

BARTREAD



WARTIME VEHICLE CONSERVATION GROUP
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Merry
Christmas
To Our Heros



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WVCG MONTHLY MEETINGS

ARE HELD AT THE TOWER HOTEL, MAGILL SA ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH STARTING AT 1900 HR'S. MEALS AVAILABLE, ORDER AT THE BAR AND MEAL WILL BE SERVED IN THE MEETING ROOM.

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THE WVCG MANAGEMENT



KVE News

Newsletter of Khaki Vehicle Enthusiasts Inc.
Organisers of the Annual Corowa Swim-In held
at Corowa N.S.W.

Edition No. 37

November 2020

42nd Annual Corowa Swim-In & Military Vehicle Gathering
8th - 14th MARCH 2021 COROWA - NSW

POSTPONED

Until 2022 - See announcement inside

YEAR OF THE

'Jeep'

YEAR OF THE

R.A.A.F.

www.corowaswim-in.org

BORN FOR WAR
READY FOR PEACE



Willys *Double the Mighty* **'Jeep'**



NEWSFLASH



\$MDDJ9L=HUG<M, LAGF E A=KLGF=
>GJF=PL-?=F JE QN=@A D



Defence Minister Linda Reynolds and Defence Industry Minister Melissa Price have confirmed that the Australian Army's new Australian-designed and built Hawkei protected vehicle is ready to enter full-rate production at Thales' Protected Vehicles facility in Bendigo, Victoria.

The vehicle's production will support more than 200 local jobs in Bendigo as Victoria deals with the current outbreak of COVID-19, as well as more across the national defence industry.

Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds said the vehicle has performed exceptionally well throughout comprehensive ballistic and blast testing, meeting Defence's stringent requirements for protection.

"This is a highly effective capability being delivered in partnership between Defence and industry that builds on Thales's iconic Bushmaster, which has been highly successful on operations overseas and exported around the world," she said.

Under project LAND 121 Phase 4, 1,100 Hawkei vehicles and 1,058 associated trailers will be delivered, with the full rate production vehicles expected to commence delivery from mid-2021.

AS SEEN BY OUR ROVING REPORTER

I spied this beautifully presented 25 pounder in an Adelaide freight yard, being transported by road from Victoria to Perth. Going by the tag attached it's fully operational!



I also took some snaps of not one, but five M52's. All in SA and at least a couple are still being used. All five belong to a timber milling company and they just look so tough!





History of Antarctic Transport



Matthew Lombard recently attended the WVCG General Meeting at the Tower Hotel and talked to attending members about the use of types of vehicles used in the Antarctic. It was a remarkably interesting Lecture and very much appreciated by our members. Matthew Lombard currently works at the Birdwood Museum as it's curator and he had also been the curator at the Christchurch Museum and oversaw their Arctic archives.

Matthew started his talk with the historic beginnings accompanied with an overhead projector, he described the original explorers' methods of transformation starting with sledges being hauled by the men to being hauled by ponies and dogs. By earliest pedal powered to wind powered and eventually engine driven. So many problems were encountered especially as the vehicles were either originating from the US or UK and their pre arctic trials were totally different than the real test. Below freezing temperatures caused mechanical failures in engines and fuel, various types of wheel and wheel diameters were tested.

Finally tracked vehicles were found to be the best scenario. Ironically the first vehicles to reach the south pole were Ferguson TEA tractors with an extra axle amidships and using an open link track designed by a New Zealand Group.

Matthew stated that they looked at early forms of transport that were based around human or animal power (dogs and ponies), the development of the idea of non-human power including sails. The development of non-sled ideas e.g. barrels as wheels. Then we moved on to the introduction of the internal combustion engine, early efforts in the 'heroic era' i.e. Sir Ernest Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition and his use of air sleds as well as the Girling tractors. We also looked at Capt. Scott's, Wolseley Crawler Tractors. We moved on to other than English vehicles and included all of Rear Admiral Byrd's efforts to haul supplies using Citroen Kregresse half-tracks and the introduction of military vehicles such as the US M1A2 tank.

We looked at post-WWII efforts using both ex-military vehicles such as the New Zealand use of an LP2 Bren Carrier and the US Operation 'Deep Freeze' use of the M29 Weasel. Finally, we moved on to the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition and Sir Edmund Hillary's use of the TEA-20 Massey Ferguson modified farm tractor and Sir Vivian Fuchs's use of the American built Tucker Sno-Cat, we also diverted briefly into my involvement in the restoration of sir Vivian Fuchs personal vehicle 'A for Able' which is now on display at the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch, New Zealand. Finally, we looked at the Russian Antarctic program and their use of Russian military-style vehicles including the Kharkovchanka a modified T54 or T55 tank based vehicle. His talk was genuinely interesting, and we were very thankful for the effort he made.



Shape, Deter, Respond

Australia's unblinking eye on Regional Expansionism



Australia's strategic circumstances continue to evolve quickly. Moreover, the regional security environment is on a trajectory that has been causing real concern in the national security community and, more recently, in the general community. Consequently, the Government has responded clearly and concisely with the recent publication of the 2020 Defence Strategic Update (2020 DSU).

The 2020 DSU highlights ways in which Australia's national interests might be threatened, including major power competition, the expansion of 'grey-zone' activities and regional force modernization. Consequently, the update focuses defence planning on the immediate region and concludes "Defence must be better prepared for the prospect of high-intensity conflict."

Moving forward, Australia will seek to *shape* the environment, *deter* actions against Australia's interests and be ready to *respond* with military force. To do so, Australia will depend on the force in being, along with those capabilities described in the 2020 Force Structure Plan (2020 FSP). While most of the commentary around the 2020 FSP has focused on the long-range strike elements, which clearly sit in the deter and respond objectives, we should not lose sight of the need for Australia to monitor, share information and ultimately understand the nature of the threats in the region and how they continue to evolve. Without this insight, Australia's efforts at shaping and deterring potential adversaries will be ill informed and ineffective.

Sovereign airborne and space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities will be crucial in providing a regional picture for Australia. That is not to say that ISR is not equally important in a response scenario, rather that Australia's goal must be to reduce the necessity of a military response by excelling at shaping outcomes and deterring would-be threats.

The Australian Government's commitment to high-altitude, long-endurance ISR capabilities such as the MQ-4C Triton will go a long way to providing Defence with the sovereign ability to understand the full expanse of our region without being dependent on other allies or commercial providers. Triton will be part of a suite of ISR capabilities that will give Australia 'ISR in Depth.' These advanced platforms, though, are only part of the answer to understanding the region.

Secure and resilient networks will form the means for ISR information to move between platforms and the people and systems that need the information to make informed decisions. For shape and deter activities, this information might move more slowly and deliberately and may even include lower classification information that we share with our regional partners. It is not hard to imagine a Triton providing a near-real-time maritime surface picture to the Forum Fisheries Agency in Honiara so they can cue partner countries who might then respond to suspected illegal activity with a Guardian Class patrol boat. As an aside, it is worth noting that Triton can patrol the Exclusive Economic Zones of Southwest Pacific countries – stretching from Papua New Guinea to Fiji in a single mission – while operating out of RAAF Base Tindal.

