook page where Lyn has lots of interesting snippets.

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Society News

Well, the final newsletter for 2021, after Covid 19 caused another year of restrictions to our society. October saw the committee hold its first meeting since July, albeit by Zoom. I am sure we are all becoming very familiar with on line communication with family, friends and employment.

Opening hours We are happy to advise that it has been decided to open the rooms to members from **Thursday 2nd December** until **Saturday 18th December**. The rooms will operate with the usual opening hours, i.e., 1-4pm Tuesday and Thursday, 10-1pm Saturday. We will then close for the Christmas break, re-opening on **Tuesday 11th January 2022**.

President's message Congratulations to everyone on making it through another very different and trying year. We can only hope that 2022 will be a more 'normal' year where we can get back to researching in our rooms and holding our meetings and events. Being able to meet, chat and help each other is, I think, what we are all missing the most.

I look forward to catching up with you when we hold our Christmas afternoon tea on Monday 6 December at 2.00 at the Creo café at the Western Plains Cultural Centre. Please contact Lyn Smith if you are coming as we need to know numbers.

We have certainly all established that not everything is 'online' and just how valuable our resources are. I know I will be checking some leads I have after doing some searching on Familysearch and discovering the digitised images are only available in our rooms because we are an affiliate library.

I would like to thank the Committee for their work during the year. Although we were closed for part of the year the Committee members have been carrying-on as much as they can whether it was our website, our Facebook page, mail research, financial matters or other necessary tasks. We have even managed a Zoom meeting to keep in touch. Having gained confidence in using Zoom it may well be a valuable tool to enable us to keep in contact or present information sessions in the future.

Of course, I must thank our Research Assistants for being the wonderful, flexible group they are. They have kept our rooms open whenever possible under difficult conditions. Well done, and I hope the new year will be less challenging.

I wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and successful New Year and look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Resignation of Treasurer We are sorry to have to announce the resignation of our long-term treasurer **Ken Fuller**. Ken has been a stalwart of the society for many years, taking up the treasurer's position some 12 years ago. During this time, he has looked after our finances in a sterling manner, making sure we didn't spend too much, and always able to account for all our funds. He has always been willing to take on other roles, when necessary, from collecting the mail to being membership secretary. He has also been involved with many of our Society's projects. He took on the Cemetery Photograph Project single-handedly organising, printing and indexing all the negatives. He also finished off the index to the Bourke books and organised for them to be published on CD. In fact, we may need a number of people to replace him! He was made a life member for his services to the society. Ken will also be missed for his 'terrible jokes' he always told us when he came into the rooms. Thank you, Ken, from all our members for your efforts for the society over the years. The hard part now is to find a replacement? Do we have anyone who is willing to take on any part of this role for the society? If you would like to find out more, and know what is entailed in this position please contact our President, Linda Barnes. Thank you very much Ken for your support and efforts for the society over the years.

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Magazines received With the Family History rooms open to members for a short period before the Christmas break, make sure you come in and check out the family history magazines which we receive regularly. A good item in the RAHS 'History' magazine No.149 relating to Bathurst is worth reading. The Spring 2021 issue of 'Descent' a magazine of SAG, has interesting articles on "misinformation and incorrect particulars" in family history research. The UK Family Tree magazine for November has an article by Chris Paton on 'Irish Land Records'.

FamilySearch has announced that **RootsTech Connect 2022 will take place on 3-5 March 2022**, as a fully virtual family history event. Organisers are hoping to repeat the success of this year's festival, which welcomed more than one million visitors from over 240 countries. Building on last year's success, RootsTech Connect in 2022 will remain **completely virtual and free**. Registrations and updates can be found at RootsTech.org, and click on Subscribe for Updates. You can also follow RootsTech on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Bathurst Remembers World War 2 Exhibition has been moved from **December** until next year. The new date for this exhibition is the **25th to 28th February, 2022**. The event will still take place at the spacious Bathurst Showground and will be the largest event of its type in country New South Wales. This exhibition marking VJ Day and 75th Anniversary of the end of WW2 will consist of a large array of items. Some of these are "Snapshots of World War 2" - 600 enlarged photos of soldiers in action, battlefields, training, the home front, Bathurst Army Camp, etc. There will also be the "Wall of Valour", over 130 enlarged photos of World War 2 Service Men and Women with an association with Bathurst who enlisted and served, with over 2000 photos in all. Guest Exhibitors will display over 3,000 military items and WW2 memorabilia, uniforms, a large display by Military Vehicle Group of NSW and other vehicle groups, medals, RAAF & POW items, Damien Parer St Stanislaus College photo display, a rustic military picture theatre, Military Guest Speakers and lots more.

