



Friends of Fort Queenscliff

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort Queenscliff Issue October 2022.

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THE AMAZING HISTORIC FORT QUEENSCLIFF.

Streets in the settlements of Australia are named. Not so within Fort Queenscliff. RMC Duntroon provides a fine example of street naming in a Defence property. The Committee of the Fort Queenscliff Heritage Association at the next meeting is to consider a proposal to name internal roadways and walkways, accompanied by Steps and Notable places. Should this idea gain favour, and the support of Queenscliff AAHU, the proposal would be submitted to the relevant part of the Department of Defence for endorsement and funding. Here goes. On a large map of the Fort some assets listed here are proposed to be marked to reflect their place of importance.

WAYS (Roads).

Identified roadways within the Fort have names proposed for consideration:

1. Charles Umphelby Way. (Leading into the Fort from main entrance.)
2. Commemorative Way (Tree circle at entrance, north side).
3. Archive Way. (formed pathway on Hesse St. side of Archive.) Note: Expect up to 10 in Number.

WALKS (Foot Walks).

21. Bullock Walk. (Already in place, leading to Indoor Museum).
22. Coxen Walk. (On the Gun embankment).
23. Jordan Walk. (At Shortlands Bluff.) Note. Expect up to 8 in Number.

STEPS.

41. Shortlands Bluff.
42. Directing Station Fire Control. (Up the Mound.)
43. To the Guns at Western end. (Ramps.) Note. Expect up to 6 in Number.

NOTABLE PLACES.

51. Memorial: Rest in Peace.
52. Chair Sculpture. (Schools).
53. Colonel G. H. Fetherston fountain in rose garden at Bldg. 44. (Viewing permission needed.) Note. Expect up to 12 in Number.

BUILDINGS.

Asset building numbers of note (15) are: 17,23,24,26, 27, 32,39,41,43, 52, S12,S13, G1, G12 and House at King St.

Reference has been made to J.E.Tate's book "History of Fort Queenscliff". If any member of the Friends of the Fort wishes to contribute/comment, please contact the writer.

Regards to Friends of the Fort.

President David Millie. davidrmillie@outlook.com mobile 0447 202 505

President Fort Queenscliff Heritage Association. Chairman Friends of the Fort.



From the Museum Manager – Major Martin Gowing.

Hello all.

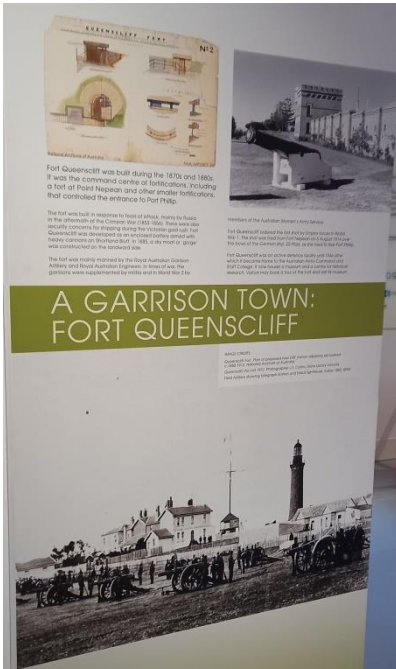
The Destination Queenscliff project has seen a fascinating transformation over the past few years, culminating in the \$5m creation of the Queenscliffe Hub, comprising the Queenscliffe Information Centre, the Queenscliffe History Museum and the Queenscliff Library under one roof.



I am pleased to report, in conjunction with the curator, we have achieved an interesting exposure of the Fort in the new Hub.

In the entrance hall to the Queenscliffe Hub this Gunner's uniform, pictured left, is vision splendour of what stopped the young ladies in their tracks in the 1890's. It is not hard to imagine the Fort soldiers, while on leave, strolling the Queenscliff centre or Thwaites Walk while the young ladies cast admiring glances.

The first room within the Hub is the Information Centre where visitors can take a Fort brochure, and the staff can encourage participation of a Fort tour by selling tour tickets.



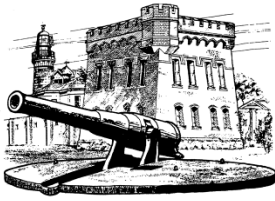
Upon further entry to the building tourists can enter the History Museum where the information panel (left) is enough to arouse interest in touring the Fort. It explains the early history of the Fort from the late 1850's.

