



# The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort Queenscliff

Issue April 2022.

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## **From the President's Desk.**

### **Holiday destination. Have you been to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum (NVVM)?**

The NVVM is an Australian war museum located on Phillip Island, Victoria. Originally it was established in San Remo in 1966, by Vietnam veteran John Methven. In March 2007 it was moved to a larger site near Phillip Island Airport.

The museum contains a large collection of items and vehicles, including a Centurion tank, a Mark V International Harvester truck and a 105 mm pack howitzer. It has a collection of aircraft from the era of the Vietnam War, including a de Havilland Canada DHC-4 Caribou transport plane, an English Electric Canberra bomber, a Westland Wessex helicopter, a Bell AH-1 Cobra helicopter gunship, a Bell UH-1 Iroquois helicopter, a Bell H-13 Sioux Helicopter and a Grumman S2 Tracker anti-submarine warfare aircraft.

The NVVM is an incorporated Not-for-Profit organization and Deductible Gift Recipient operating as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The museum employs both staff and a dedicated volunteer force to help manage the day-to-day activities of the museum. The museum is managed by a General Manager reporting to the Chairman of the Board of directors.

The Collection is dedicated to the preservation and presentation of the history of all Vietnam Veterans and the enduring impact of the war on society. This volunteer-created and run museum is home to a huge collection of artifacts, interpreted with information, imagery and audio/using touch screens. The museum presents the conscription balls used in the system of selection for National Service that divided our nation.

Added to the need for conservation and preservation is the need to rotate items which are on display to protect them from the ravages, over time, of light and ultraviolet rays, dust and other environmental hazards.

The museum is currently working on a brand new life-sized diorama exhibit showing a Viet Cong tunnel system.

A collection policy has been established to help museum staff work through the processes of donations, acquisition, assessment and de-accessioning and disposal. To this end, closer relations have been established with other military style museums and greater information sharing about the collection is being developed. So now the museum is working towards making the best use of the collection rather than simply having everything on display, and this means that there is more work going on behind the scenes as is visible to the visitor. We hope you can enjoy the outcome as the museum continues to develop and improve its exhibits, exhibitions and information.



Bibliography: The National Vietnam Veterans Museum.

Article by: David Millie MBE Lt Col (Retd)  
President FQHA, Chairman Friends of the Fort. April 2022.



## What's been happening in the Museum Library?

Be honest, how many of you knew there was a 'research service' actively working in the library?

Over the last few months there has been a reorganisation of the library and that will continue for a good few months more, but now seems a good time to bring everyone up to date of what has been done and what it is hoped to achieve.

The aim of this reorganisation is to create a library where FQHA members and researchers can access the books, journals, military manuals, pamphlets, and other items that have been donated or acquired by the museum over the years.

Apart from full sets of the official First and Second World War histories there are a number of hard to find and rare books from when the Staff college was located at FQ, as well as studies on military related matters.

Currently all books on the shelves have been checked in the Mosaic Catalogue system and reorganised into subject areas in the shelves, duplicate books being removed and put aside, and that process is continuing with the journals and periodicals. The military manuals and

pamphlets will be next for sorting and recording in the Mosaic catalogue system, and that is expected to take a while before tackling the maps, charts and plan drawings.

In the future it is hoped to make available on the website:-

1. A list of books on the FQHA website so that everyone can see what is held in the library.
2. A list of articles in the journals and periodicals.
3. A list of the military manuals and pamphlets
4. A list of original maps, charts, and plans
5. An online searchable database of the above.

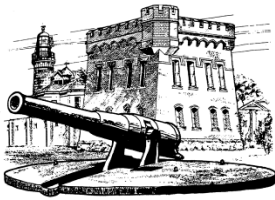
After that is completed, work will switch to scanning archive documents held within the various collections to make them more accessible by saving digital copies. That will address three issues at once,

1. conservation of documents by reducing handling,
2. allowing greater accessibility online,
3. and greater interpretation by allowing wider use in research and studies.

It is all go in the library.

Andrew Dagg. Grants officer. Committee of Management Member & Library researcher.





### **GEELONG GAOL AND THE MILITARY. By Rob. Wynne and Deb. Robinson.**

The Geelong Gaol has overlooked the township of Geelong for more than 170 years, imprisoning the criminal element of the district and beyond. Throughout its history it has confined men, women and children behind its imposing bluestone walls.