At the higher end of the ISR spectrum, networks that support 5th-generation operations will be needed. ISR operations can create a deterrence effect through visible, persistent operations, backed by resilient networks. In fact, the US Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments recently coined the term 'Deterrence by Detection' in a [paper](#) that argued, "real-time situational awareness is critical to countering the twin challenges of sub-conventional grey-zone aggression and a conventional *fait accompli* gambit promptly and

effectively.” The idea here is that potential adversaries who know they are being watched in real time are less likely to conduct opportunistic aggression. For this to work, Australia would need to work with allies to provide persistent ISR over areas of intelligence interest. A layered ‘ISR in Depth’ approach is also required here, as weather and other factors like basing access will limit the effectiveness of any one ISR capability.

In this scenario, Australian Tritons might be complemented by P-8A Poseidon's, MQ-9B Sky Guardians, and space-based assets, along with allied capabilities to provide persistent, real-time ISR in a location that could provide the most effective deterrent.

In all cases, robust, resilient, cyber-worthy networks will ensure decision-makers have access to the situational awareness and information they need.

Technology and new operational concepts will also have a role to play in the last piece of this ISR information puzzle – the ability to process the huge volumes of information that are on the network. Advanced systems will allow us to expand the functionality of our own capabilities and get the best value from our ISR investments.

Artificial intelligence and machine learning will play a vital role here along with new thinking about how response decisions are made. The advent of hypersonic weapons will demand decisions prior to events, not during the event. Humans will probably be too slow to make real time decisions so ‘human-machine teaming’ will become more prevalent. Our ability to use data will be how we maintain a comparative advantage over our adversaries.

Australia's 2020 FSP and the ISR capabilities it brings will be vital to the realization the 2020 DSU. The real test now for the Government will be in delivering these capabilities quickly to achieve this vision.

Hanwha tendered to build Aussie self-propelled howitzers

By: Brian Hartigan



FILE PHOTO: *Hanwha K9 Thunder – possibly called Huntsman in Australia.*

propelled howitzers

A Request for Tender will shortly be released to preferred supplier Hanwha Defence Australia to build and maintain 30 self-propelled howitzers and 15 armoured ammunition resupply vehicles and their supporting systems. The build was a contentious 2019 Morrison Government election commitment, which is expected to create up to 350 jobs. The tender will be issued under the LAND 8116 Phase 2 Protected Mobile Fires project. Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds said issuing the Request for Tender marked a key step in progressing the project.

"Through this project, the government is delivering the capability Army needs while creating local jobs in and around Geelong, Victoria, that will grow Australia's highly skilled workforce," Minister Reynolds said. "This comes at an important time as Victoria deals with its latest outbreak of COVID-19.

"The acquisition of this capability will provide the ADF with mobility, lethality and protection required to support joint force operations in the land domain. "The self-propelled howitzers will be built in the Geelong region, with ongoing deep maintenance conducted in the same Australian facility to support the systems throughout their service life. "The Request for Tender will progress this first phase of the Protected Mobile Fires capability. "Together with subsequent phases announced in the 2020 Force Structure Plan, it will ensure a long-term future for industry's involvement in the delivery of this critical capability for the ADF." Minister for Defence Industry Melissa Price said this project built on Australia's efforts to strengthen its Defence-industry capability and represented a program of continuous investment well into the next decade in the Geelong region. "This project is expected to create up to 350 jobs to build and maintain the new vehicles," Minister Price said. "It will also provide significant opportunities in other areas such as transport and warehousing, as well as component manufacture and repair."

LAND 8116 Phase 2, announced in the 2020 Force Structure Plan, is anticipated to commence in the late 2020s, delivering additional Protected Mobile Fires capability, and LAND 8116 Phase 3 is anticipated to commence in the mid-2030s, delivering a mid-life upgrade that will provide an opportunity to incorporate emerging technologies.

British POW Captured in Arnhem



On the corner of Steenstraat near the Musis Sacrum in Arnhem, the German Kriegsberichter Lt. Erwin Seeger took a photo of two British prisoners of war paratroopers, who were taken away by German soldiers in a captured British jeep. Late September 1944. The British take a seat on the back of the jeep, as can be seen, the atmosphere is relaxed. The British are probably from the Musis Sacrum. During the war, the Musis

was used as a 'Wehrmachtsheim' (Wehrmacht rest home) and during the Battle of Arnhem the Musis was used as a Wehrmachtsheim' (Wehrmachof Arnhem served as a collection point for British POWs. From Musis, the POWs were transported to various barracks outside Arnhem, from where they were transported by train to large prisoner of war camps in Germany. The jeep originally belonged to the 1st Airlanding Light Regiment; this was an artillery regiment that used the jeeps to transport cannons. For most of the Battle of Arnhem, the guns of this regiment were stationed at the Oude Kerk on the Benedendorpseweg in Oosterbeek. Leutnant Erwin Seeger was with the Luftwaffe Kriegsberichter Abteilung of the Fallschirmjäger AOK. *Update* the German on the left is in fact one of a group of Naval Personnel (Marine-Artillerie-Abteilung) that were attached to the 9th SS-Pz Div., there were over 2000 "Marines" fighting in and around Arnhem. They fought as cohesive units supplemented with Heer or SS NCOs attached for leadership and direction (naval personnel not so well trained in street fighting). They were also thrown into Kampfgruppen already fighting insitu. They wore a golden eagle, buttons, and shoulder board insignia.

The Amazing Irish Kamikaze Tank Buster Took Out A King Tiger By Ramming it.

By; Jay Hemmings



British officers who commanded tanks during WW2 were often told that naval tactics could be used effectively by tanks. However, this advice was not often put into practice.

But there was one officer who took such wisdom to heart: Lieutenant John Reginald Gorman of the Irish Guards.

In 1944, while serving with the 2nd Armoured Battalion of the Guards Armoured Division in France during the Second World War, Gorman managed to take out a German super-tank: a 70-ton Königstiger. This tank was thought to be almost invincible against Allied tanks, but Gorman used some rather unconventional tactics to prove them all wrong.



Sir John Gorman, former presiding officer of the Northern Ireland Assembly and former guardsman in the British Army. Bobbie Hanvey Photographic Archives, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Gorman's measured use of such tactics and the fact that he was able to keep a cool head under extreme pressure likely stemmed from his upbringing in Ireland as the son of a prominent Royal Irish Constabulary Officer. Gorman joined the Irish Guards at the age of 19 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant shortly after that, on December 5th, 1942.

It wouldn't be too long before Gorman saw action as a tank commander. The young lieutenant landed in Normandy in late June 1944, shortly after the Allied D-Day invasion. The incident for which he achieved recognition happened a mere month after he and his men arrived on French soil.



A King Tiger of the 503rd heavy tank battalion, after it has been rammed by a British Sherman commanded by Lieutenant John Gorman of the 2nd Armoured Irish Guards, Guards Armoured Division during Operation Goodwood.

As part of Operation Goodwood, Gorman's group of M4 Sherman tanks were part of the British offensive launched to take Caen and the Bourguébus Ridge. These were strategic locations which were of vital importance in the Allied push to take France.

The battle wasn't going to be an easy one, especially since the Germans possessed the Königstiger, otherwise known as the Tiger II. This model of tank had frontal armour that was virtually impervious to most ammunition the Allied tanks could fire at it.