Also on display (right) are the immaculate uniforms of Nurse Captain Connor and Gunner Hodgetts, with information about their army careers. A visitor's auditorium has films of Queenscliff's history, with an individual section about Fort Queenscliff.



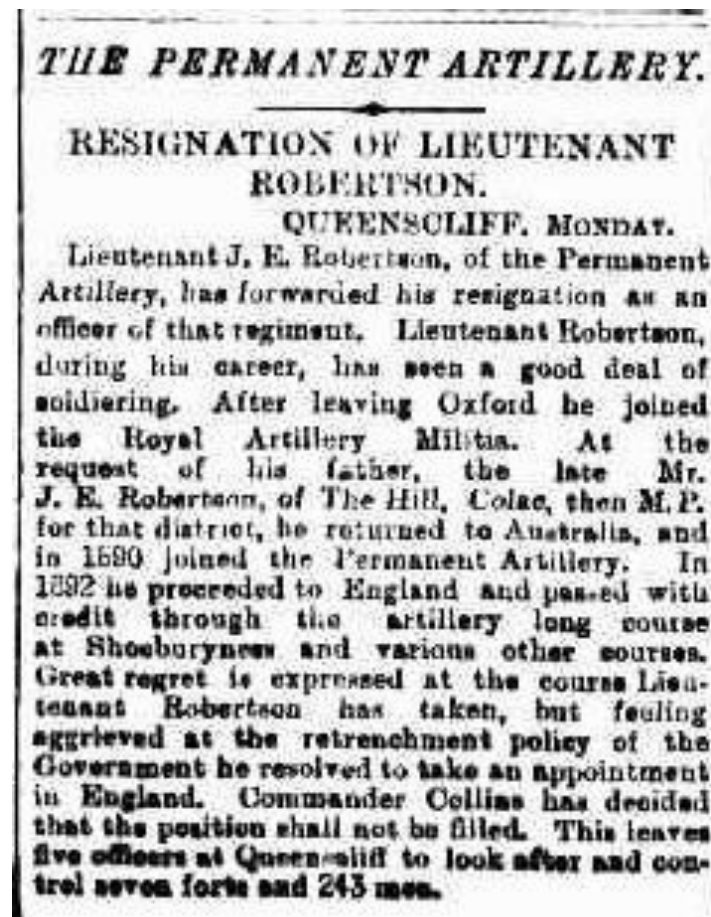
I am sure you will enjoy a visit to the new Queenscliffe Hub centre.

Regards, Major Martin GOWLING. Manager, Fort Queenscliff Museum.



John Earnest (Jack) ROBERTSON - love & tragedy - his life as a family man.

Continued from newsletter June 2022. Second of two parts written by Friend of the Fort Malcolm Robertson in Canberra June 2022.

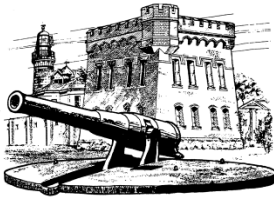


Newspaper item left is excerpt from The Age 4th June 1895. Space here limits me in delving too deeply into his army career from 1895 on, but to clarify previous comments in the FOF Newsletter, Jack himself says that in 1895 his resignation was in protest at the retrenchment of one officer and fifty men. He took his family back to England via Canada and his son Donald Struan was born in London during October 1895. He must have patched up his differences with the VMF and in 1896 his resignation was cancelled and he returned to Regimental duties in Melbourne, Queenscliff and Portsea.

As a brief aside, readers may be interested to know that the Robertsons seem to have a strong sense of principal and fair play running in their genes as my own father, Jack's grandson, Captain R J (John) Robertson RAN, also resigned on principal from the military. John left the Navy in 1964 when he was

badly treated by his superiors in the Navy after the collision between the aircraft carrier Melbourne, of which he was captain, and the destroyer Voyager. It would be interesting to hear the details of the mass retrenchments in 1895 that so angered Jack Robertson that he resigned.

