

THE FURPHY

ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

August 2025 Edition



**1 Commerce Ave, Armadale, WA 6112
PO Box 697, Armadale, WA 6992**

Ph: (08) 9497 1972

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General Meetings:

Second Sunday of the month at 1100hrs

Annual General Meeting:

Second Sunday of September

Committee Positions

Armada Sub-Branch Committee	
President	Mr Mike Fairweather
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Ms Carol King
Treasurer	Mrs Cheryl Cowie
Warden	Mr Graeme Cowie
Warden	Mr Mick Quinn
Membership Officer	Mr Tom Rynn
Committee	Mr Bob Giles
Committee	Mr Keith Northcott
Committee	Mr Geoff Scott
Advocate / Welfare Officer	Mr Brent Errington
Bar Manager	Mr Mike Fairweather

ADVOCATE / WELFARE

Brent Errington “Erro” is available as follows:

At the Armadale RSL Sub-Branch:

Monday: by appointment only

Thursday: between 0900 - 1400hrs

Weekday Contact Details:

Mobile: 0407 449 150

e-mail: welfare2@armadalersl.com.au

Diary Dates for August

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>
Sunday	3 rd	Social Committee Meeting	1100
Tuesday	5 th	Management Committee Meeting	1100
Sunday	10 th	General Meeting	1100

REMINDERS

***General Meetings are held on the 2nd
Sunday of each month and now***

Commence at 1100 hours

(not 1030 as in the past)

***Nominations for the
September AGM close on
Sunday 10th August***

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi Members,

I'd like to extend my thanks for the Armadale Police Rangers and the 1st Armadale Scout Groups for their overnight Vigil prior to our ANZAC Day Dawn Service each year. We held a small thank you luncheon on 26th July to show them our appreciation.

Thanks for Cheryl and Graeme Cowie, Keith Northcott and Mick Quinn for helping both the Secretary and myself out on the day.

Nominations for the AGM close after the August General Meeting. The vacant Executive positions for the AGM are: President (2 years), Vice President (1 year) and Treasurer (2 years). All nominations received will then be posted on the board until voting at the AGM on Sunday 14th September. Please consider standing for a position on either the Executive or the Committee.

Thanks everyone for their support to date and cheers for now,

Mike Fairweather

President

Returned Services League Armadale Sub-Branch

Ph: (08) 9497 1972. M: 0403 980 290

1 Commerce Avenue Armadale WA 6112 | PO Box 697 Armadale WA 6992

e-mail: president@armadalersl.com.au





No.711 Panzer IV D destroyed in battle of Stonne with crew's tomb, May 1940

Secretary's Notes

Hi Everyone,

We had a great afternoon of music and food on Sunday 20th with the Heartbeats Band. Lisa supplied the food and it was very well received by all.

We have a couple of private bookings for hall hire in August, one for SESVA (10th Anniversary and the CWA will be holding a Quiz Night.

The next public event will be the Father's Day roast lunch and names are now being taken until 24th August.

The Cloud 9 Band will be playing on that day.

That's about all from me for this edition.

Carol King

Sub-Branch Secretary

e-mail: secretary@armadalersl.com.au

**What do you call a
typo on a
headstone?
A grave mistake.**

A Polish man married an American girl, and though his English wasn't very good, they got along very well. One day he rushes into a lawyer's office and asks him to arrange a divorce for him. The lawyer says that getting a divorce would depend on the circumstances, and asks him the following questions: "Have you any grounds?" "Yes, an acre and a half and a nice little home." "No, I mean what is the foundation of this case?" "It's made of concrete." "I don't think you understand. Does either of you have a real grudge?" "No, we have carport, and not need one." "I mean what are your relations like?" "All my relations still in Poland. "Is there any infidelity in your marriage?" "We have hi-fidelity stereo and good DVD player." "Does your wife beat you up?" "No, I always up before her." "Why do you want this divorce?" "She going to kill me." "What makes you think that??" "I got proof." "What kind of proof?" "She going to poison me. She buy a bottle at drugstore and put on shelf in bathroom. I can read English pretty good, and it say: POLISH REMOVER."