A Sherman Firefly crosses 'Euston Bridge' over the Orne as it moves up to the start line for Operation Goodwood, 18 July 1944. The Königstiger also had another advantage over the Allied tanks: its main armament could take out pretty much any Allied tank at a range of up to 1.6 miles (2.5km). Understandably, Allied tank crews were nervous about the prospect of engaging these monsters in open combat. On July 18th, 1944, outside Cagny, Lieutenant Gorman and his men came across a group of four German tanks.

comprised of a Panther, a Tiger I, an old Mark IV — and one Königstiger. Lieutenant Gorman knew he would have to think outside the box if he was to have any hope of taking out the super-tank



Aerial view of Cagny on July 18, 1944 after being bombed by the Allies

Prior to sighting the tanks, Gorman had overseen three Sherman tanks. Unfortunately, the tank he was in had gotten stuck in a stream, and he had been obliged to abandon it. He had gotten into one of the other Sherman's and carried on. When the two Sherman's came across the four German tanks, they might have been outnumbered, but they did at least have the advantage of higher ground.

Carriers and a Sherman observation tank of an artillery headquarters unit moving up to cross the Orne river during Operation 'Goodwood', 18 July 1944.

Gorman found himself at the top of a ridge, looking down at a field in which the German tanks were gathered. Only 900 feet (274 meters) of open ground stood between him and the feared Königstiger. He knew that if he did not act immediately, his two Sherman tanks would likely be taken out. This was when he decided to put a naval tactic to good use.

By then, the Germans had spotted the Sherman's. The huge gun of the closest tank – the Königstiger – was swinging around to take them out. Gorman yelled out what must have sounded like an almost suicidal order: "Ram it!"



Panzerkampfwagen VI Tiger II at the Panzermuseum Thun. (Previous page)

The Sherman (named "Ballyragget") roared at full speed down the slope, propelled so fast by gravity and its own motor that it almost skidded out of control. But the manoeuvre worked. Before the Königstiger could take a shot at Ballyragget, the Sherman smashed into its rear at speed. The collision incapacitated both tanks. The Germans, shocked by what had just happened, scrambled out of their tank with their hands up.



Tiger IIs Although the Königstiger was knocked out of the fight, the three other German tanks were, unfortunately, still perfectly operational. They turned their guns on the other Sherman, commanded by Sergeant Harbinson.

Out in the open, without the element of surprise Gorman's tank had exploited, the three German tanks pounded it with their main guns, killing three crew members and putting the Sherman out of action.

Gorman and his crew took the opportunity provided by this distraction to escape from their own disabled Sherman. They fled the field before they, too, could be shot.

However, Gorman was determined to destroy the remaining three German tanks. The wounded crew members of Harbinson's tank had taken refuge in a nearby cornfield. After assuring them that he would return, Gorman struck out on his own.



British Sherman "Firefly" tank in Namur on the Meuse River, December 1944 (Previous Page) He managed to find a Sherman Firefly with a 17-pounder gun that he knew would be effective against the German tanks. The gunner inside the Firefly was dead. His body was trapping the other crew members, who were in shock. Gorman helped them to extricate themselves from the corpse and calmed them down.

He then took the Firefly back to the field. The remaining three German tanks were still there. He instructed his gunner to fire on the Tiger I, which, after a few missed shots, he hit. Then he focused his attention on the disabled Königstiger, which he hit and set a flame.



A Sherman Firefly of 7th Armoured Division in Hamburg, 4 May 1945 At this point, the remaining German tanks fought back. Outnumbered, Gorman had no choice but to order a retreat. He picked up Harbinson's crew and returned to safety. Gorman was awarded the Military Cross for his action in taking out the tanks. Indeed, the Königstiger he incapacitated was still there a year later.

After the war, Gorman returned to Northern Ireland and went on to work with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) as well as with the British Secret Intelligence Service, assisting them with undercover work against the IRA. Gorman also had a long and successful career in politics. He passed away in 2014 at the age of 91.

WWII Tank Hero Returns to Meet His Enemy After 68 Years & Lay Old Ghosts to Rest

By: George Winston

Clarence Smoyer was just 19 years old in March 1945 when he was part of a tank crew pushing its way slowly through Cologne. This was the US Army's biggest house to house, street-by-street battle in Europe, and it certainly took its toll. March 6th was day two of the Allied advance into the city, and something terrible happened, something that would trouble Smoyer for the rest of his life. E Company part of the 32nd Regiment of the 3rd US Armoured Division, reached the city Centre by 10 am. Smoyer's tank rolled into an intersection. A German tank was immediately spotted as it rolled out of sight behind a building.



The order was given to destroy the corner of the building behind which it was hiding. The falling masonry disabled the main gun, but the machine gunner remained active and continued to engage. Live fire crisscrossed the intersection. The Nazi forces, part of a specialist counter-attack force, were not going to give up easily. Anything and anyone caught in the crossfire was simply cut down. Suddenly a black Opel staff car raced into the junction. It was hit several times before it stopped dead, right in the middle of the firing zone. It remained there for over an hour.



At around midday, the fighting became less intense, allowing American infantrymen to cross the Ringstrasse. When they arrive at the Opel, they found a young woman, still alive, but only just. She was treated at the scene by American medics and taken away on a stretcher. From inside their tanks, both Smoyer and his counterpart in the German tank could see what was happening. Neither wanted to believe that they were responsible for the death of a civilian woman. Over the decades that followed, neither man would discuss the events of that morning in Cologne. Smoyer went on to be hailed as a Hero of Cologne for destroying a Nazi

Panther tank on the steps of Cologne Cathedral. The Panther was described as a "monster" tank. Its gun was so powerful that it could blow a hole right through one US tank and take out the tank directly behind it as well. But Smoyer never sought the limelight, and it was a rare day that found him sharing war stories with anyone. Back in Europe, Gustav Shaeffer, the German gunner, had been tracked down by a journalist from Cologne when footage of the battle at Ringstrasse had come to light. Smoyer, then in his eighties, had also been contacted by an American historian and writer, Adam Makos. Both had seen the footage of what had happened at the intersection that day, and the aftermath. Sixty-eight years later, on a freezing cold day in March 2013, Clarence Smoyer and Gustav Shaefer went to meet each other. Smoyer put out his hand and said, "The war is over, and we can be friends now."



The next day, the two men visited the Ringstrasse together and surveyed the scene, the theatre of all their nightmares over the past seven decades. "This is where I see her in my dreams," said Smoyer. Shaefer agreed and replied "It's war. It's it." Both men had fired multiple rounds across the street where the black Opel had passed through their cross-hairs. Two-hundred yards along the street there is a churchyard. Sadly, the woman did not survive her injuries and was buried nearby. Her name was Katharina Esser, and she had been 26 years old at the time.





The Cathedral at Cologne and surrounding damaged structures, 1944

It was assumed that she and her boss from the local grocery store had made a dash for freedom, desperate to escape the noise and danger of the battle. At the grave site, the two men laid flowers, later making peace with Kathi Esser surviving family. Shaefer died four years later, in 2017, and Smoyer sent a wreath with the words, "I will never forget you! Your brother in arms, Clarence." Smoyer still has the same recurring dreams, but they are less like nightmares he says, "I don't think she haunts me. It's different than that."



REMEMBERANCE DAY

The 11th Hour of the 11th Day of the 11th Month.

