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# RECOLLECTIONS ON THE DEFENCE OF SYDNEY 1939 – 1945

by  
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## RECOLLECTIONS ON THE DEFENCE OF SYDNEY 1939 – 1945

### Recollections of School, Cadets, Volunteer Defence Corps and a POW Hostel 1939-1947

by

L.P. Hindmarsh in 1995

#### Preamble

When Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced that Australia was at war on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1939, I was twenty-five days away from my fourteenth birthday. I heard the Prime Minister's broadcast on ABC radio on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September and well remember the sad flat tone in which he said:

*"Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of the persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her, and that as a result, Australia is also at war."*

Young as I was, I had known that war was inevitable from the time of the Munich crisis in 1938. When war was declared, my family was living on what is now known as the Central Coast in New South Wales. The immediate impact on me was that two favourite uncles joined up, one a qualified marine engineer in the RANVR (he survived), and the other a country doctor in the RAAMC (as adjutant of the ship's medical staff, he was drowned when the hospital ship "Centaur" was torpedoed on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1943.) This was a fairly typical response from members of a pioneer family which had been involved with the Armed Services since 1887.

In 1941 I became a boarder at St. Ignatius College Riverview on the Lane Cover River, and on the night that I joined, I was introduced by a family friend to Tom Hughes, one of the "greats" of the class of 1940. About May that year, 1941, Hughes visited the school in the uniform of a Pilot Officer RAAF and wearing wings. He was, of course, to become Tom Hughes, QC.

I attended this school from 1941 and, as the War progressed, the older fellows in my class (which included me) and in the classes ahead of mine, realised that the first stop after leaving school would be one of the Armed Services. The realisation did not worry us. What did worry us was that, when food rationing was introduced in 1942, the food served up to us, which had never been very good or plentiful, became atrocious and there was less of it!

#### Senior Cadets/Air Training Corps

The school had re-formed its Senior Cadet Detachment in 1939, and raised an Air Training Corps Flight in 1942. In those days, it was a small school with an enrolment

of about three hundred and thirty. Nevertheless, the Senior Cadets paraded as a company of three platoons with a strength of one hundred, whilst the Air Training Corps paraded with a strength of fifty. Since membership was voluntary and the minimum age fifteen, this was a creditable performance.

I joined the cadet detachment in 1941. At that time senior boys were "Senior Cadets," aged sixteen to eighteen. The movement was supported very strongly by the Australian Army, despite shortages of manpower and equipment. For example, there was a Staff Officer Senior Cadets (SOSC) at HQ NSW L of C area with an instructional staff of experienced warrant officers and sergeants. They included veterans of the North Western Frontier 1908, Mons 1914 and Western Desert 1940/41. Training consisted of two hours per week after classes and an annual camp of five days attended during school holidays. At the first camp that I attended in 1941 on the then Brookvale Showground, two members of the Australian Instructional Corps were present as instructors. The SOSC ran courses for potential Cadet Lieutenants (CUO's) and for cadet NCOs. I spent three weeks at courses during Christmas holidays 1942/1943.

Cadets who reached the ranks of Cadet Lieutenant and Sergeant had received a good grounding as infantrymen, and those who enlisted in the Army after leaving school found the transition easy. In my case I did find a minor disadvantage; having admitted to my experience, I would find myself hauled out to act as Platoon Sergeant or Section Commander during my time in training units in 1944. This tended to get me offside with the other members of my platoon; however, I survived.

### **Civil Defence**

Apart from food rationing, the immediate effect of Japan's entry into the War was the brown-out when we returned to school after the 1941/1942 Christmas holidays. Windows in night-time study areas, which were normally open in summer, now had to be blacked out and closed, making conditions most uncomfortable and certainly not conducive to study. Such are the horrors of war !

Some months into 1942, the National Emergency Service (NES) authorities approached the school to recruit fifty boys to act as spotters for magnetic mines dropped into the Harbour from hostile aircraft. The task entailed manning observation posts on the Harbour foreshores and taking bearings on the splashes. The only condition that I can remember was that sixteen was the minimum age. Of course this was a chance to get close to the real thing and fifty boys enrolled in the NES immediately. We completed an attestation form and took the Oath of Allegiance (no problem at all).