Membership Update

As at 31st July, 2025:

Service Members:	135
Affiliate Members:	40
Social Members:	<u>70</u>
Total:	<u>245</u>

If any Service or Affiliate member has not yet received their Membership Card from RSLWA then please let me know ASAP.

Tom Rynn

Tel: 0439 934 285

e-mail: tomrynn@bigpond.com





Hiller X-18 an experimental cargo transport aircraft designed to be the first testbed for tiltwing and VSTOL (vertical/short take-off and landing) technology.

The X-18 had 20 successful flights, however on the 20th and final flight the aircraft had a propeller pitch control problem when attempting to convert to a hover and the aircraft went into a spin, luckily the crew was able to recover the aircraft but this was her last flight.

All further testing would be completed on a VTOL test stand (aircraft is on this stand in the first picture of the photo feature) until the project was cancelled on January 18, 1964.

The data gained from the X-18 program was invaluable in the later XC-142 program.

Most notably that cross-shafting of the engines was necessary to prevent loss of control in the event of a loss of an engine, and finally that direct propeller pitch control was necessary for precise height and lateral control during vertical take offs/ landings & hover.

From the Treasurer

Hello Everyone,

Following the success of the Heartbeats afternoon there have been many suggestions as to how much money we would have made and lots of ideas for how often we should hold these events. For clarification, I thought I'd outline how we did on the day.

INCOME:	Bar	\$2,181.23	
	Raffles	\$227.50	
	\$25 Cash /Cards	<u>\$250.00</u>	<u>\$2,658.23</u>

EXPENDITURE:	Band	\$750.00	
	Ham (for Raffle)	\$40.00	
	Bar Costs (Drinks)	\$1,047.00	
	Bar (Wages)	<u>\$345.00</u>	<u>\$2,182.00</u>

PROFIT:			\$476.73
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Notes:

- All food was at no Profit to the Sub-Branch (private contractor)*
- Volunteers sold raffles for the entire day*
- Cleaning on Monday morning – 2 volunteers x 3 hours each (would have been at \$42 per hour should contractors have been employed)*

From the above, you will see that there is very little profit to be made when holding these events however, we will continue to organise bands periodically.

We do thank our members and their guests for attending, your patronage is sincerely appreciated by us all.

Cheryl Cowie

Sub-Branch Treasurer

e-mail: accounts@armadalersl.com.au



American Liberty ship SS Robert Rowan explodes after being hit by German Junkers Ju 88 bombers off Gela, Sicily, July 11, 1943



German Jagdpanzer 38(t) self-propelled guns captured by the Red Army near the Czechoslovakian city of Nove Mesto.



August Service Members:

Beven	Mr	Ken	28/08	Briggs	Mr	Mark	15/08
Buti	Mr	Antonio	20/08	Devries	Mr	Christopher	15/08
Hewitson	Mr	Alan	17/08	Husking	Mr	Peter	22/08
Knight	Mr	Michael	09/08	Livesey	Mr	Adam	05/08
McDonnell	Mr	Graeme	04/08	Rynn	Mr	Thomas	31/08
Smith	Mr	Robert	20/08	Tooth	Mr	Geoffrey	11/08

August Affiliate Members:

Brown	Mr	Ray	11/08	Galvin	Mrs	Joan	18/08
Kostin	Ms	Vicki	12/08	Lewis	Mr	Steve	29/08
Symonds	Mrs	Karan	28/08				

August Social Members:

Beckham	Ms	Patricia	24/08	Borger	Mr	Henk	06/08
Craven	Mr	Vince	02/08	Gunjila	Mr	Stjepan	15/08
Nonnok	Ms	Phanphanat	07/08	Reeves	Mr	Sean	06/08
Thornton	Mr	David	20/08				

*If anyone has been missed off the list, please advise
Tom Rynn (Membership Officer)*

*These members may collect a free drink of their
choice during the month*

We hope you have a very special Birthday

CLOUD 9 BAND

***Appearing at the
Armadale RSL***



Sunday, 7th September 12:30pm

***Get a group of friends together and join
us for a great afternoon of musical
entertainment***

Free Entry

Fathers Day Luncheon

**Sunday 7th September, 2025
(1230 hours)**



***Roast:* Beef or Pork**
\$20 per Person

***Desserts:* Sticky Date Pudding
Cherry Ripe Cheesecake
Peach Cobbler**
\$5 pay on the Day

Bar Manager's Report

G'day All,

I don't have much to say in this edition, everything seems to be ticking along quite well at the moment.