By 1916, Jack's career had reached its peak with his appointment as Colonel to the post of Commandant of the five forts and stationed at Queenscliff. It was here that tragedy struck. Jack's son Donald, who joined the Ninth Reinforcements in late 1915, suffered badly on the western front in Europe in 1917 and was returned to Australia and discharged from the AIF. Badly injured during an offensive, he had been buried alive for many hours outside the lines before being brought in to the casualty clearing station. His injuries were such that he was sent to England for convalescing. Unfortunately, he became addicted to morphia and ultimately had to be returned home. His wife Winnie, who had met Donald in Western Australia during Jack's posting to Fremantle, tried to nurse him back to health, but the treatments available for drug addiction in those early years were limited and Donald



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continued to behave erratically. In October 1920, he decided to sail a small yacht from Black Rock to Queenscliff, at night so as to “surprise everyone at breakfast”. He never arrived, his yacht was never found, nobody was ever washed up and he was never heard from again. And sadly, because of the stigma associated with his drug addiction and his quiet discharge from the AIF, his story was never discussed in the family until nearly sixty years later. Even the Queenscliff Historical Society has very little on file about what must have been a terrible local event involving some high profile people.



John Ernest (Jack) Robertson retired from his post as Commandant in 1922 and moved from ‘Maytone’ at 1 The Esplanade, which he had occupied as the Commanding Officer’s residence, into the next door two-storied residence ‘Charlcote’.

There he and Minnie lived in relative peace apart from the occasional influx of grandchildren, nieces and nephews and friends and relations until Minnie died in 1941, and he moved to smaller premises in Melbourne. He died in Melbourne age 87, and his remains were cremated at Springvale in June 1955.

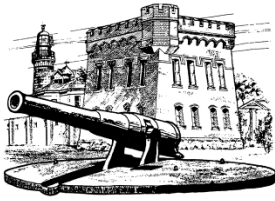
Best regards to all Friends of the Fort.

Malcolm Robertson June 2022.

The group photo below is in the possession of the Fort Library. The photo is not dated and the officers are not named. However, seated left we can identify Lt. Col. Walter Clark, CO at

Fort Queenscliff 1906 – 1910. Seated right is Captain John Robertson. If anybody can identify the senior officer visiting who is seated in the middle, or the probable occasion of the photo, please advise us at the Fort.





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**A 2022 escape from winter by Bruce and Helena Murray
to the Atherton Tablelands.**

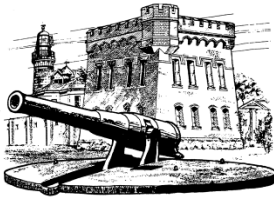
Our first caravanning “Grey Nomad Adventure” included a modest detour from Broome to Cairns along the Savannah Way. Some 3,700 km across WA, NT and QLD. After days of endless monotony, it was with great excitement to have crossed the Herberton Range leaving behind the dry, dusty outback and enter the wet tropics of the Atherton Tableland. We were greeted by mist covered mountains and rolling green pastures interspersed with dense rainforest.



In 2022 this was a scenic tourist getaway from Victoria’s winter. In the 1940’s it was the perfect location for dairy farming or the mobilising of a large number of military troops.



In late November 1942, almost a year after Japan’s entry into World War II, the Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Military Forces, Lieutenant-General Thomas Blamey ordered a survey of the Atherton Tableland with the intention of developing facilities for a rehabilitation and training



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area for volunteer army troops of the Second Australian Imperial Force (AIF) recently returned from the Middle East.

The key purpose of the scheme was to recuperate troops in a cooler climate while engaged in jungle warfare training; provide suitable hospitalization for malaria and tropical disease cases; and locate personnel and maintenance installations close to the New Guinea frontline with access to railway and port facilities.

Units of the Australian 6th and 7th Divisions began arriving on the Tableland in January 1943 and started occupying tent encampments around the settlements of Wongabel, Wondecla and Ravenshoe. Units of the 9th Division returned to Australia from North Africa during February and by April had begun reforming at camps around Kairi, Danbulla and Barrine.

For a brief period from September to November 1944, all three AIF Divisions (6th, 7th and 9th) were encamped on the Atherton Tableland. While Australian 1 Corps had originally been intended to participate in the liberation of the Philippines, these plans were dropped and the Corps was instead tasked with taking the Borneo oilfields, involving the last Australian amphibious landings of the war by the 7th and 9th Divisions, at Balikpapan, Tarakan, Brunei and Labuan.



By mid-1945, it was clear that the Pacific conflict had moved away from Australia's shores. After the Japanese surrender in August that year Ravenshoe and the other Atherton Tableland camps were decommissioned. Buildings and structures were disposed of at auctions and most remaining debris was burnt or buried.