The Geelong Gaol is one of twelve colonial gaols built in Victoria based on the Pentonville system, a system of built on punishment through silence and religious reflection.

The Geelong Gaol had a variety of roles over its history including a male and female prison, hospital gaol, industrial school for young girls and as a military detention barracks in both World War 1 and 2.

Military detention dates back to Roman times and has existed since there have been organised armies. Rules and regulations have governed the armies since those times with consequences for breaking the rules – sometimes resulting in death.

Many of the punishments inflicted on military soldiers under British regulations in earlier centuries became the forerunner of punishments that were carried out on the prisoners of our gaols; such as floggings, stone breaking and picking oakum or imprisonment in the black hole for example.

The Geelong Gaol's connection with the military dates back to the 1880s when the female prisoners undergoing hard labour were tasked with the laundering of the Fort Queenscliff uniforms. The women would wash, starch and iron shirts and collars.

In 1899, Gunner Alexander Pollock wilfully murdered his fellow artilleryman, Thomas Briner in the Fort barracks. Pollock was held in the Geelong Gaol until his trial at the Ballarat Supreme Court where he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

The Gaol played a role in the beginnings of World War 1 when secured telegraphs were sent from Ballarat to the Geelong Gaol before being passed to the Army authorities next to the Gaol.

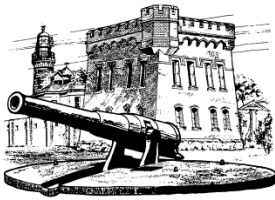
In September 1916, the Geelong Gaol became a semi military institution taking on military prisoners alongside regular prisoners. The first ten military prisoners were received on 10 September with more arriving quickly in the following days. Extra warders were employed to keep watch over them.

By January 1918, Geelong Gaol was the sole military prison of Victoria with the military section set apart and specially staffed.

Up to 40 men were held over at Geelong Gaol up until its revocation as a military prison in October 1919. The peace time amnesty in July 1919 saw the release of 6 men from Geelong. However, those men serving time for crimes that would result in gaol time for civilians did not receive the same lenient treatment. Two soldiers remained at Geelong who were serving 10 year sentences for manslaughter overseas. By this time, there were only five soldiers held in gaol Australia wide. Geelong Gaol continued next page ...

***Geelong Gaol continued next page...***





### ***Geelong Gaol continued ...***

In 1942, Geelong Gaol was gazetted as a detention barrack becoming known as 8<sup>th</sup> Australian Detention Barrack and part of the Southern Command.



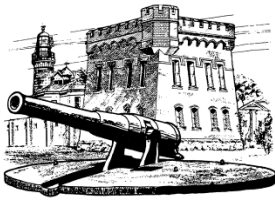
The barracks received its first intake of SUS (soldiers under sentence) in February with four warders enlisted for service. By the end of March 1942, Geelong had received over 248 SUS with 156 being discharged. The Detention Barracks admitted members of the Army, Navy and Air Force and also held two sailors from the Royal Netherlands Navy.

Detainees would complete parade ground drills and would graduate to more interesting training if they behaved. SUS could also be in line for trusted positions such as the Orderly Room, Kitchens, Stores, Staff Quarters, etc. There was one incident involving a soldier who was made to parade around the exercise yard at the double holding his urine tub.

Over its time as a detention barracks, Geelong Gaol saw 13 escapes with nine men remaining at large for up to six months. The largest escape in Detention Barrack history took place on July 21, 1945 when a well planned escape saw 22 men go over the wall. Communications to the body of the Gaol had been cut and the men took off in different directions. Military Police were hampered in their arrival from Melbourne due to the traffic from a football match between Geelong and North Melbourne – the Cats lost!

The Gaol was returned to the penal authorities when it was once again proclaimed as a gaol in February 1947. Geelong Gaol has existed for a similar time-span as Fort Queenscliff, and a tour is recommended to see & appreciate its history.