Thanks to all those loyal members who continue to support the Sub-Branch week after week.

I have nothing else to report currently so will say bye for now,

Stormy



Kangaroos by the Pyramids

Author: **Duncan Beard** (01 April 2022)



An Australian soldier plays with a regimental mascot at Mena Camp, December 1914

The first contingent of soldiers destined for the war in Europe left Western Australia on 1 November 1914, thinking that they were headed to England for training before proceeding to the Western Front. But it was decided that the overcrowded military camps in England were unsuitable for so many men over winter, so the Australians instead disembarked in Egypt on 3 December 1914, making their way to Mena Camp, a vast training facility near the great pyramids about 16 kilometres from Cairo. At its peak, there were around 25,000 soldiers in camp. After training for six days of the week, the soldiers were allowed to explore. Most had never been outside Australia, and became eager tourists. While the pyramids and Sphinx were popular attractions, it was also easy to travel into Cairo city, with its bazaars, cafés and brothels.

When Charles Bean arrived in Egypt, he was ordered to prepare a booklet. *What to Know in Egypt: A Guide for Australian Soldiers*, published

early in 1915, was similar in form to a tourist guide. It explained common causes of sickness and how to avoid them; the history of the pyramids, provided useful phrases for the visitor, and warned against “familiarity with native women”, which could lead to venereal disease. Bean warned: “A great part of the population is anxious to know the European in order to make money out of him. They will become a nuisance if allowed to be familiar.” The handbook included a dozen helpful phrases in Arabic, including two ways of saying “go away”.

As Australian troops were some of the best paid, shops called The Fair Dinkum Store, Ribuck Goods and The Melbourne Store (located next to the Sydney Store) began to appear. The locals became known to the diggers as “Gyppos”, and were viewed as devious and conniving (although easily beaten), subservient and unclean figures who obsequiously attempted to extort tourists. Mistrust led to tension, and there were plenty of instances of physical confrontation. Captain Kynvett, who gleefully recounted teaching Egyptian newsboys how to swear, boasted in his memoir:

*There was a good deal of Irish blood among us, and many men who would rather fight than go to the opera, so there was some good old ding-dong scraps. Of course the ‘Gyppo’ is no fighter, but he can stand behind and throw stones and can’t resist plunging the knife into an inviting back, so sometimes our boys would get laid out ... I saw a pretty ugly-looking crowd dispersed with a characteristic Australian weapon. Firing over their heads had no effect, nor threats of a bayonet charge, but when two Australian bushmen began plying stockwhips, those n**gers made themselves scarcer than mice on the smell of a cat.*

To many Australian soldiers, the cosmopolitan nature of Cairo came as a shock, and some viewed the city as a den of vice. Guy Thornton, a chaplain of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, wrote a book entirely devoted to the evils of Cairo:

It was a nightmare – inconceivably vile and horribly grotesque. The narrow, evil-smelling, tortuous lanes literally lined by these poor degraded women of almost every nationality, the foul cries of solicitation sounded in a veritable Babel of tongues, the barbaric dress and ornaments which many of them wore, the flaring lights, the flaunting evils, all combined to produce on the

mind of a European an impression of unreality ... Thank God, however, there was not one British woman in that motley throng.

There were, however, plenty of European sex workers in Cairo, largely a result of British colonialism. Although supposedly part of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt had been occupied by the British army since 1882. With the declaration of war in 1914, a protectorate was formally declared. Fear of venereal disease led British authorities to create a system of regulations for state-controlled prostitution. Women were given licenses and underwent regular medical check-ups. Venereal disease continued to run rampant, but there was an insatiable demand from the army, the colonial bureaucracy and the tourist sector.