The training was superimposed, somehow, over the school programme of classes, study, cadet training and sport. We were introduced to the steel helmet, the civilian

respirator, (which differed markedly from the service respirator,) and aircraft recognition. We purchased books on aircraft recognition with our pocket money; the modellers built scale model aircraft from balsa wood, and these were hung in an aircraft recognition room. Within two or three months we all had a good knowledge of the silhouettes of allied, Japanese and German aircraft.

Practical training was carried out at night in an observation post on Greenwich Point. The post was fitted with a disc graduated in the degrees of the compass and a swinging sight. All the observer had to do was swing the sight to the splash of the mine as represented by a flashing light (probably from a Volunteer Coastal Patrol Vessel) and report the bearing. Reports from three posts would enable the position of the mine to be fixed with reasonable accuracy. One of the advantages of practical training was that, on the way back to school, we would storm the hamburger shop at Lane Cove Terminus, (so named because trams from Wynyard terminated there,) and demolish a hamburger, to subdue the pangs of hunger that were always with us.

### **Volunteer Defence Corps**

Due to my involvement as a Senior Cadet, I had quite a lot of contact with the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) in 1943. An old boy of the school commanded a local battalion and rendered unofficial support, whilst my father was a member of another VDC unit, and I attended training with him during school holidays. By 1943, I was a Sergeant and, since I knew full well that in the following year it would be the real thing, I grasped every opportunity to learn.

Records show that the VDC had been allocated a guerilla role in the event of invasion. In my contacts with them, which admittedly were piecemeal, the training appeared to be quite formal. In retrospect the VDC appears to me to have taken the place of the pre-1939 militia, parading in local halls for two hours on one night a week and on local open spaces at weekends. The training that I saw and in which I participated was squad and platoon drill, formal weapon training (with German machine guns captured in the First World War and converted to fire .303 inch ammunition,) and section battle drill.

Once again, in retrospect, section battle drill training was quite stylised and seemed to be designed for very simple soldiers. The officers and senior NCOs of the Senior Cadet Detachment paraded one Sunday with our supporting VDC CO and some of his NCOs on top of Killara reservoir, which in those days was open space. The VDC lent us their .303 inch SMLE rifles and bayonets, steel helmets and 1908 pattern leather equipment, and away we went. The whole thing was done by numbers and carried out at the double. Since there were seven of us, and since we had to be interchangeable ie: take the part of every member of the section, we doubled round the top of that reservoir at least seven times. We were provided with a cut lunch by the school which,

I am sure, in view of my earlier comments about catering, did not extend beyond jam sandwiches without butter. Such are the horrors of war !

I still have the notes that I wrote up following section battle drill training so that I could train my platoon. Whether they got anything out of it, I do not know because in the time left to me we never got beyond "Battle Drill by numbers."

Whilst some of the foregoing has been written in a jocular vein in the year that "Australia Remembers," my recollection of the VDC is one of the greatest respect. Soldiers of the First World War responded in their thousands when the Corps was formed by the RSL in 1940, and its strength grew to forty-four thousand. Members were attested, took the Oath of Allegiance and were unpaid. In the critical years, my family was living about 10km north of Gosford, in an area then devoted to citrus orchards. Many orchardists were returned soldiers and they had had a rough time during the Depression. Nevertheless, they came forward immediately and formed a local platoon with a strength of about sixty. It was with this platoon that I trained during school holidays. One thing struck me about these men: in their working clothes they appeared nondescript and undistinguished; in their uniforms they were different men. One could see behind them the spirit of the Australian Imperial Force 1914 -1919. It was not uncommon to see the ribbons of the Distinguished Conduct Medal or the Military Medal worn with the ribbons of the usual campaign awards.