Today all that remains are military road signs and a plethora of unit plaques dedicated to those men and women who occupied this region on their way to war, or returning to recuperate in the peace and tranquillity of the Atherton Tablelands; the perfect location for dairy farming.

We enjoyed our visit to the scenic Atherton Tablelands, and to pay respects to all the military units and personnel who contributed to the ongoing peace and freedom of our great continent.



Kind regards to all Friends of the Fort from Colonel Bruce Murray, AM, Vice-president of the Fort Queenscliff Heritage Association.



Captain Edward Frederick Robert Bage. 3rd Field Company, Australian Engineers, who became a tragic fatality at Lone Pine Gallipoli.

A prize-winning student, athlete, and soldier, Bob Bage was a young adventurous Antarctic explorer before returning to his army appointment. He was killed during the first fortnight on Gallipoli.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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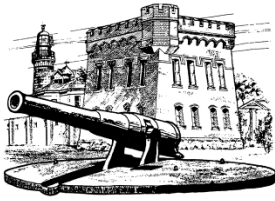
Bage joined the militia in 1909; two years later, he transferred as an officer, to the Royal Australian Engineers. In December 1911, aged 23, he took leave to join Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition as astronomer, assistant magnetician and recorder of tides.

On the outbreak of war in August 1914, Bage was commissioned in the AIF as second-in-command of the 3rd Field Company, Australian Engineers in the 1st Division. He and his colleagues embarked for the war aboard the HMAT Geelong on 22 September 1914. He was well known because of his Antarctic exploits, but it was his personal attributes and demeanour that continued to win him the respect of all those he came in contact with.

Captain Bage was part of the landings at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. He applied himself diligently to his tasks in the lead up to and following the landing at Gallipoli. However, Bob Bage's service on Gallipoli was to be tragically cut short.

The Engineers were busy from the outset, preparing field defences, manufacturing bombs, building roads, carting ammunition and building gun positions for the Artillery.

Early in May some abandoned trenches were identified forward of the 11th Battalion near Lone Pine by Captain Raymond Leane. Major General Bridges himself inspected the area and requested that an attempt be made to push forward as soon as possible to gain the position at night. To do this it needed to be clearly marked and for that to occur a party



needed to go forward to do so - in daylight. Bage was nearby at the time surveying the forward area with a prismatic compass, assisted by two sappers.

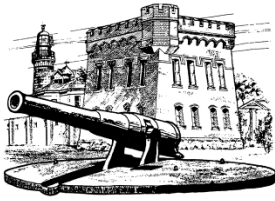
As he passed by Bridges exclaimed "Here's the man!" and Bob Bage found himself tasked for what he quickly realised was almost certainly a suicidal mission.

While marking out a trench line near Lone Pine on May 7, 1915, he died when he and his companions came under fire from Turkish machine guns. His dead body could not be recovered until dark. He was later buried in the Beach Cemetery at the southern end of Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula.



A cemetery near Hell Spit, the southern horn of Anzac Cove. Later these graves were exhumed to allow burial within a Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery but only some inscriptions on the grave markers were legible. On the far left is the grave of Captain Edward Frederick Robert Bage, 3rd Field Company Engineers, killed in action on 7 May 1915.

Article compiled by Evan Donohue. Researcher at Fort Queenscliff Museum Library.
Information from the Australian War Memorial and internet sources.



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On your next holiday check out the nearest silo or water tower for a 'towering' piece of art. The examples I have included here have military subjects, but Victoria's silos have many local and varied topics.



I recently diverged from Shepparton to visit Tatura where I had not previously been. I was very impressed to stand under General Monash.

TATURA WATER TOWER – GOULBURN WATER Auth.

The water tower features a portrait of General Sir John Monash, a WW1 Veteran and renowned civil engineer.

On the other side features a waterfall of beautiful Poppies as a tribute to the regions significant Anzac legacy.

The Tatura water tower art work began in late May 2021 and was unveiled on the 27th June 2021.

Cam Scale and Andy Davis worked on this project and have developed an amazing piece of art well worth a visit to the area.

I also recently visited the GRAINCORP SILOS AT DEVENISH - NORTHERN VICTORIA

Location: 33 Main St,
Devenish, Victoria.
Artist: Cam Scale
Photo by: Annette Green

The GrainCorp Silos at Devenish in North East Victoria were also painted by Melbourne Street Artist Cam Scale and are officially the 19th Silos to be included in the Australian Silo Art Trail.