**Article by Rob. Wynne and Deb. Robinson at the Geelong Gaol.**



## **Progress in the Fort Queenscliff Library –**

### **- purchase of a Czur ET18 Pro Document Scanner.**

Following a successful submission for a \$900 grant from the Borough of Queenscliffe in 2021 we were able to purchase a new document scanner to replace an old flatbed type. The Czur ET18 Pro shown in the picture below has an overhead arm viewing lens with built in lights that allows it to copy documents up to A3 size. It will copy pretty much anything that fits on the black mat.



While it makes excellent copies of photographs and pictures it comes into its own when handling multi page items like the book shown in this example.

The scanner not only automatically selects the right size for the document and digitises the image but splits it into two separate pages and 'flattens' them out on the scanned image. Furthermore, the software enables you to save the images as a straight photo or PDF, or in a format that is readable by the computer allowing you to search the text for particular words or sentences. A great boon to researchers.

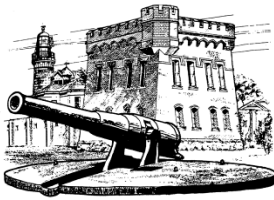
In the picture are two yellow 'finger bobs' that allow a

person to hold down a page if it constantly folds back, the software will cut these out of the finished image leaving a clear view of the page. Complete with a hand and foot button to start the scan, the process is fast with the operator able to concentrate on just turning the pages and taking the scans in a batch before going back to review the results on the computer screen. Multiple pages are scanned in a single PDF.

Getting a high resolution digital copy of historic documents means originals can be archived and preserved, and future viewing and/or copying is assured for researchers.

It is safe to say the Czur is a 'hit' and we are learning more about its capabilities every day.

**Andrew Dagg – Library Researcher and Grants Office.**



### *The latest news in 1894:-*

#### **GEELONG GAOL. Geelong Advertiser. Monday 23 April 1894, page 2.**

A reduction in the staff at the Geelong Gaol has been effected through the adoption by the Penal department of new arrangements in regard to the disposal of female prisoners of the vagrant class, for whom special accommodation has been provided at Pentridge. All the enfeebled women will be transferred to the Coburg penitentiary; only female prisoners of vigorous type being retained at the local gaol **in order to do the laundry work furnished for them by the military authorities at Queenscliff.**

#### **Australian Star (Sydney, NSW : 1887 - 1909), Friday 9 March 1894, page 6**

**AN ALLEGED WATERLOO VETERAN.** Ends His Life in Gaol.  
Melbourne, Thursday. Jeremiah Brown, alleged to be a Waterloo veteran, has died in Geelong Gaol, where he was undergoing a sentence for vagrancy.

#### **Herald Melbourne, Saturday 13 January 1894, page 5**

**MISCONDUCT AT GEELONG. THE LASH ORDERED.** GEELONG, Saturday.

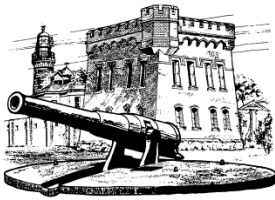
A negro named William James, who was arrested at Brunswick, was charged with gross misconduct on the Western Beach slopes on the 26th December. The evidence upheld the charge and accused was sent to gaol for six months and ordered to receive one flogging of 15 lashes.

#### **Melbourne Herald, Thursday 8 March 1894, page 2**

**THE CYCLORAMA VETERAN DIES AT GEELONG - LAST OF JEREMIAH BROWN.** GEELONG, Thursday.

Jeremiah Brown, who some time ago put in a season at the Melbourne Cyclorama of the battle of Waterloo, In the role of a survivor of the famous battle, died last night In the Geelong Gaol, where he was under-going a sentence for vagrancy. Our readers will recollect that Brown figured for a considerable time as a Waterloo hero, but it was in the end demonstrated that he had never been on the scene of the historic battle, and his narrative of events associated with it were simply an attractive fairy tale.





## **A Tobins Tube – What on Earth Is That?**

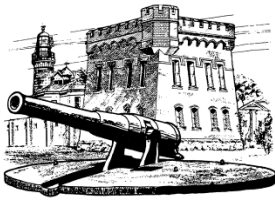
Recently I was researching the origins and architectural plan of the Fort Guardhouse. The 1884 plan showed that the Guardhouse originally was a smaller than present building consisting of two rooms; a dayroom for Guards and a smaller cell for retaining soldiers convicted of minor offences. The plan showed a Tobins Tube located vertically in the corner of the cell room. A Tobins Tube was news to me but research soon revealed the newspaper article below from The Argus.