### **Conclusion**

I left school at the end of 1943, enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force early in 1944, and left Sydney for the following two and a half years. When I returned to Australia on 2nd May 1946, I found that I was to be involved in the aftermath of the defence of Sydney. I was appointed to the staff of N34 Prisoner of War Hostel at St. Ives.

The Hostel was situated on the western side of Mona Vale Road, between what is now Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden and Richmond Avenue. The hostel housed about one hundred and fifty Italian Prisoners of War (PW) and eight administrative staff commanded by a Captain. Since Italy had sought peace in 1943, the hostel was unguarded and the PW were awaiting repatriation. Nevertheless, the PW had certain tasks to carry out. Every weekday, a party went to the northern beaches and dismantled the barbed wire that had been erected from Manly to Palm Beach. The wire and steel pickets both corroded after four years, were dumped east of the site of the Advanced Driving School on Mona Vale Road, and have long since rusted away.

Another and larger party went each weekday to an enormous vehicle park at North Ryde, and serviced military vehicles collected there for auction. These vehicles, modified in various ways, could be seen on the roads into the 1960's. The area of the vehicle park became a War Service Homes development.

At long last the patient Italians were repatriated early in 1947. Their triumphant progress along Mona Vale Road is another story, and not relevant to the defence of Sydney. I was one of the escort that accompanied them to Darling Harbour, where they boarded the P & O "SS Otranto" without a backward glance. On 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1947, I marched out the gate of Victoria Barracks, had a drink with a friend at a hotel opposite, and went home a civilian.

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### ADDENDA

1. Addendum One - The Defence of Sydney 1939-1945
2. Addendum Two - Australian Military Forces vs Australian Imperial Force (Australian Army)
3. Addendum Three - Civil Defence
4. Biography of author - prepared by Ken Broadhead
5. Bibliography

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**ADDENDUM ONE**  
**The Defence of Sydney 1939-1945**

**Introduction**

In 1939, a hundred and fifty years after its first settlement, Sydney was a city with a population of more than 1,000,000, a major industrial centre, a major export and import port, and the main base of the Royal Australian Navy. The defence of this important centre had always been taken seriously, but by 1933, Sydney's defences, and in fact, all Australia's defences, had reached the lowest point in twenty years, due to lack of interest on the part of government, and an economic recession. However, from that low point, defence expenditure increased annually, being spurred on by the aggressive attitude of Japan and doubts as to the capacity of Great Britain to fight a war in the West and the East simultaneously.

**Defence Forces in the Sydney Area at 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1939**

**Royal Australian Navy**

Mobilisation of Reserves ordered 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939

**Ships:**

**Cruisers**

HMAS "Australia" at Cockatoo Island completing a refit  
 HMAS "Adelaide" commissioned from reserve 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939, and alongside at Garden Island, ammunitioning, storing and cleaning ship

**Destroyers**

HMAS "Stuart" - as for "Adelaide"  
 HMAS "Waterhen" - as for "Adelaide"  
 HMAS "Arunta" under construction at Cockatoo Island

All other ships of the fleet were at sea.

Work commenced immediately on the conversion of requisitioned merchant ships to armed merchant cruisers, and ocean-going trawlers to minesweepers.

**Indicator loops**

These were insulated electronic loops laid underwater, and could detect the passage of submerged or surface vessels. There were three loops - an outer loop between North Head and Bondi, and two inner loops between Inner South Head and Outer North Head and Inner South Head and Middle Head.



## Australian Army [Australian Military Forces (AMF)]

### **Coastal defences; Fixed Defence Command**

Batteries manned by RAA [Royal Australian Artillery] and RAA(M) [Royal Australian Artillery (Militia)] personnel were sited from north to south along the Sydney coastline. Each battery had an attached Searchlight Section RAE [Royal Australian Engineers.] See details of batteries in the table below :

Title	Armament	Locations
North Battery	2 x 9.2 inch mk 10 guns	North head
Middle Battery	2 x 6 inch mk 7 guns	Middle Head
Hornby Battery	2 x 6 inch mk 7 guns	South Head
Signal Battery	2 x 6 inch mk 7 guns	Signal Hill
Banks Battery	2 x 9.2 inch mk 10 guns	Cape Banks

RAA(M) personnel were called up immediately for sixteen days' training with their batteries.