SILOS AT DEVENISH cont.

Stage one, which comprises the two tall silos, was officially unveiled on Anzac Day in 2018. Marked as a tribute to help celebrate the 100-year centenary of the end of the First World War, the artwork depicts a stunning image of a WW1 nurse and a modern female military medic in the Australian Armed Forces. This mural also depicts the changing role of women in the military and society in general.

Stage two, on the short silo, was officially unveiled one year later on Anzac Day 2019. This mural is a tribute to the Australian Light Horse. The Australian Light Horse were mounted troops with characteristics of both cavalry and mounted infantry, who served in the Second Boer War and WW1.

Fifty young men and women from the Devenish Community enlisted in the military services in WW1. At the time, that was one in six residents from this very tiny town. Artist Cam Scale also wanted to honour the seven Devenish diggers that never made it home.

Parking is available at the front of these silos and will suit caravans and buses alike.

HEYWOOD WATER TOWER by artist ADNATE. Location: 27 Hunter St, Heywood,

Photo by: Anne McCurdy. Artists: Adnate & Levi Geebung.



The Heywood Water Tower was completed in late May 2021.

Captain Reginald Saunders features in the artwork. A Purnim man, Reginald Saunders was the first Aboriginal Australian to be commissioned as an officer in the Australian Army.

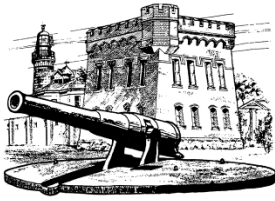
Four other indigenous soldiers, the Lovett brothers are also depicted on this new Indigenous war memorial mural in Heywood.

The other side of the tower shows Gunditjmara brothers, Privates Herbert, Frederick, Edward and Leonard Lovett who enlisted and served in the first and second world wars. The brothers were part of 13 members of the Lovett family who proudly served their country.

Internationally-acclaimed street artist Adnate was commissioned as the lead for the project and a local Indigenous artist, Levi Geebung assisted.

Before you leave home on your next holiday be sure to do an internet search of Victoria's Silo Art. There will probably be a towering example close to your destination.

Silo art compiled by Evan Donohue – Researcher at Fort Queenscliff Museum Library.



Fort Tour Guide Margaret Salmen retires.



Our longest serving tour guide, Margaret Salmen, has retired after 25 years as a joyful guide at the Fort. When it comes to entertainment she has really filled the role in an admirable way.

For years many messages of thanks have been received by those who have enjoyed tours with Margaret.

Most of all the school groups have been Margaret's great pleasure, when she would instruct many children to march like troopers around the Fort and sing marching songs, in between instructing them on the historic Fort features.

Following her announced retirement a farewell luncheon was enjoyed by her fellow guides and President David Millie, Secretary Bob Marmion and with Liz Fountain.

She was presented with a potted orchid and a 25 year service commemorative certificate.

Well done Margaret. We hope you continue to enjoy many years of retirement with your family.





Lastly ... WISDOM FROM TRAINING MANUALS

'If the enemy is in range, so are you.'

'It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed.'

'Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword, obviously never encountered automatic weapons.'

'Tracers work both ways.'

'Five second fuses last about three seconds.'

'Any ship can be a minesweeper. Once.'

'Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do.'

'If you see a bomb technician running, try to keep up to him.'

'The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.'

'When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane, you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash.'

If you hear me yell; "Eject, Eject, Eject!", the last two will be echoes. If you stop to ask "Why?" you'll be talking to yourself, because by then you'll be the pilot.'

The three most common expressions (or famous last words) in military aviation are: 'Did you feel that?' 'What's that noise?' and 'Oh NO!'

'Airspeed, altitude and brains. Two are always needed to successfully complete the flight.'

'The Piper Cub is the safest airplane in the world; it can just barely kill you.'

'You know that your landing gear is up and locked when it takes full power to taxi to the terminal.'

As the test pilot climbs out of the experimental aircraft, having torn off the wings and tail in the crash landing, the crash truck arrives. The rescuer sees the bloodied pilot and asks, 'What happened?' The pilot's reply: 'I have no idea, I just got here myself!'

Entertainment from Dr. Bob Marmion. Secretary, Fort Queenscliff Heritage Assoc.