For all our Gallant Soldiers
Whose graves are not known
You have my gratitude
So that I may know my own,



PLEASE REMEMBER OUR TROOP
SERVING OVERSEAS THIS
CHRISTMAS AWAY FROM FAM-
ILY AND FRIENDS REMEMBER
THEM WHILE YOU CELEBRATE
YOUR CHRISTMAS IN SAFETY
WITH YOUR FAMILY SAY A
PRAYER FOR THEIR SAVE RE-
TURN BACK HOME



Rheinmetall reveals first KF41 Lynx IFVs for LAND 400 Phase 3



LAND & AMPHIBIOUS

By: Stephen Kuper

Lynx is a next generation tracked, digitised, and highly protected infantry fighting vehicle (IFV) built to meet the stringent military requirements of LAND 400 Phase 3.

The Australian Army needs a new IFV for close combat to close in and defeat an enemy in the most dangerous and lethal environments for Australian soldiers. Rheinmetall is delivering each of the Lynx vehicles to compete in the test and evaluation trials as part of the risk mitigation activity (RMA) to be conducted around Australia over a 12-month time frame from November 2020. If successful, the Lynx fleet will be manufactured in Queensland at Rheinmetall's new Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence (MILVEHCOE) at Redbank south-west of Brisbane. Rheinmetall Defence Australia managing director Gary Stewart said, "Rheinmetall looks forward to demonstrating the capability of this next-generation infantry fighting vehicle. We believe Lynx is the best vehicle in its class and sets a new standard in protection and the lethality needed to survive and defeat any adversary."

PROMOTED CONTENT

The RMA trials will incorporate a range of tests including lethality, mobility, and protection. The vehicle unveiled will be the focus of blast testing at a dedicated Commonwealth facility in coming months. Lynx was unveiled at a closed ceremony with selected Australian industry partners at the MILVEHCOE.

"Lynx has been developed so it is positioned at an ideal level of maturity when Australia needs it to enter service - and it will have a growth path to extend these capabilities through its 40-year life," Stewart added.

Each of the Lynx vehicles delivered into the RMA trials will incorporate a significant level of Australian industry content and local partners to the Rheinmetall offer for LAND 400 Phase 3 will be announced in coming weeks.

Lynx has been selected by the Hungarian Armed Forces for the delivery of more than 200 vehicles in the first launch order for the vehicle globally.

Rheinmetall Defence Australia will export turrets to the value of \$150 million manufactured by Australians – and will soon announce further export orders into the Hungarian program, including orders for Australian SMEs.

Rheinmetall is also delivering 211 8x8 Boxer combat reconnaissance vehicles (CRV) to the Australian Army after the vehicle was selected by the Commonwealth after 12 months of RMA trials by Australian Defence Force personnel in 2016-17.

The company is establishing a local industrial capability in Australia for the design, development and manufacture of military vehicles that creates high technology enduring jobs for hundreds of Australians by localising design and manufacturing expertise in electro-optics, weapon systems, fire control and sensor systems, turret manufacturing, variant design and manufacture, integration, armour systems, simulation, training and fleet sustainment.

“Design, development and manufacture of the Lynx in Australia for the ADF will build on the advanced manufacturing jobs at our new MILVEHCOE, as well as a strong industrial network of SMEs across Australia,” Stewart said.

Both the Boxer and Lynx are modular. That means the vehicle can be split in two, with a mission module sitting on a common drive module.

This allows for swap out of mission modules for operational needs, reducing through-life cost for the introduction of new technology, and ongoing fleet management.

Stewart added, “Rheinmetall has taken all of the significant benefits of the Boxer and ensured they are part of the Lynx KF41 package.

“Our partnership with Army and the Commonwealth to deliver the Boxer for Land 400 Phase 2 presents the opportunity to deliver develop a complete armoured vehicle-fighting force for the ADF.”

LAND 400 Phase 3 is a multibillion-dollar Army program, which will recapitalize Army's Vietnam-era M113 armoured personnel carrier (APC) force, with a combination of a tracked IFV and tracked APC.



KEVIN TIPLER 1944 JEEP RESTORATION PROJECT

CONTINUING ON FROM THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE: Just a couple of pics to show the jeep build status. Main wiring loom is in and re the engine, I am about to install the new studs and then it's head on and won't be long till I hopefully hear the purr!





Sgt Reckless: Americas Greatest War Horse Has Statue Unveiled.



From years B.C. up to World War I, horses were vital frontline animals in almost any military conflict. As the foot soldiers punched fist first into their enemy, the cavalry would sweep around and cut them off from behind.

It wasn't until World War I, when the mechanization of modern warfare proved too much for any large scale animal-based assaults, that military leaders realized that the speed of a horse was no match for the bullets of a machine gun. Horses were still useful for the military in the first half of the 20th century, pulling carts and guns, as well as transporting commanding officers.

By the 1950s, horses were rarely used, having been almost entirely replaced by trucks and tanks. During the Korean War (1950-53), the use of horses was seen as entirely redundant.



Reckless with her main caretaker, US Marine Sergeant Joseph Latham.

During the Korean war the Jeep CJ-2A was a commonly used vehicle that often carried the necessary heavy rounds of ammunition.

Despite being extremely capable, it would sometimes struggle in Korea's rough terrain and so the duty of transporting the heavy ammunition had to be passed onto the foot soldiers. Weighing roughly 24 pounds each, the shells used in the "recoilless rifle" had to be carried in twos or threes, strapped to the packs of the infantrymen.

Gunnery Sergeant Joseph Latham took charge as her main carer and trainer, and he set about teaching Reckless the ways of war in what was dubbed her "hoof camp." Latham taught her to run for the nearest bunker at the shout of the word "incoming," showed her how to lie down when under fire, and demonstrated to her the risks of entanglement in barbed wire.

Reckless was known to eat anything, and food had to be hidden from her or else the men would find it gone. She would drink Coca-Cola and eat Hershey bars and, in the morning, a cup of coffee would accompany her scrambled eggs and pancakes.





Sergeant Reckless a highly decorated US Marine Corps artillery horse in the Korean War pictured beside a 75mm recoilless rifle. As the name suggests, the rifle was designed to have a dramatically reduced recoil which was achieved by a fast release of gas from the opposing end of the weapon at the moment of firing to create a form of counterbalance. As a consequence, some projectile velocity was lost, although it still proved a very effective anti-tank weapon. During Reckless' first experience of battle at Panmunjom-Vegas, also known as the Battle of Vegas Hill, she carried over 9,000 pounds of ammunition for her platoon and made 51 solo trips.