### **Anti-Aircraft [AA] Defences; Fixed Defence Command**

1<sup>st</sup> AA battery, 1<sup>st</sup> AA brigade. The 1<sup>st</sup> battery was equipped with 8x3 inch 20 cwt AA guns. Location: Georges Heights, Mosman.

### **Field Force**

There were three HQs of militia divisions in the Sydney metropolitan area, together with elements of each division. The divisions were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division;
- 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division; and
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division.

Personnel commenced to be called up in rotation for sixteen days' training. Personnel were all volunteers, but only liable for service in Australia and its Territories.

### Royal Australian Air Force

Four squadrons were stationed at Richmond, on the western edge of the Sydney metropolitan area as per table:

Squadron	Thought to be equipped with
No. 3 (Army Co-op) Squadron	Westland Wapiti and/or Hawker Demons
No. 6 (General Recce) Squadron	AVRO Ansons
No. 9 (Fleet Co-op) Squadron	Supermarine Seagulls

No. 22 (Gen. Purpose) Squadron, Citizen Air Force	AVRO Ansons
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All permanent and citizen Air Force personnel were called up for full-time duty on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1939.

### **War with Japan - Defences forces in the Sydney area 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1941 & later**

#### Royal Australian Navy

Ships in the classes listed above were not kept in port waiting for the enemy to arrive. They were deployed to their various stations at sea, returning to port for R & R and replenishment, and then returning to station or a new station.

Sydney Harbour was not left to fend for itself:

an anti-submarine torpedo boom had been erected across the Harbour between Georges Head and Green Point with gates at the western and eastern channels;

a Harbour defence flotilla had been formed, made up of boom defence vessels, minesweepers and anti-submarine vessels, and six or seven converted motor yachts acting as channel patrol boats.

#### Australian Army [Australian Military Forces (AMF)]

##### **Coastal Defences: Fixed Defence Command**

Since 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1939 these had been augmented from north to south by the following additional batteries:

Title	Armament	Location
Shelly Section	1 X 12 Pr Gun	Shelly Beach
Obelisk Section	6 Pr Twin Guns	Obelisk Bay
Casemate Section	6 Pr Twin Guns	Georges Head
Green Point Section	6 Pr Twin Guns	Green Point
Malabar Battery	2 x 6 Inch Mk 12 Guns	Long Bay
Henry Battery	2 x 18 Pr guns	Henry Head
West Battery	2 x 4.7 inch guns	West Head

##### **Anti-aircraft defences: AA defences NSW L of C (lines of communication) area**

Sydney AA Group

Units	Armament	Location
103 HAA Regt	24 x 3.7 inch guns	Sutherland (training)
7 HAA Batteries (static)	76 x 3.7 inch guns 2 x 3 inch guns 20 x 40 mm guns	Nth Sydney, Prospect, Lithgow, East Sydney, Richmond
3 LAA Regiments	96 x 40 mm guns	throughout the Sydney area

### **Field force**

Following the declaration of war with Japan, the militia divisions were called up for full-time duty, being brought up to strength by universal trainees:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division; deployed along the north and south coasts outside the Sydney area
- 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (less one brigade); deployed along northern beaches and south to Port Kembla
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division; Eastern Command Reserve

The Newcastle-Sydney-Port Kembla area was appreciated as a vital Area.

### **Garrison Battalions**

Raised from older men most of whom had seen service in 1914-1918.

Role: local defence of coast batteries, guards at wharves and other vital points.

### **Volunteer Defence Corps**

Originally sponsored by the RSL members: were unpaid part-time volunteers organised as battalions.

Role: support garrison battalions in local defence of coast batteries. Act as guerillas in the event of invasion.

Later, as the Japanese threat receded, the VDC manned coast and AA Batteries on a part time and full-time basis (full-time personnel were paid).