### **Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957), Monday 28 February 1876, page 6**

#### **TOBIN'S SYSTEM OF VENTILATION.**

*“The importance of a good system of ventilation in a climate like that of Victoria can hardly be over-estimated, but up to the present the methods adopted for ventilating our public buildings have been conspicuous for their failing most signally to effect the object for which they were intended. In our large halls the atmosphere is either kept almost stagnant for want of the introduction of sufficient fresh air, or else the openings made for ventilation have been so clumsily constructed that strong draughts have resulted, to the injury of the health of those persons who have been constantly obliged to remain in the apartments so ventilated. The question of introducing a sufficient quantity of fresh air into a room, no matter what size or how few windows it contains has apparently been solved by a retired English merchant named Tobin, who lives in the neighbourhood of Leeds.*

*In order to solve the whole problem of domestic ventilation Mr Tobin at once commenced a series of experiments at his own private residence and eventually he contrived a method of putting his principle into practice which he has since patented. The plan which he adopted is extremely simple and very easy of application. It consists of placing horizontal metal tubes communicating with the outer air, either under or above the*

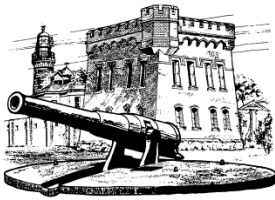


floor. From these tubes branch off smaller vertical tubes, extending from 4ft to 5ft above the floor. From the open mouths of those tubes there ascends to the ceiling an unbroken current of the outer air, like a column of smoke on a still day when the barometer is high.

The current of air from these tubes is so strong that it will support feathers or other light substances and will sometimes even extinguish a lighted match, but it has so little inclination to spread itself laterally that persons remaining in the immediate neighbourhood of the tube cannot perceive its influence except in the unusual freshness of the atmosphere in the room. So direct is the stream in its upwards course that it can be made to influence one half of the flame of a candle, while the other half remains perfectly quiet. The first public building on which Mr Tobin tried his principle of ventilation was the borough police court at Leeds, which was in a very bad condition for want of ventilation, though the council had spent nearly £1,500 on successive schemes of ventilation each of which had left matters as bad, if not worse, than they were before. Under these circumstances Mr Tobin obtained leave to try his plan, his remuneration being left to the council when the effect was seen. He placed three horizontal tubes under the floor, each communicating with the outer air, and from these brought up eight vertical shafts to a height of about four feet above the floor, each of them being five inches in diameter. The effect answered his highest expectation. The court was rendered as fresh and sweet as the outside air. The steady flow of the eight ascending currents washed away the effluvia of dirty people and the effect of respiration as fast as they were liberated, and forced them through the skylight opening. The effect was so satisfactory that Mr Tobin's plan was afterwards applied to the council chamber, and many merchants and bankers in the town adopted the plan.

The managers of this journal (*The Argus*) have lately accepted that from the heat engendered by the great number of gas burners, any plan that would render the atmosphere fresh would be doubly acceptable to the occupants. Six horizontal





*tubes have been laid down, each piercing the wall to communicate with the open air. From these tubes smaller ones branch off to the height of nearly 6ft., so as to be above the composing desks. The result has been highly satisfactory. The atmosphere of the room has been immensely improved by the introduction of a strong stream of fresh air, while the occupants of the room do not feel the slightest inconvenience from draught.*

*There is no danger by Mr Tobin's method of aerating a room too much; no matter how large the tubes are, as they will not admit air in excess of the rarefaction or combustion of that which is already in the room. As rarefaction or combustion increases or diminishes, the current of air admitted by the tubes increases or diminishes in precisely the same ratio. There cannot be a doubt of the advantage of this system of ventilation in any building where large numbers of workmen are employed. The principle is an extremely simple one, but it is none the less likely to add to the general health and comfort.*

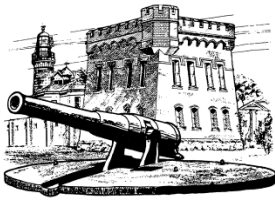
*By the application of Mr Tobin's plan such a thing as a stuffy room becomes impossibility, while its cheapness places it within the reach of every householder. From the formation of the pipes, the entrance of the currents of air are uninfluenced by either wind or rain Those persons who take an interest in the subject of ventilation are at liberty to inspect Mr. Tobin's plan, now in operation in The Argus composing room”.*