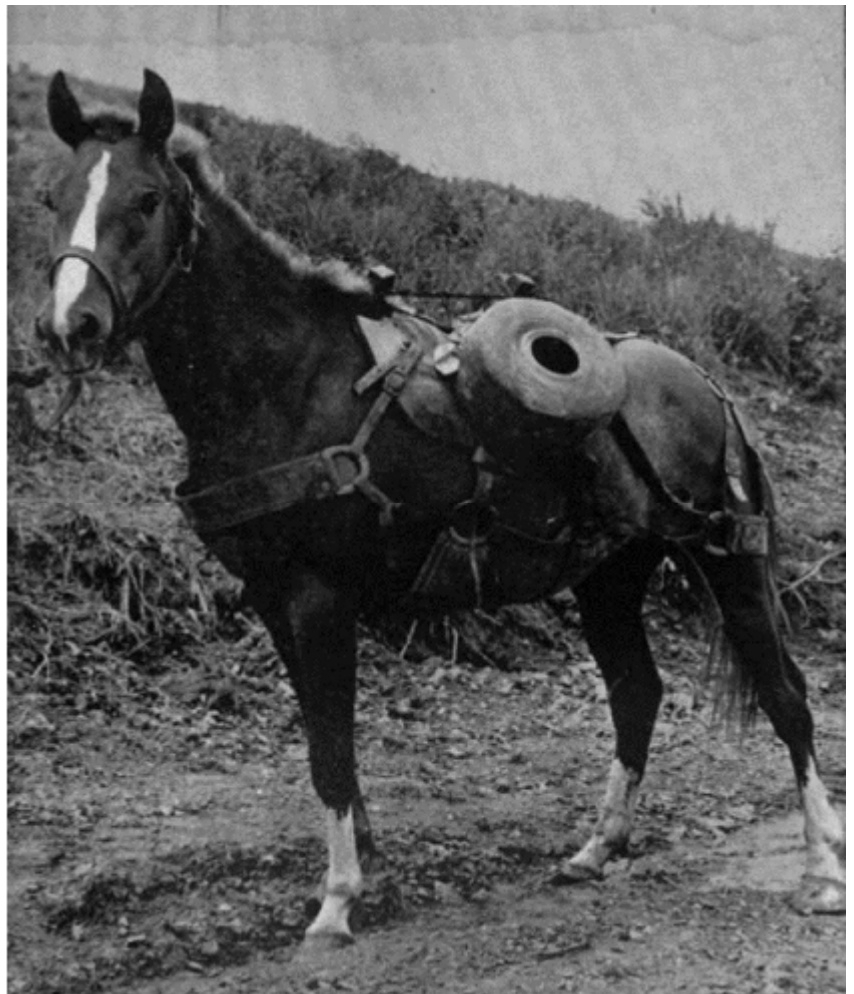
After five days, the battle came to an end as the Chinese-led forces halted their advance, claiming they had achieved their objective. Reckless was wounded twice by shrapnel and received her first official ranking as a corporal.

The war came to a close and Reckless was set to receive further promotions. In a formal ceremony in April 1954, the commander of the 1st Marine Division, Randolph M. Pate, gave Reckless the battlefield promotion of sergeant.

After being shipped back to the U.S. and arriving in San Francisco to be received by hundreds of spectators, Reckless was promoted once again to staff sergeant in a ceremony dedicated to her that included a 19-gun salute and a 1,700-Marine parade. For her wounds in the war, she received two Purple Hearts.

By. **Ross Barnwell**

Sergeant Reckless a highly decorated US Marine Corps artillery horse in the Korean War.





Reckless seen in a combat situation in Korea.



Sergeant Reckless getting promoted to Staff Sergeant in 1959

The base of a statue of Reckless carrying shells and equipment, unveiled in Semper Fidelis Memorial Park at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in 2013, contains a lock of her mane. After contracting arthritis, Staff Sergeant Reckless died from injuries she received after falling into a barbed wire fence in 1968 at the age of 19 or 20.

[Read another story: Unusual Warriors – Animal Roles in the Military](#)

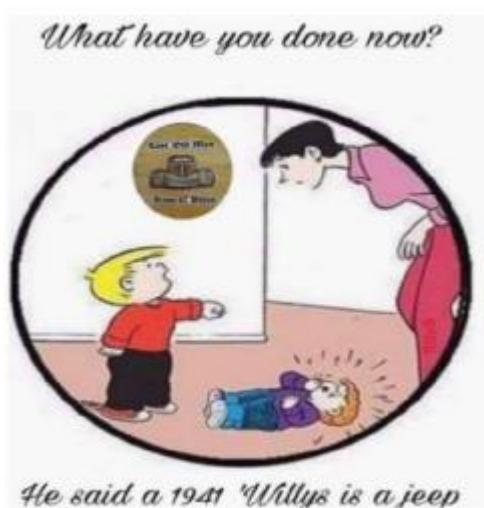
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Ferdinand – The Tank the Nazis Couldn't Admit was a Total Failure



In online history buff circles, the Ferdinand, or “Elefant” as later versions were renamed, is something of a meme. To many it represents the absurd conclusion to Hitler’s obsession with heavy tanks and superweapons. But what made the tank such a failure, and if it really did totally fail, why were so many built? The story begins in 1942 when Hitler realized that German tanks, despite successes so far in the war, were not all that powerful compared to some of the tanks they went up against. They had struggled against the heavier French tanks, and were in danger of failing on the Eastern Front in the face of Soviet T-34s. To solve this problem, Hitler decided that Germany needed a new heavy tank. The Nazi government held a competition between two major designers, Porsche and Henschel, for the new design.



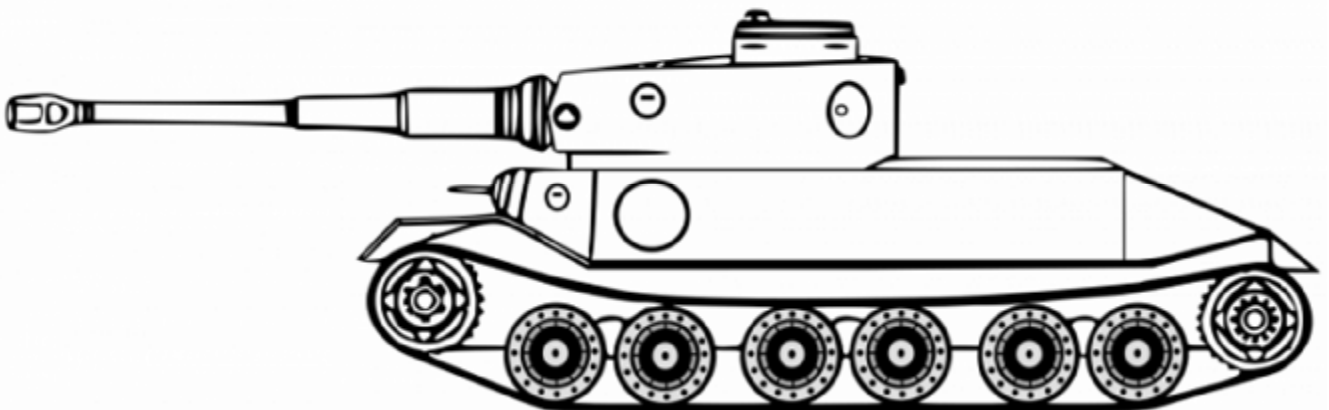
Heavy tank destroyer Ferdinand (named after Ferdinand Porsche, after renamed into Elefant) 624 of the "schweres Panzerjäger-Regiment 656"

Porsche's design was bold, to say the least. Weighing in at a remarkable 60 tons, it was powered by two Porsche Type 101 engines. These V-10 air-cooled engines were gasoline-powered, like many other German tanks. The engines each drove a separate generator, which then powered two electric motors, one for each track from the rear drive sprocket.



This all made the tank significantly heavier than the 54-ton Henschel version. The engines also required high quality copper parts that were difficult to come across in blockaded Germany.

The final nail in the coffin was that these engines had never been used in tanks before, so the technology had not been perfected.



Porsche's pre-Elfant, turreted Tiger I prototype

The "competition" was extremely one-sided, as the Porsche design's engine burst into flames early in the trial, unable to handle the tank's extreme weight. Henschel's design clearly won out and became the legendary Tiger Tank.