### **Beach Defence**

Following declaration of war with Japan, barbed wire was erected on Sydney's beaches and, where appropriate, anti-tank obstacles in the form of ditches and tetrahedrons.

### Royal Australian Air Force

Squadron	Equipped with	Location
No 6 (general recce)	Lockheed Hudsons	Richmond
No 9 (fleet co-op)	Supermarine Seagull	Richmond
No 22 (general purp.)	Wirraways/later Bostons	Bankstown
No 24 (fighter)	Airacobra	Richmond

### Women in the Armed Forces

For the first time women other than nurses were being enlisted into the armed services, the majority in administrative, signalling, driving and catering roles.

From June 1942 the Army went a step further and employed AWAS (Australian Women's Army Service) personnel in coast batteries and static AA Batteries as plotters and instrument operators. AWAS personnel were excluded from forward areas at this time, but nevertheless these roles were combat roles.

### Civil Defence

A Department of National Emergency Services (NES) was set up on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1939, and, through committees, provided wardens, first aid, decontamination, rescues, repairs, liaison with essential services, emergency communications, shelters, demolition, warnings, lighting, vehicles and unexploded bomb disposal.

Municipalities and shires were designated "areas" and divided into sectors of 250/500 people. Apart from full-time professional and administrative staff, NES workers were unpaid part-time volunteers, both men and women, and, in at least one case, boys aged sixteen plus were recruited at a boarding school as mine-spotters

### Other Volunteer Women's Organisations

Voluntary Aid Detachments

Women's Air League

Women's Auxiliary National Service

Women's Emergency Signalling Corps



### Enemy Action

#### German

German armed merchant cruisers were active in all Australian waters:

28<sup>th</sup> October 1940      AMC "Penguin" laid mines between Sydney and Newcastle at night. Bridge officer plotted searchlights and navigation lights at Newcastle, Norah Head, Barrenjoey and Sydney;

24<sup>th</sup> November 1940   Coastal Steamer "Nimbin" sunk by a mine from this field;

25<sup>th</sup> March 1941        Trawler "Millimumul" sunk by mine 30 miles east of Broken Bay;

Reaction: air patrols, minesweeping operations by 20<sup>th</sup> Minesweeping Flotilla and Auxiliary Group

#### Japanese Submarines

14<sup>th</sup> February 1942    I-25, 2,600 tons, range 14,000 miles 5.5 inch gun, reconnaissance floatplane arrived off Sydney ;

16<sup>th</sup> May 1942         Eastern Attack Group arrived off central NSW coast. Three mother submarines, as for I-25, carrying midget submarines and two carrying floatplanes ;

19<sup>th</sup> February 1943    I-21 (of the Eastern Attack Group) returned to Sydney

#### Reconnaissance flights over Sydney

17<sup>th</sup> February 1942    from I-25, came in over La Perouse towards Parramatta, banked over Ryde and Willoughby. Returned to I-25. No reaction from Sydney's defences;

- 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1942 from I-29 at dawn, returned but damaged on landing, no further use. No reaction from Sydney's defence. Recce report from I-29's Captain intercepted;
- 30<sup>th</sup> May 1942 from I-21 pre-dawn, came in over South Head, flew over the Harbour. Returned to I-29 but ditched. Sighted from Middle Head but identified as friendly, report from civilian spotter ignored;
- 19<sup>th</sup> February 1943 from I-21 early evening flew over harbour. Returned to I-21. Engaged by AA Batteries. No 24 (fighter) squadron "scrambled."

### **Midget Submarine Attack**

- 31<sup>st</sup> May 1942 three midget submarines enter Sydney Harbour late evening. Depth charged and engaged by naval gunfire; none returned to mother submarines. Coastal Battery Searchlight Sections RAE assisted with illumination.

### **Bombardment of Bellevue Hill/ Rose Bay**

- 8<sup>th</sup> June 1942 12:15 am I-24 fired 10 rounds into the above area - 9 failed to explode. The operation took about one minute at the conclusion of which I-24 dived. Coastal Batteries took post to engage but I-24 had gone.