By the time the Anzacs arrived, the brothels were doing a roaring trade. A class system was in operation, with French women servicing officers, while the services of Egyptian, Sudanese and Nubian women were offered in the Wass'ah district, close to Shepheard's Hotel, where the elite colonials mixed and mingled. When the Anzacs arrived, "the Wazza" became well known for venereal diseases. With no reliable form of protection, Australian soldiers who visited the brothels became infected with gonorrhoea, syphilis, and chancroid.

By February 1915, the VD epidemic among Australian troops was alarming their commanders. A Cairo conference of army doctors was told that about 1,000 men were in hospital with venereal disease every day. The 520-bed 1st Australian General Hospital was established, but the number of venereal patients was so great that another 500 beds were added. The 300-bed 2nd Australian Stationary Hospital at the Mena camp was, by the end of January, completely filled with venereal patients, with 150 more waiting to be admitted.



Four Australian soldiers from Mena Camp visit the Sphinx, c.1915

The Wazza

By April 1915, there were a lot of troops with venereal diseases, and tensions in the Wass'ah district were high. There had been complaints about the quality of alcohol sold in the area (one soldier said that the beer “was expensive and it was reckoned that the Gippos pissed in it to give it colour”). There was concern about the spread of venereal disease, as well as stories of pimps ripping off soldiers.

The 2nd of April 1915 was Good Friday. Anzacs waiting to go to Gallipoli were on leave, when a rumour spread that Egyptians had stabbed some Anzacs. By the afternoon a riot had developed. At its peak, up to 2,500 Australian and New Zealand soldiers were involved. Sex workers were thrown from the windows of several houses in an alley. Furniture was piled onto a street, and a fire was started. Firefighters sent to stop the blaze were attacked. When British military police arrived, they fired shots over the crowd to disperse the rioters, who responded by pelting them with rocks and beer bottles. A gang of soldiers began looting and burning shops. By nightfall, the rioters had dispersed, and by early morning the excitement died down.

Some believed that it had started with a mission to rescue a young Englishwoman who was being held as a sex slave. A court of inquiry “found that the riot grew out of an incident arising from two or three disgruntled Australians trying to extort money from some prostitutes who they said had given them VD.”

Regardless of its origins, the fracas entered into Anzac folklore, and became known as “the battle of the Wazza”. A Greek counterfeiter manufactured a medallion, one side of which read, “The Battle of the Wassaa”; the other read, “I was there”. The Memorial has a dug-out sign from a Gallipoli trench with “The Wozzer” inscribed on it. In the Official History, Bean noted that the riots “were not heroic, but they also differed very little from what at Oxford and Cambridge and in Australian universities is known as a ‘rag’.” While it is the best known example of Australians terrorising the local population, the battle of the Wazza was a large-scale version of what was happening on a regular basis. Many of the Anzac troops revelled in the destruction they caused in Cairo, most of which was written off as larrikinism: boisterous but harmless skylarking.

The Egalitarian Myth

Some accounts claim that this can be partially explained by the fact that, while English soldiers had a tendency to stand apart from the local population and maintain cultural and colonial and class barriers, the Australians did not, instead interacting openly with locals without much consideration for difference, which led to conflict. While this idea really leans into the ideal of Australian egalitarianism, it does not account for the fact that a similar riot took place in 1919, involving British troops. While the Australians may have interacted with locals differently from the way British soldiers did, they were by no means above treating Egyptians with superior disdain, and in many instances this appeared as outright bullying.

With the local population suffering at the hands of a heavy-handed occupation, Egyptian support for the war evaporated. As well as thousands of imperial troops (including unruly Australians) being stationed in Egypt, over one and a half million Egyptians had been conscripted into the Labour Corps. Buildings, supplies and animals were requisitioned for use in the war effort.