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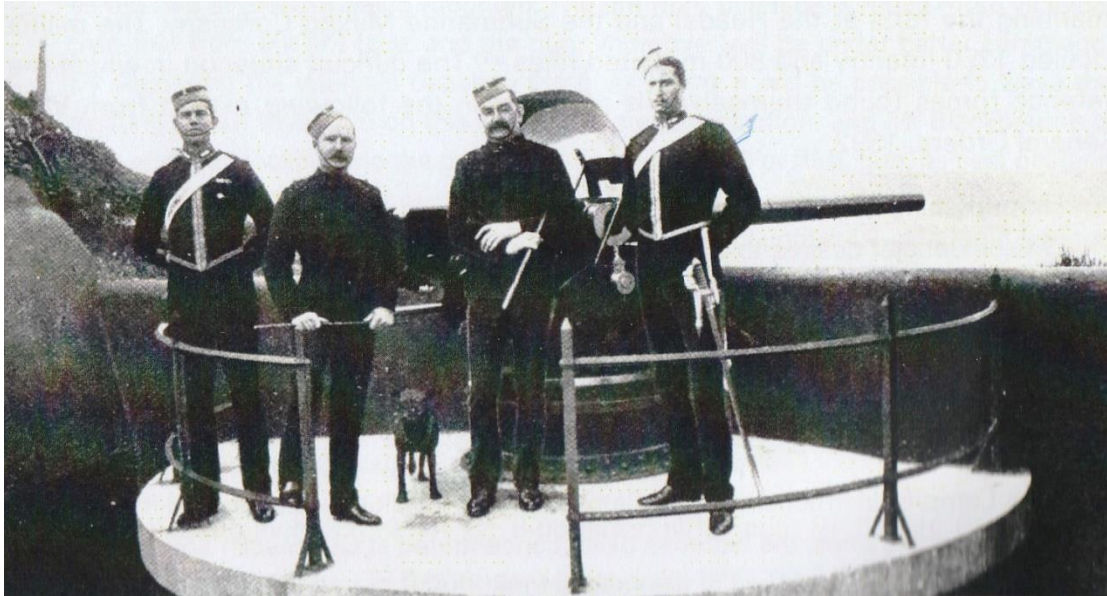
Thanks to The ARGUS for this lengthy read, but there you have it. To install a green energy saving, sustainable, low cost, efficient and quiet air refresher in your home all you need is to install Tobins Tubes in each room. I no longer need any reverse cycle electric devices at all. I will knock some holes in the walls immediately to enjoy fresh air.

*Best regards from the Library.*

Evan Donohue, Researcher in the Fort Queenscliff library.



**Lieutenant J E Robertson and others. A photo discovery at Fort Queenscliff Library.**



The caption reads:- 1898 Officers of the Western Artillery Brigade. L – R are Lt. F J Hayter (Quartermaster), CO Lt. Col. Charles Umphelby, Captain Robert Wallace and Lt. John Ernest Robertson. The photo amazed me because I am sure there is no other photo amongst 2000 in our Library which shows this scene with gun in place; nor have I previously found photos of Hayter, Wallace or Robertson at the Library. They are pictured at the 6 lbr gun emplacement outside the northern wall of the Fort at the end of the gorge, overlooking the shoreline on Shortlands Bluff,. The Gun could fire at a low angle across the foot of the Bluff, at invading soldiers, where the big guns could not sufficiently depress.

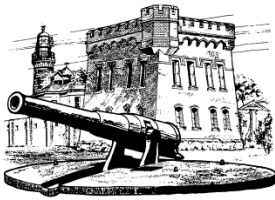


This gun emplacement is still there today (photo above), and affords a wonderful vista of the intended 1890's target zone, except for overgrown SA thornbush.

About the men in the 1<sup>st</sup> photo:- Lt Col. Umphelby is well known to us as the most senior Australian Officer who was plugged by a Boer sniper in Sth Africa. His fate proved it is not a good idea to loiter spying on the enemy whilst engaged in artillery battle.