### **Attacks on shipping between Newcastle and Port Kembla 16<sup>th</sup> May 1942/6<sup>th</sup> June 1943**

Sunk	6
Damaged	5
Chased / attacked/ not damaged	4

### **Perspective**

Sydney's defences were strong but obviously required "tuning." Refer first two reconnaissance flights over Sydney.

Enemy activity along the Sydney coastline, whilst dramatic and exciting, was not even a flea bite when compared with what Great Britain was being subjected to, the Battle of the Atlantic and operations in the English Channel.

Although Sydney real estate took a slump and Blue Mountain's real estate appreciated, "Middle Sydney," not in the armed services full-time, carried on with

their jobs and gave countless hours to the VAD, NES and other voluntary patriotic organisations. "Middle Sydney" was prepared to "take them on."

Much has been said regarding the heroism and dedication of the midget submarine crews. However, compare with:

- Australians in the RAAF and RAF who were "Pathfinders";
- Australians in 617 "Dambusters" Squadron, RAF;
- Z Special Force and two raids on Singapore, and
- the service of the independent Commando companies

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**ADDENDUM TWO**  
**Australian Military Forces**  
**vs**  
**Australian Imperial Force (Australian Army)**

**Preamble**

The purpose of this chapter is to shed some light on the deployment of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Divisions AMF.

The distinction between AMF and Australian Imperial force AIF troops must be clearly understood. The AMF was the militia or citizen military force, the members of which could only serve in Australia and its Territories. The AIF was an entirely separate force whose members had volunteered for service anywhere in the world.

The full story of the "two army" situation has yet to be written; suffice to say that it was the cause of much bitterness. The AIF is not considered further in this paper except to say that had a situation developed in the Sydney area, AIF troops training in the area would surely have been involved.

As a footnote, the members of the small Permanent Military Force (PMF), most of whom gained promotion, were eventually dispersed throughout the AMF and AIF and their influence was invaluable.

**War declared 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939**

Units went into camp in rotation for sixteen days' training. Some units provided guards for vital points following the declaration.

In January 1940, the Commonwealth Government introduced a system of universal training for home defence, whereby men were called up for three months' (later six months') continuous training. The men were drafted to AMF units in their areas. Training was carried out in the Hunter Valley at Largs, Rutherford and Greta, also in the Sydney area at Narellan, Ingleburn and Wallgrove. There appears to have been no choice of Corps. At the end of each three months' continuous training, units reverted to pre-war style home training for three months. Later Infantry Brigades formed Brigade Training Battalions, staffed by cadres of officers and NCOs from the three battalions in the Brigade. It appears that trainees marched into the Training Battalion, completed three months' elementary training, at the conclusion of which they marched into the battalions of the Brigade and Brigade Training.

The system imposed an enhanced administrative load on the units of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Divisions, and in consequence a large number of personnel went on to full-



time duty. Here it must be stated that all universal trainees were not willing soldiers. On the other hand, many trainees later transferred to the AIF, whilst others were anxious to serve for home defence.

1940 and 1941 were difficult years for many AMF members. As each AIF division was raised, there was an exodus of AMF personnel, until a point was reached when officers and NCOs in key appointments were forbidden to transfer. At the same time, many pre-war militia men and universal trainees, who wanted to transfer to the AIF and were not aged twenty-one, were prevented from doing so because they could not get their parents' written consent. Others could not transfer because they could not meet AIF medical standards. Members of the AMF came to be known as "chocos" a derisory abbreviation of "chocolate soldier" which, of course, was very unfair to personnel in the categories described above.

Some statistics regarding the exodus of officers to the AIF are revealing. Between September 1939 and January 1940, twenty-two officers transferred to 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade AIF from 30<sup>th</sup> battalion NSW Scottish. In the case of 7<sup>th</sup> Field Brigade RAA (Militia) / 7<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RAA (Militia) thirty-six officers, including a commanding officer, transferred to the AIF between September 1939 and November 1940. The result was that many officers were recalled from the retired list and the reserve of officers and the ranks of units were combed for potential officers to fill the void.