Shortly after the 1918 Armistice, a delegation of Egyptian nationalist activists led by Saad Zaghlul made a request to end the British Protectorate, and to gain Egyptian representation at the planned peace conference in Paris. In response, Britain ordered the exile of Saad Zaghlul and other members of the group, leading to a countrywide rebellion in March and April of 1919.

Australian troops who had remained in Egypt after the war were involved in suppressing the rebellion. Australian Captain Hector Dinning's memoir describes how senior commanders sent Australian troops to patrol in the Egyptian provinces: *Two Australians were shot whilst patrolling the Canal. In the general flogging that ensued in that village, many died of the laceration. This was the end of sniping. Inciters to revolt in the provinces and plunderers were court-martialled and flogged. It was very effective. Gradually the provinces were forced into quietness.*



C Company, 8th Battalion , AIF. at the foot of the Great Pyramid of Giza, Egypt, 1914

The rebellion suppressed, numerous villages incinerated, and with the deaths of many Egyptians, Britain unilaterally declared Egyptian independence (without any negotiations with Egypt) on the 28th of February 1922. The Anglo–Egyptian Treaty of 1936 allowed Britain to maintain a garrison of 10,000 men in the Suez Canal Zone, and to maintain control of Sudan.

The treaty failed to provide independence; power was still in British hands, and the treaty's signing produced a new wave of anti-British demonstrations.

Second World War

With the beginning of the Second World War, Egypt again became vital to British interests. For its part, Egypt considered the war a European conflict and hoped to avoid being involved. Egyptians grew increasingly convinced that Germany would win the war, and many were pleased by thoughts of the destruction of the hated occupiers. Egyptian troops were not sent to fight, for fear that they would revolt. Instead, they were used for guard duty and logistical tasks. Egypt remained technically neutral until it declared war against the Axis in February 1945.

Amid all of this, Australian soldiers returned to the Middle East. The 6th and 9th Divisions would be there for two years, the 7th Division for more than one. In total, 100,000 to 130,000 Australian soldiers served in the Middle East during the Second World War. Memories of Australians rampaging through Cairo were still fresh; and according to some, this caused the Egyptian government to insist that Australian troops be kept out of the country, which was part of the reason they were sent to Palestine instead.

Just as the typical First World War soldier had few experiences of international travel, the average Australian soldier of the Second World War was a labourer who had left school before he was 14, and would have had little knowledge of the people and places he would visit. Australians were again noted as not relating to locals with the same authoritarian attitude as the British, but being just as overbearing. Seeing the pyramids and going to where their fathers and uncles had encamped during the First World War was significant to the men of the Second AIF; they were acutely aware of their Anzac forbears, and were impressed by the stories they had heard from veterans reminiscing about the battle of the Wazza. Those veterans had told younger troops that Egyptians would “thieve the eye from a needle”, while NCOs told their men that Egyptians were disease-ridden thieves.

After the experiences of the First World War, most British officers assumed that Australian soldiers would be ill-disciplined. British General Sir Archibald Wavell, Commander in Chief of the Middle East, greeted the arriving Australians. He told them that their forebears had “left a very great reputation as soldiers out here, which I am quite sure you will maintain and increase ... But they also left in some countries of the Middle East a reputation of another kind, for a lack of restraint and discipline, which I am sure you will not wish to maintain but to remove.”

In the Wass’ah district of Cairo, the military again set up brothels controlled by the Medical Corps, and medical centres were established to try to prevent servicemen contracting VD. Army medical services oversaw regular check-ups of sex workers carried out by civilian authorities. There were warning signs, showing a cross on a white background, at both ends of the street.

Jack Barber of the 2/17th Battalion noted on his arriving at Port Said:

We had all been lectured on VD and personal hygiene, and certain places in the city were declared out of bounds to all. In one area of the city, there were streets of brothels. These were to pose a big problem for the army with so many men on the loose at night. It was only a matter of time before the CO and medical officers decided to ban all the brothels with the exception of two ... which were regularly visited by the medics. The girls working in these places had a framed calendar in their rooms which was stamped whenever they had passed the regular medical inspection.