Sir (Arthur) Roden Cutler, VC AK KCMG KCVO CBE (1916 – 2002) (Part 3)

A military and family history review by Steve Clayton

Life in the regiment was not all endless target practice and training drills. Any opportunity to lighten the mood and lift morale was fair game. Enter the regiment's most infamous and influential member, **Gunner Harry Peck** or more correctly, *'the elusive Harry Peck'*.

His identity first became apparent at the Ingleburn Army Camp, a pseudo recruit who was always being blamed for some mischief or misdemeanor, but could never be found on parade. His name was borrowed from Peck's Paste. He was responsible for a lot of fraudulent Ordnance Store requisitions and bad debts which accrued on the war effort but which helped make up for the dreadful shortage of goods and supplies in the Middle East and later in New Guinea, to supply the Regiment ranging from binoculars, to pistols, motor vehicles, building stone, Bulimba Beer and even football boots from a Tel Aviv sports store, all signed off by the likes of Heinrich Pfeck, Major Harry Peck, Lt Col. Peck all generally attached to the Anchovy Division AIF. *His name lived on in "Harry Peck's Post" the official newsletter of the 2/5th Field Regiment Association which my father continued to receive for many years into the 1970s.* His infamy has earned him a place in Warren Fahey's Australian Folklore Unit.

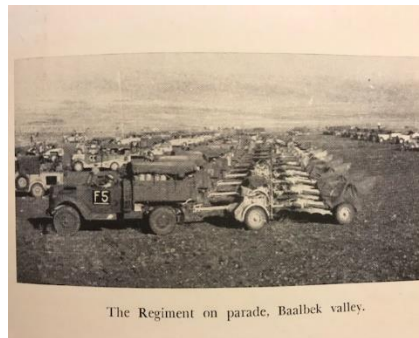
Back to the war in the Middle East.....

The British were getting walloped by the Germans in Greece and it seemed likely that Australians in the Middle East would be called upon to provide reinforcements. However, in the case of the 2/5th Field

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Regiment their artillery services were to be better utilised in countering any advancement by the Germans in North Africa. They were instead sent to Mersa Matruh toward the Egypt- Libyan border to defend any possible Italian/German advance eastward. There was not much military action at that stage so useful time was made in training and refining gunnery skills.

The next action was to repel and occupy the territory held by the Vichy French forces in Lebanon and Syria. Churchill feared a German advance on the Middle East through collaboration with the Vichy Government to take control of the Arab oil fields and Suez Canal could be extremely detrimental to the Allied war effort. The allied force of 34,000 in Syria was under the command of British General Henry Wilson and the Australians were led by Major General John Lavarack and numbered 18,000 of the allied force.



Then came “Operation Exporter”

Operation Exporter involved three routes of attack northwards from Palestine towards Tripoli in Lebanon. The Australians, including the 2/5th Regiment with the 21st Brigade took the coastal route to Beyrouth (Beirut) including the taking of Merdjayoun and Damour.

A soldier of note fighting with the Allied Force was **Moshe Dayan**, attached to the 21st Brigade. On 8 June the 21st Brigade spearheaded the allied invasion. Dayan was assigned to take control of a bridge crossing north of the Palestine/Lebanon border, coping a rifle shot into his binoculars while he was using them and losing his left eye. He survived the war to later become Chief of Staff of Israel’s defence forces and later Minister of Defence.

Lt. Cutler’s role in the 2/5th Field Regiment was as an Intelligence Officer or Observation Officer whose task it was to “register” targets for the artillery to fix range and direction, which required scouting several miles ahead of the artillery line and getting very close to the enemy sometimes behind the enemy line – There were no tanks or troop carriers to protect infantry and the risk of being hit by snipers and enemy machine gun nests was constant. Communications by field telephone wire which was laid on ground for miles had to be maintained including repairing any breaks under the risk of enemy fire.

Lt. Cutler’s two reported instances of bravery which are recorded on his Victoria Cross citation date 28 November 1941, include 9th June attack at Merdjayoun, (for which he was initially recommended for the Military Cross) and again on 24-25th June in the retaking of Merdjayoun. Later, Cutler was involved in an attack on Damour on 6 July when after taking out 3 machine gun posts, Lt. Cutler was injured in the leg trying to recover to base. He was immobilised in the field and unable to be rescued for another 26 hours after suffering blood loss and severe dehydration in the searing desert heat.