On 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1941, the units of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> infantry Divisions entered camp once again for three months' continuous training. They were to remain in uniform for four years, and the majority of the personnel were to see much active service.

### **Japan enters the war - Australia declares war on Japan 9<sup>th</sup> December 1941**

Within a few days, units of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisions (already in camp) were brought up to full strength by calling up Universal Trainees who had previously completed their three or six months' training.

1st infantry division, which was under command GOC Eastern Command, appears to have been deployed as follows:

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade

4 battalions - Newcastle area (not relevant to this narrative)

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade

2 battalions - Thornleigh. Appears to have been the position of Brigade Headquarters.

17th battalion, North Sydney Regiment, assumed to be one of the Battalions, is known to have occupied positions at Manly, Harbord and Curl Curl.

23<sup>rd</sup> infantry brigade

2 Battalions - Wollongong assumed to have been the position of Brigade Headquarters. Further assumed that the two battalions occupied positions in the Wollongong area and north to Botany Bay.

1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion, City of Sydney Regiment Centennial Park. If this battalion was divisional reserve, it would have been well forward. The assumption is that the battalion was deployed between Bondi and Botany Bay.

Two Garrison Battalions were attached to 9th and 23rd Infantry Brigades and two more were guarding vulnerable points.

2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division also under command GOC Eastern Command was command reserve and concentrated as follows:

5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Bathurst  
 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Wallgrove  
 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Greta

In March 1942 there was a change. At time of writing [1995] what is definitely known is that 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade moved forward to the coast, and 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade moved from Bathurst to Wallgrove.

Some detail is known of the deployment of two units of 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. The 30<sup>th</sup> Battalion relieved the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the positions Manly/Curl Curl. Battalion Headquarters was at Frenchs Forest, near the intersection of Wakehurst Parkway and Warringah Road (thought to be in the south-west corner of the intersection). "A" Company Headquarters was on Allambie Road above the golf course. Vickers guns covered the valley occupied by the golf course. Vickers guns were also sited on each headland to enfilade the beaches.

The deployment of 7<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment is impossible to understand without reference to the orders. Reference to the unit war diary is no help at all; it did not exist at that time ! What has been gleaned is:

26<sup>th</sup> Battery deployed at Frenchs Forest, C Troop observation post was established on the North East slope of Manly Trig (Beacon Hill).

C Troop pnot [*sic – unsure of meaning*] was reference Sydney 1: 63360 at coordinates E424464 N830248. This places the troop North East of the intersection of Wakehurst Parkway and Warringah Road.

The history of the NSW Scottish Regiment says: "the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment was in a position along the escarpment where the Spastic Centre Hostel and Sunnyfield Hostel now stand." Was this D troop of 26<sup>th</sup> Battery? If so, contrary to the doctrine of the time, there was an enormous distance between troops. Usually 183 metres was the distance.

27<sup>th</sup> Battery less F troop deployed on East Lakes Golf Course. Accommodation for battery personnel was provided in recently constructed houses in Florence Avenue and Vernon Street.

25<sup>th</sup> Battery plus F Troop from 27<sup>th</sup> battery deployed in the Mount Keira area near Wollongong.

From the deployment of 7<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, the writer can only deduce that 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was deployed as a thin screen along the coast from Palm Beach to Wollongong.

It is known that 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was withdrawn from its forward positions between 29<sup>th</sup> May 1942 and 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942, and concentrated at Greta, prior to moving to Western Australia as part of 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, which came under command of Lieutenant General H.G. Bennett's 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Corps. 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade also moved with the division to Western Australia.

7<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment staged at St. Ives showground and Hassell Park, St. Ives over the weekend 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> May. The regiment was given weekend leave, and whilst the gunners were reporting back to Pymble Station on the night of the 31<sup>st</sup>, the midget submarine attack was in full swing. The gunners knew nothing about it until next morning, when the regiment continued the move to Greta.