He also made remarks that bring to mind the background of the battle of the Wazza: “With the rapid influx of so many soldiers from allied countries, it wasn’t long before some of the back streets ... became inter-colonial battlegrounds ... The troops fighting each other would immediately become friends and start fighting the [British Military Police].”

However, there were no large-scale riots this time. While there was certainly conflict, when the 6th Division was sent to Helwan (near Cairo) and Amiriya (near Alexandria) there were fewer incidents than expected. The official history reports that even when several thousand Australians were on leave, only a dozen or fewer were arrested each day; on days when there were 500 or fewer on leave, there were usually no arrests. There were no further battles of the Wazza.

Authorities closed down the red light district in May 1942 after two Australian soldiers were killed in the area. Some of the troops blamed General Bernard Montgomery, who had a reputation as a puritan, for this closure.



Mena Camp, Egypt, 1915

Real soldiers

Australians maintained their reputation as outstanding soldiers, while continuing an overbearing relationship with locals. As British Gunner Len Tutt recorded: “I yield to no one in my admiration of them as soldiers,” but “anyone with coloured skin was akin to the aborigines of their native land, and the whole world knows how badly they have treated them. All the Egyptians were, in the diggers’ eyes, seventh or eighth class citizens. It was possible to inflict any indignity upon one of them and it could be put right afterwards by tossing him a couple of piastres.” Tutt reported that Egyptian sex workers “really dreaded the Australians as customers”. As was the case during the First World War, Australian soldiers often refused to pay their bills and had a reputation for terrorising the local population.

While the similarities to the First World War experiences of Australians in Egypt are many, what had changed was the scope of Australian military action in Egypt, which became the site of the Australians' most significant battle in the Middle East. In late 1941, the German Afrika Korps, led by "Desert Fox" Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, entered western Egypt, threatening Cairo and the Suez Canal. As part of the British Eighth Army, the Australian 9th Division played a key role in turning the tide during the battles of El Alamein. Lieutenant Tas Gill of the 2/48th Battalion, described the sight of a 40-mile convoy of Australian troops heading towards El Alamein: "Cairo went hysterical when the Aussies, loaded on trucks and stripped to the waist, eating watermelons stolen from the street vendors, went slowly through."

Tim Fearnside of the 20th Brigade said that the reason that the Egyptians welcomed his unit in Alexandria "certainly wasn't because they liked us, or anyone else in the Allied forces, but probably because we were the devil they know." The 2/48th Battalion historian wrote that Australian soldiers found the Egyptians strange in their failure to take up arms in defence of their own country, while others noted that occupation had forced the Egyptians to become strangers in their own country.

After success in North Africa, the bulk of Australian troops left the Middle East to take part in the Pacific War. With the spread of the Japanese army and the fall of Singapore, the war had come closer to home, and Australia felt increasingly threatened. In leaving the Middle East, Australian soldiers left, as a soldier of the 2/23rd Battalion put it, "a land hated and even loathed at times, yet loved because it held the mortal remains of our men buried in its soil." Soldiers remarked of their time in Egypt that it reminded them of "just how fortunate we are to be British"; "all of us will be glad to leave this Arab, fly-ridden country."

Those who worked in AIF hospitals, on Royal Australian Air Force bases operating from North Africa, or who visited ports while serving with the Royal Australian Navy may have had different experiences, but on the whole there was no love lost for the land or the people of the Middle East.

Terms of racial abuse in this article reflect the standards, language, and attitudes of their time. They are not condoned by the author or the Memorial.

About the author

Dr Duncan Beard is an Editor at the Australian War Memorial and an avowed Egyptophile with ongoing research interests in ancient and modern Egyptian history.