Doubling Down

However, Porsche was rather arrogant, and had already built ten of his tanks in anticipation of winning the contest. Even worse, he had built an additional 90 hulls. This was especially unfortunate due to the amount of raw materials that went into building them.

Rather than admitting defeat and that his design was simply too heavy for its engine, Porsche doubled down and repurposed them into a new super-heavy tank destroyer. The Ferdinand was born.



So how was Porsche going to overcome the obvious problem with his design—that it was simply too heavy for its unorthodox engine? He ignored it. In fact, as a tank destroyer, it would need an even larger gun and adjustments to the hull to support that gun.

Porsche went with the Pak 43, which had been a stand-alone anti-tank gun. The Ferdinand's weight ballooned to 65 tons. About 90 Ferdinand's were created, and they were soon sent off to the Eastern Front.

Their engines began bursting into flames before they even reached the battle. Some are reported to have been unable to climb a hill to reach a better firing position.

Additionally, there were numerous other mechanical failures that plagued the tank, including gas line fires. In order to avoid capture, many of the tanks had to be abandoned and destroyed by their own crews.

However, those that did make it into combat actually did rather well. The anti-tank gun was extremely powerful and effective. They had a good kill-to-death ratio, although that is to be somewhat expected given that the point of a tank destroyer is to be able to destroy enemy tanks without coming within those tanks' range.



However, the tank crews constantly complained about the tanks' poor reliability. During the German retreat from Kursk, there was no time for repairs, and many tanks had to be abandoned.

Further "Upgrades" and Late War Service

Once it was clear that the Ferdinand's were generally a disaster, they were sent back to Germany for upgrades. Even at this late juncture, Germany wasted more resources trying to make this fundamentally broken design work.

The upgrades included thicker armour, a machine gun, and a commander's cupola. The tank was now 70 tons and had no significant engine upgrades. The astute reader may be able to guess how this ended.

The suitably renamed "Elefant" was now ready to be sent back into combat. This time they were sent to Italy, where they would have to contend with hilly and mountainous terrain.

They continued bursting into flames and generally breaking down throughout Italy. Those few that did see combat, again, did not necessarily perform poorly in the actual battle. By the Battle of Berlin, only two are reported to have been usable.

Today two of these tank destroyers still exist. One of them is currently located in Moscow because it was captured by the Soviets, and like all of those used on the Eastern Front it is a pre-modification Ferdinand. Another was captured by Americans in Italy. That Elephant is now kept in the American state of Georgia.



The United States Army Ordnance Museum's restored Elephant. Scott Dunham / CC BY 3.0

The Ferdinand/Elefant is certainly worthy of its meme status, but that is more because of what it reveals about the German mentality rather than because of its specific mechanical failures.

The Nazis were constantly looking for the latest great weapon to win the war in one fell swoop, rather than investing in ideas that worked, but were less flashy.

By: Billy Moncure



Government announces request for tender for Army Protected Mobile Fire project



Australia Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds and Defence Industry Minister Melissa Price have announced the request for tender to locally-build 30 self-propelled howitzers as part of the Protected Mobile Fires project.

The 'K9 Thunder' SPH will provide significant capability enhancement for the Australian Army. As the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) of the K9 Thunder, Hanwha is ready to build and assemble 30 K9 Thunder SPHs and supporting systems in Australia.

The request for tender will be released to preferred supplier Hanwha Defence Australia, to build and maintain 30 self-propelled howitzers and 15 armoured ammunition resupply vehicles, and their supporting systems.

Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said it marks a key step in progressing the project that was a key election commitment.

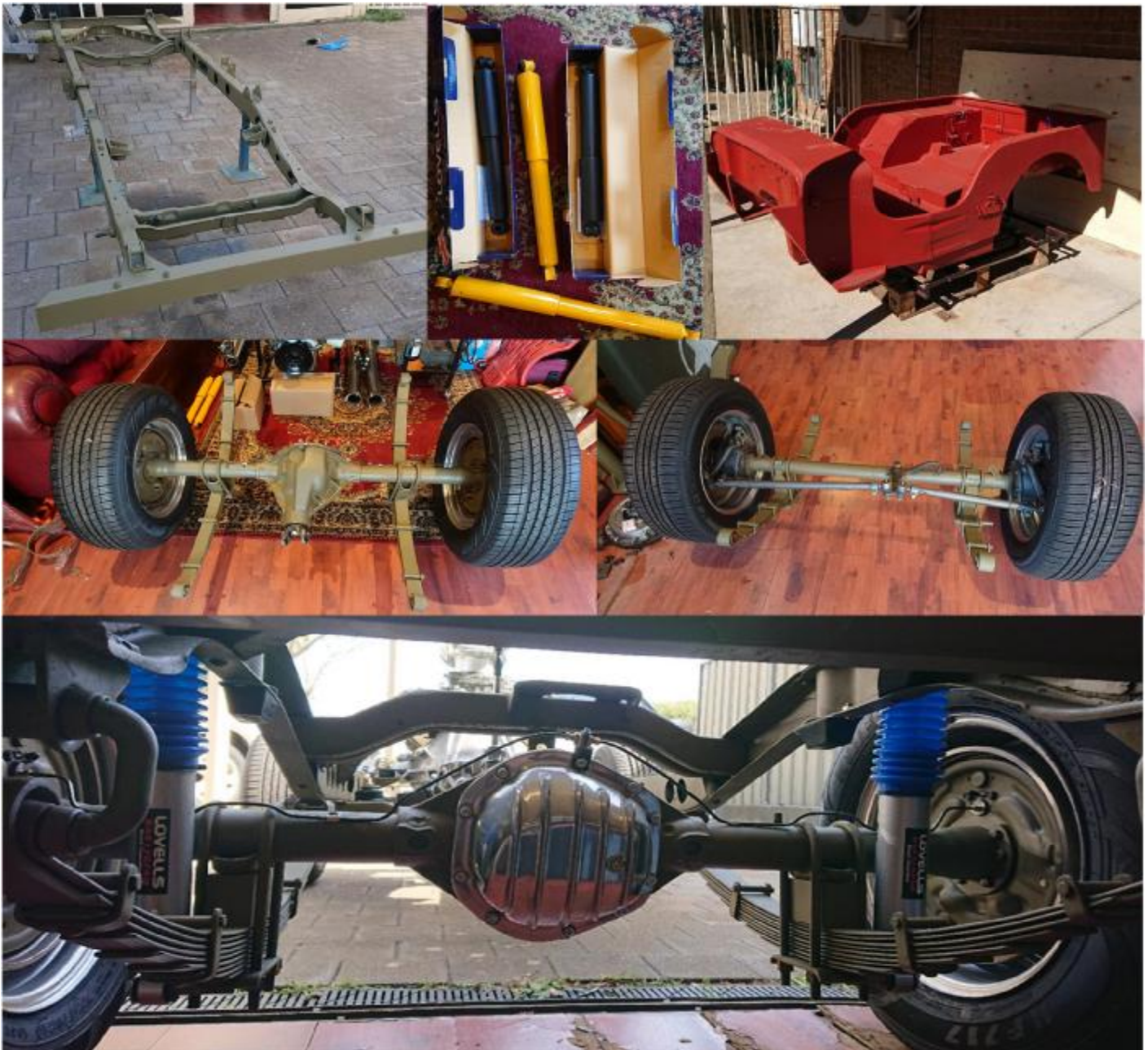
"Through this project, this government is delivering the capability Army needs while creating local jobs in and around Geelong that will grow our highly skilled workforce. The acquisition of this capability will provide the ADF with the mobility, lethality and protection required to support Joint Force operations in the land domain," Minister Reynolds explained.