14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade had moved from Greta to Queensland at some time prior to these moves, and embarked at Townsville on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1942 to join the garrison of Port Moresby. The "Kokoda to Wau" volume of the Official History makes a number of references to the inexperience and lack of training of this Brigade. The comments are valid having regard to the year, 1942, and the presence in Australia of the battle-hardened brigades of the AIF, recently returned from the Middle East. The comments in the Official History are a severe reflection on the efficiency of the three months' training scheme.

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### ADDENDUM THREE

#### Civil defence

The Civil Defence Organisation in Australia was known as the National Emergency Service and was set up by the Federal Department of National Emergency Services, established on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1939. The organisation followed the British model very closely.

In Britain the Government had commenced civil defence planning in 1936. The planners drew heavily on the experience of Zeppelin and Gotha raids in 1914-1918 and events in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939.) That the planners did their homework was borne out by events in the near future. The published record of Britain's Civil Defence, "*Front Line 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Great Britain*," by C.R. Leslie, Chief Provost, Ministry of Home Security, HMSO (1942) confirms that the British studied the precedents carefully. The similarity of the British organisation to the Australian organisation will be seen when the reader notes the references to "local authorities" and to the "Town Clerk" in the attached extract and the Australian "area" organisation based on municipalities and shires. The control centre for New South Wales was set up in the sub-basement of Railway House in York Street, Sydney.

Sydney took the threat of air raids more and more seriously as the War continued. Advice about the precautions to take appeared regularly in the print media. Demonstrations in Martin Place showed citizens how to deal with incendiary bombs. Demonstration family shelters were set up in department stores and in the Domain. There was an upsurge of interest in first aid.



*Air raid protection erected around the old Sydney General Post Office on the corner of Pitt Street and Martin Place in 1942. The new post office building is also visible on the left as are Red Cross posters on the GPO and signs for a pedestrian refuge in the street. Source: National Archives of Australia.*

Following Japan's entry into the War, precautions against air attack were stepped up. The clock tower was removed from the GPO in 1942 not to reappear for many years. (It was rebuilt in 1964 during the time of the Askin state government.) A brownout, as distinct from a blackout, was enforced, which meant that street lights were turned off and motor vehicle head-lights were hooded. Lights were not permitted to shine from the windows of buildings, and this restriction involved covering the window permanently with a black material eg: paper or fabric, or fitting a blackout screen at sunset. Windows were also criss-crossed with tape to lessen the effect of shattering by bomb blast. In the city, display windows of department stores were boarded over and the entrances to major city buildings were protected by walls or sandbags. Stirrup pumps and buckets of sand appeared in the stairwells of city buildings, so that staff could attack incendiary bombs. Air-raid shelters were constructed in public places.

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**Biography of Author**  
**by Ken Broadhead**

Major Laurie P.W. Hindmarsh ED RAA (Ret'd)  
 (28 September 1925 - 24 April 2022)

Born Roseville, moved to farm at Lisarow, educated St. Ignatius College, Riverview.

Enlisted from school. Recruit training in Cowra – present when Japanese POWs staged breakout August 1944.

Posted to 22nd Bn AIF and served New Britain January 1945 – May 1946.

Posted as Accounts Officer/Guard at Camp for Italian ex-POW/Internees, St Ives NSW.

Served CMF 7<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RAA 1948 – 1961, Command and Staff Training Unit 1961-1963.

Long term member RUSI-NSW especially on Library Committee.



Corporate accounting career at Caltex, Mercantile Mutual, and Doubleday Publishing. President RAA Association NSW and tireless worker for RAA Historical Company North Head.

Acknowledged as Contributor and Critic to *“We Stood and Waited – Sydney’s Anti-Ship Defences 1939-1945”* by R.K. Fullford, RAA Historical Society Inc, 1994.

Sought-after speaker on defence of Sydney and Italian POWs.

Enjoyed his family, polo and studying military history.

We extend thanks to Mrs Jennifer Hindmarsh and family for their support of this Monograph.

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