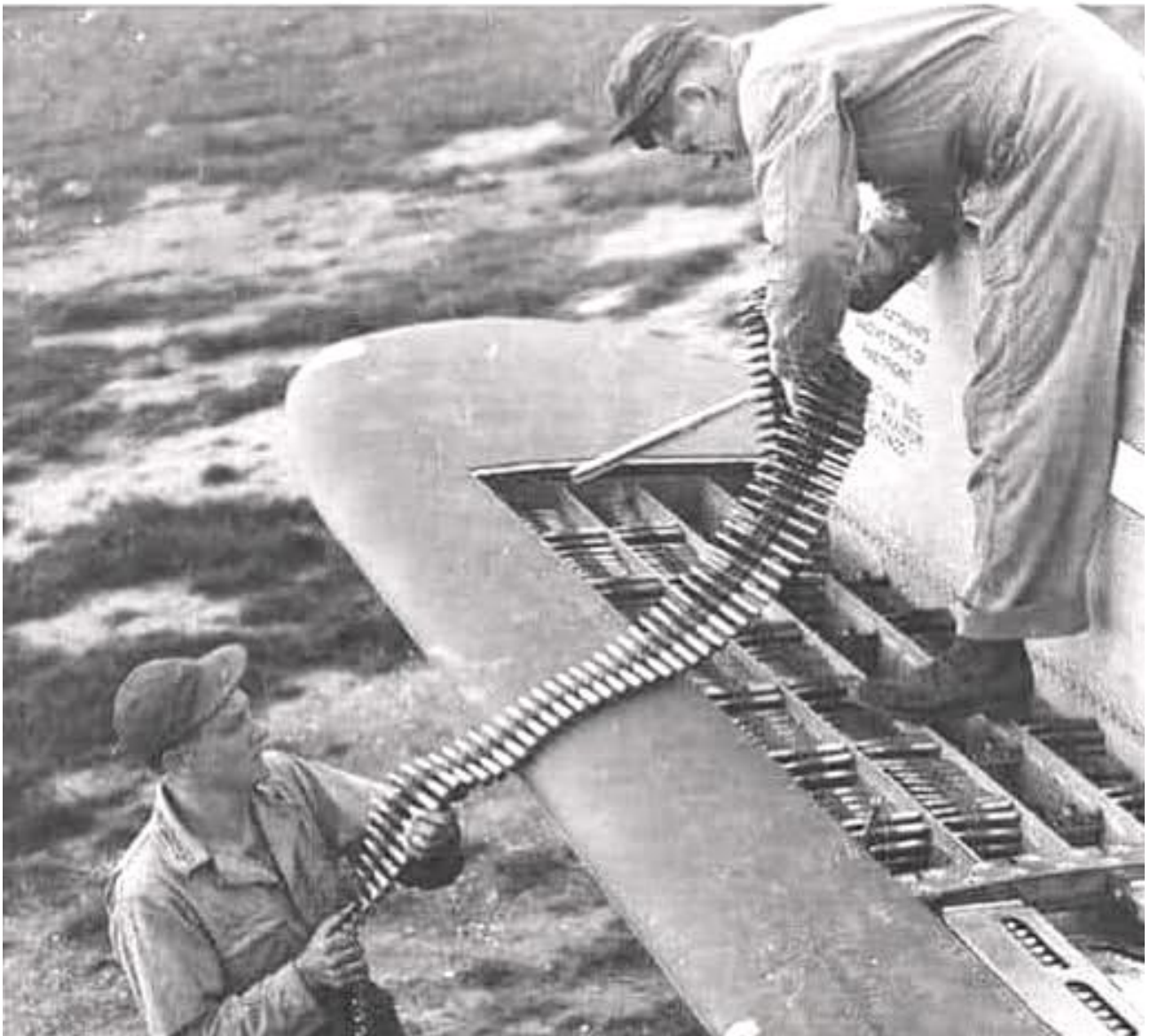


Gunners of the Essex-class aircraft carrier USS Hornet (CV-12) score a direct hit on Japanese Yokosuka D4Y Suisei carrier-based dive bomber on March 18, 1945



Cavalry in reserve halted in the Authie River to water the horses, Auxi-le-Chateau, September 1918

The standard US ammo belt was 27 feet long (nine yards) this is where the expression "the whole nine yards" comes from



THE WHOLE NINE YARDS....."Send in the troops, aircraft, nuclear submarine experts, the whole nine yards!"



RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH

Your RSL