A 14-minute YouTube clip recorded in 1985 of Sir Roden recounting his actions in battle which led to him being decorated with the Victoria Cross can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/GqiAyg-JDWo>

(Well worth listening too)

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Gunner Geoff Grayson, 2/25th Field Regiment said of his valour... *"Had it not been for Cutler I'm quite sure that tank would've annihilated the lot of us... My last recollection is of him shooting, because he continued to engage the tank... He was firing at the tracks and he managed to stop the tank, which slewed around and couldn't fire at us anymore. He was cool, he was calm, his orders were quite clear and concise. There was not one element of panic and that did a lot to inspire those serving under him."*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL 128440
Roden Cutler is carried back to base by Vichy Prisoners he had previously captured.



Gunner Sgt. Clayton 2/5th Field Reg. skiing at Les Cedres, Lebanon, Jan.'42

By the time he was recovered to a medical station, gangrene had set in in his right leg and amputation became necessary. He was later transferred to the 1st Australian General Hospital at Gaza for convalescence for five months before being invalided back to Australia in November aboard the hospital ship *Oranje*. The trip was one of much celebration to be carrying on board Australia's latest war hero and Military Cross recipient. And arriving in Perth with the news that he was to receive the Victoria Cross – he couldn't believe it!

Following the successful advance at Damour, the Vichy French saw that they were outdone and an armistice was signed on Bastille Day 14 July 1941. Beyrouth and Tripoli fell into allied occupation and on 15 July the 2/5th Regiment commenced occupation duties to demilitarise the enemy territory. Due to the advance of Germany through Greece and Turkey following victories over the USSR, the Seventh Division was required to remain in Syria-Lebanon to defend this territory. *My father, a Gunner Sergeant in the 2/5th Field Regiment remained in Lebanon undertaking occupation duty well into the winter months where, on high mountain ranges, snow falls were a welcome distraction, (see photo above).*
(The final episode will be presented in our next issue)

First AIF Families & Friends group which publishes the **'Digger'** magazine has advised that a compilation of eight stories from Issues 14 to 60 has been issued in an **e-book**. We have been fortunate to receive this e-book which can be found on the thumb drive under "First AIF Families & Friends compilation of Digger series from Issues 1 to 60". This thumb drive, which contains all magazines and newsletters received by us in electronic form, can be found hanging in the second room.

"Five Good Squadrons" a book written by Robin Droogleever has recently been published. The book covers the 1st Regiment of the NSW Mounted Rifles who took part in the Boer war in South Africa in the 1900's. The book covers not only the campaign history of the regiment but there are 185 pages of biographies of all the men who served. There are also 150 pages of photos, most of which have been generously donated by descendants, and which provide a wonderful panorama of social life at the turn of the 20th century.

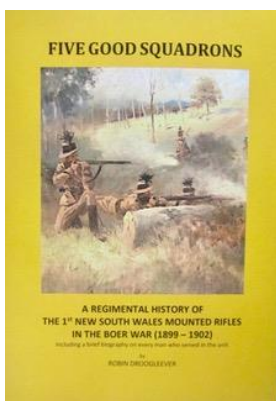
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Robin came into our family history rooms on several occasions to do research, being assisted by our president Linda on several occasions. The book contains biographies of fourteen men from the Dubbo district, plus others from Wellington and Bathurst. Please see the following if you are interested in purchasing a copy of this book.

\$60 plus postage of \$12.50 in the Australia Post medium sized red bag which is waterproof and can be tracked. **Total: \$72.50**. Not only do Australia Post seem to give priority to their red bags it is definitely the most secure way of despatch.

Payment can be through Direct credit to the authors account which will be provided upon request for the book. You can also pay by cheque made out to Robin Droogleever and sent to P.O. Box 42 Bulleen 3105, Victoria.

Contact: Robin Droogleever on email at jerwfd@optusnet.com.au or phone on mobile 0455-346-777



1921 Census of England & Wales will be launched on Findmypast and the National Archives on the 6th January 2022. This will include 8.5mil households recorded, 38mil individuals and over 18mil colour images. From that day forward, everyone will be able to search and explore the census online, only at Findmypast. The 1921 Census offers more detail than all previous England and Wales censuses. Individuals were asked not only about their occupations but also their place of work, employer, and were given 'Divorced' as an option for marital status.

Visitors to Findmypast will not only have the ability to discover what life was like in England and Wales a century ago by discovering where, how and with whom their ancestors were living, but will also be able to search by address to uncover the history of their local area or home and the stories of former occupants.

(Hard to believe 1921 was a century ago. Many of our parents were born in the 1920's!!!)

Christmas Wishes to all our members, let's hope 2022 will be kinder to us and we will be back in full swing. Don't forget membership fees become due on the 1st January 2022. These can be paid in person in our rooms, or on line as per banking information on our website. Please make sure you put your name and 'm'ship fee', so it can be identified. Fees remain the same as last year, ie; \$40 single, \$45 joint and \$48 family membership.

Keep safe everyone and keep up your family research – lots of resources available in the family history rooms.