PHIL HOADLEY JEEP RESTORATION PROJECT

Progress has started to speed up a little. 1942 Ford script tub has arrived, axles and suspension are painted and chassis is nearly painted. This is the culmination of all the trialling of parts, pre fitting, fabrication, and preassembly. Now, having finished the chassis work, final assembly can take place. Fitting of tried and tested combinations of parts (and some further testing and fabrication as the build progresses). While it is far from finished, it is a welcome progression and a rewarding part of the project. New Lovells Gas legend shocks front and rear (as that is who I work for) Which brings me to my next point...

I now have a full set of Ultima shocks front and rear for sale, which have never been on the road \$50.

Dr. Phil Hoadley, Ph.d
Doctor of Leisure Science from Abide University







TO BE CONTINUED—WATCH THIS SPACE
FOR FURTHER UPDATES.

PHILL RESTORATION NOV. 2020



WE CONTINUE TO FOLLOW PHIL'S WWII JEEP RESTORATION PROJECT AS HE CONTINUES TO WORK ON HIS "MEAN MACHINE" . I FOR ONE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING THE FINISHED PROJECT ON THE ROAD.

Editor: Tony Van Rhoda.

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A life long Dedication to a fallen soldier



Willemien Rieken was only 9 years old when she first began laying flowers on the grave of Trooper William Edmond, a British hero who fought and died to liberate her Dutch village. From that day, and for 75 years, this amazing woman looked after his grave and kept his memory alive. During WWII, William served with the 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron, and took part in the Battle of Arnhem in the Netherlands. Sadly, on September 17, 1944, he was shot in the back by a German sniper and fell to the ground. One of his comrades, Sgt David Christie, rushed to his aid, but nothing could be done to save William. Seconds before dying, he said to David: "Tell my wife I love her". This British hero was then buried, among his brothers in arms, at the Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery. This week, the woman who spent 75 years looking after his grave died, at the age of 85. May Trooper William Edmond and Mrs. Willemien Rieken both rest in eternal peace.

"We Shall Remember Them "

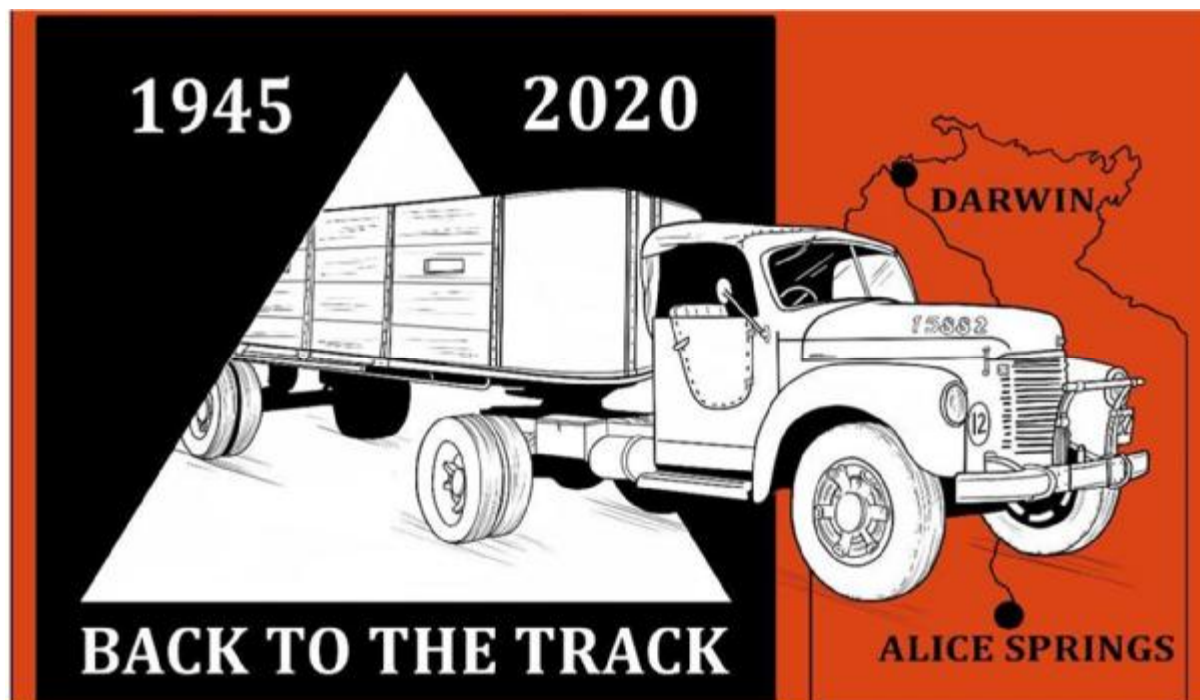


A Message From the WVCG committee

We ask all our members traveling to any Club outings too take extreme care when driving your precious restored vehicles on our busy roads and highways. We want you all to arrive safely to the venue and return home safely back to your families.

**Safety Alert from your WVCG
Committee**

BACK TO THE TRACK POSPONED UNTIL 2021



WEB SITE

Keep visiting the web site for the latest event information. <http://www.backtothetrack2020.com>

Event delayed until 2021

After speaking to NT Health authorities and Tourism NT, being directed to complete the on line COVID-19 Event Risk Assessment tool and given that more restrictions will likely be placed on events, the various liabilities and risks are too great for the event to occur at this time.

It is with great regret that the event BTTT2020 will be delayed until the same time next year - 2021

All participant entries will be retained for 2021.

If you have no intention of participating in 2021 and wish a full refund, return the participant book "A Wartime Journey" for a refund of the entry fee and year numberplate order if already paid.

If you can join us in 2021, all event merchandise / numberplates / participant pack / events will be retained and kept for 2021.

NT Government response to COVID-19

In line with the activation of the national pandemic plan, the Northern Territory along with all other jurisdictions is preparing for a potential pandemic situation.

<https://health.nt.gov.au/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-covid-19> Latest NT specific updates

Public Health Emergency declared

The National Cabinet has met and resolved to enact a series of measures enforceable by Federal, State and Territory law:

- The aim is to get ahead of the curve. There will be some impacts to our Territory lifestyle regarding our significant events; however, we all need to follow the best advice to limit to risk of COVID-19 to Territorians.
- Remote communities in the Northern Territory have been closed to all non-essential travel in response to concerns about the spread of COVID-19.

Mass gatherings. From today (18th March), organised, non-essential gatherings of more than 500 people will be prevented. Event organisers will need to cancel, reschedule or modify events falling within this category. Organisers can use NT Health's risk based assessment tool (available on SecureNT) to identify the risk of the event. If they would like the event to proceed then they should contact the mass gatherings hotline to confirm their assessment that the event can proceed.

Non-essential organised gatherings are any function or event that a large group of people attend including, but are not limited to, conferences, music festivals, sporting events, some religious and life celebrations, cultural events, elections and other public occasions.

For gatherings of less than 500 people. The NT Health COVID-19 Risk Assessment tool available on Secure NT has been developed to assist event organisers determine the level of clinical risk around proposed events. The results of the risk assessment will assist event organisers in making decisions about whether to proceed with an event or to restrict, modify, postpone or cancel.