*Continued next page ...*





*continuing ... "A photo discovery from a book at Fort Queenscliff Library".*

Captain Robert Wallace continued a distinguished military career including Commanding Officer RAA Vic. 1907 – 1914. He died in 1915 and is buried with a substantial grave memorial adjacent the VPA cemetery section in the Queenscliff/Point Lonsdale Cemetery. Lieutenant Hayter (see a later edition) and Robertson needed further discovery. I was recently delighted to find that one of our Friends of the Fort is a descendant of Lieutenant John Ernest Robertson, and will shortly provide readers of our newsletter with an historic account of the early colonial Robertson family.

**John Ernest Robertson's career was as follows:-**

7/03/1890. Victorian Military Forces. Garrison Artillery. John Ernest Robertson, gentleman, to be Lieutenant. 24/11/ 1893. Confirmed as Lieutenant 1<sup>st</sup> July 1893. 1892/3 Travelled to UK; gained certificate as Gunnery Instructor in Garrison, Horse, Field, Siege and Mountain Artillery.

19/7/1895. Resignation of Lieutenant John Ernest Robertson, Victorian Artillery, has been accepted from 31<sup>st</sup> May 1895. This was his protest at Defence reduction of finance and personnel. Returned UK via Canada.

24/4/1896. Resignation of Lieutenant John Ernest Robertson is cancelled.

1900 to South Africa as Captain, and UK in 1901.

7/12/1900. Lieutenant John Ernest Robertson to be Captain in the Victorian Military Forces. Two years Artillery in NSW, 1903 returning to Queenscliff and Portsea.



Pictured 1904. Lieutenant John Ernest Robertson, second left, as Chief Instructor of NCO's Gunnery Course at Queenscliff. (photo from a private collection)

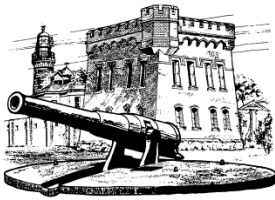
1<sup>st</sup> December 1910 promoted to Major. 1912 to Melbourne as Assistant Director of Training HQ.

1914/15 Thursday Island. 1916 Commanding Officer at Queenscliff until retirement 1922.

*Article by Evan Donohue – researcher at Fort Queenscliff Library.*

*From Victorian & Commonwealth Gazette entries, also family, Trove & internet sources.*





Dear Friend of the Fort,

Fort Queenscliff is a foundation stone in Victoria's history. School Participation in our Heritage Association's Guided Tours makes up about half the annual patronage, and provides important curriculum knowledge of the Fort's role in Victoria's development. Individual family and tourist visitors, numbering several thousand annually, are also usually amazed at discovery of the Fort's historical significance.

Fort Queenscliff Heritage Association needs your subscription to continue the Association, support conduct of Tours, as well as the Museum and promotion of the history of Fort Queenscliff.

The 2022 subscriptions are the same as last year. \$50 for a couple and \$30 for a single person; Association support for less than a dollar per week.

A Friend of the Fort subscription contributes to:-

- ongoing public tours to promote Fort Queenscliff history,
- your personal free admission to regular tours of the Fort & the Museum; so you may proudly showcase the Fort to your visitors who will only pay for themselves,
- several "Friends of the Fort" newsletters during the year,
- invitation to social functions,
- personal support to the Fort Queenscliff Museum,
- a discount on the cost of any Fort shop purchase,
- and, you can attend Annual General Meetings to oversee future conduct of our Association, and participate in elections of the Committee of Management.

Thanks to Friends already paid, and we welcome other subscriptions from remaining Friends.

- if you use electronic banking, forward your subscription to account of "Fort Queenscliff Museum", where our BSB is 633-000 and the account number is 132018813, with your 'name-subscription' as a reference, or
- by cheque to "Fort Queenscliff Heritage Association" at King Street, Queenscliff. 3225.
- or, pay your subscription easily by the appropriate link on the Fort Queenscliff website.

Our next Annual General Meeting is planned for 14th May, so please renew your Friends of the Fort subscription without delay, if not already done.

Kind regards,

*Evan T Donohue.* Secretary – Fort Queenscliff Heritage Assoc. Inc.