The Public Health advice is to use this self-assessment tool to assist decision-making noting that erring on the side of caution is encouraged.

MASS GATHERINGS

There is a dedicated COVID-19 mass gatherings hotline for the NT - 1800 518 055.

All gatherings of more than 500 people are prevented and will need to be cancelled, postponed or modified to meet requirements.

The NT Health COVID-19 Risk Assessment tool DOCX (66.0 KB) has been developed to assist event organisers to determine the level of clinical risk around proposed events.

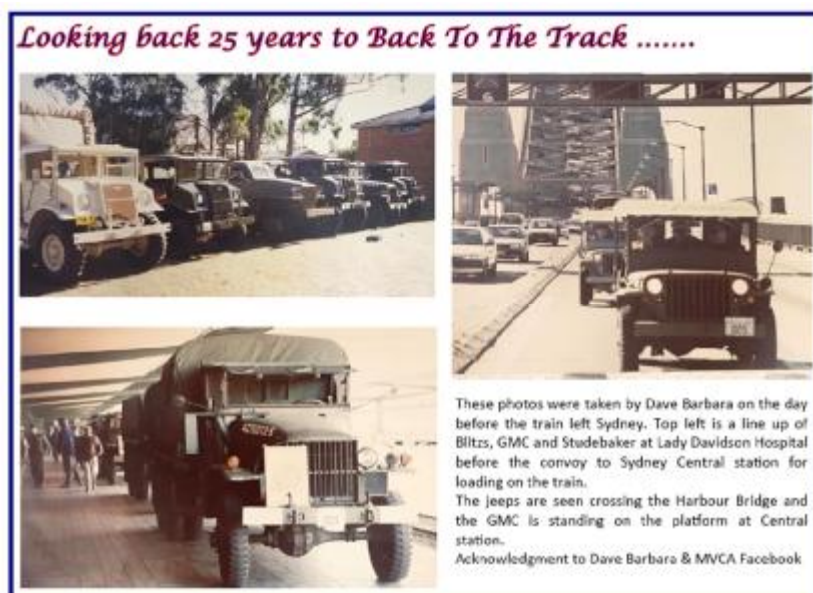
In Summary:

After considering the average age and profile of participants travelling from intrastate to the NT, the likely imposition of further restrictions, completing the Risk Assessment tool and speaking directly with NT Health authorities: -

The event "Back To The Track 2020" will regrettably need to be deferred until 2021.

We are living in hope that this virus mess can be sorted out by July 2021 and borders re-opened. It is now scheduled for 24 July to 15 August 2021. To that end, the organisers have relaunched a new website; "Backtothetrack2021.com" where you can access the latest information and itinerary etc. Douglas Draeger can still be contacted via email; dougdraer@hotmail.com or mobile 0428 676 741.

Latest info, if you have registered and paid for last years, your entry automatically carries over.



Back To The Track Event Update.



Visit the web site for the latest event information – quick facts

Now - Open to all ex-military vehicle types.

Commemorative event saluting the service of all who served in the NT in Australia's defence during WWI I

4 weeks available in July to explore Alice Springs and region camped at Road Transport Hall of Fame

Departing Alice Springs on 1st August and spending 14 days on the road exploring what remains of the wartime history along the North South track, arriving in fortress Darwin on 14th August

Refer the Entry Form, Conditions of entry and On the track documentation (available at the Web Site)

Predominately a self-catered, bush camping road trip. Some sponsored events and local shire / council provided support / events are planned.

An event Sponsorship and support package has been updated and can now be downloaded from the web site – please share

Do you know of a business or industry that is interested in supporting this event.

Perhaps you are aware of an industry or business that has an interesting story from their past involvement in producing material support for the war effort in WWI I , and we can acknowledge their role in the Battle for Australia and tell their story along the track.

Refer the web site for the latest dates for the event

Itinerary changes

The itinerary is in flux to some extent and final details will be confirmed closer to the event.

Indeterminable at this time due to very low tourist numbers (Covid) putting in question the availability for some roadhouse and campground destinations (currently closed or close to closing / businesses for sale).

I hope that many in Aust will follow the "holiday at home" message and visit the NT over the coming months and help revitalize tourism in Central Australia.

Also local shire and councils are now pushing us into commercial accommodation options

that are not suitable for trucks and public engagement and will break the participants up into small groups at different locations. i.e. withdrawing support to utilize local show-ground and campground facilities.

Other issues that will resolve themselves closer to the event

Defence (JOSS) engagement and involvement with this commemorative event, formal request for support in 2021 will require a new submission. COVID put an unexpected new priority to defence operations in 2020.

A new submission for Defence involvement in 2021 is being prepared.

POLITICS

The NT Elections saw a return of the Gunner Labour Government but also some changes to constituent representation in Alice Springs with some Independents and CLP members winning seats.

Labour has a new set of ministers and portfolios, so I am now dealing with a fresh lot of faces concerning making government ministers aware of this commemorative event and hopefully gather support.

Hopefully to our advantage, Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, Chansey Paech is a local Alice Springs resident.

My new local CLP Member in Opposition is William Yan MLA who was my old boss in Corrections for the last 7 years and a local RSL member (past Vice President). Bill will add his support to this commemorative event.

Local Alice Springs Independent Member Robyn Lambley MLA is in my local (MECCA) car club as well.

The Motor Vehicle Enthusiast Car club of Central Australia will be supporting the event with a special club meeting, club run and BBQ lunch on Sunday 11th July for participants who will be turning up early in Alice Springs to take advantage of the 4 weeks of activities that are planned.

We will have an Event COVID-19 Plan

Current Coronavirus information

Get the latest information on the [NTG Central website](#)

For public information about the virus, go to the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#)

We have an event management plan

To date – we have over 160 ex-military vehicles (383 participants) registered to participate in this event

As all the advertising and marketing budgets for the event that was to be held in 2020, are now slim picking, I am digging deep and pushing harder for more government and sponsorship support so that commemorative events can be held along the track in each of the communities and shires we will be visiting

Participant packs / numberplates were produced before Covid and no changes will be made to the commemorative material to be supplied for the event in 2021 i.e. "1945 – 2020 - 75th Anniversary of the end of WWI" commemorated in 2021

Stay Covid safe and looking forward to seeing you all in July

Douglas Draeger

You are receiving this email because you are an official entrant in Back

To Back To The Track 2020

Our mailing address is:

Back To The Track 2020

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PO Box 8607,

Alice Springs, NT 0870

Australia

POWER WAGON WOODIE

The project was started about 6 months ago. The truck is a 1950 Power Wagon, the wood body that was on the truck when I got it was built by someone who either did not have the original wood to copy or did not try. The original plan was to build an exact copy of an original, but as the owner intends to use it, some changes were made to improve functionality. Styling will be mostly Campbell. It is a three-door style with the spare tyre on the running board behind the driver's door. I am working on the spare tyre mount and finishing the opposite door now. After that will be the tailgate, trim, veneer for all the panels, a few thousand odd details then blow it all apart and start making it new and shiny.





The roof is mostly original except that I decided to dress the corners up some. The original back corner posts had the same shape on the back as the new ones, but the outside was straight instead of having the same profile as the other pillars. I decided to shape the outside of the rear post to match the front pillars. Tall people will be driving it so the front seat will be moved back along with the B pillar to make a bigger door and better access.

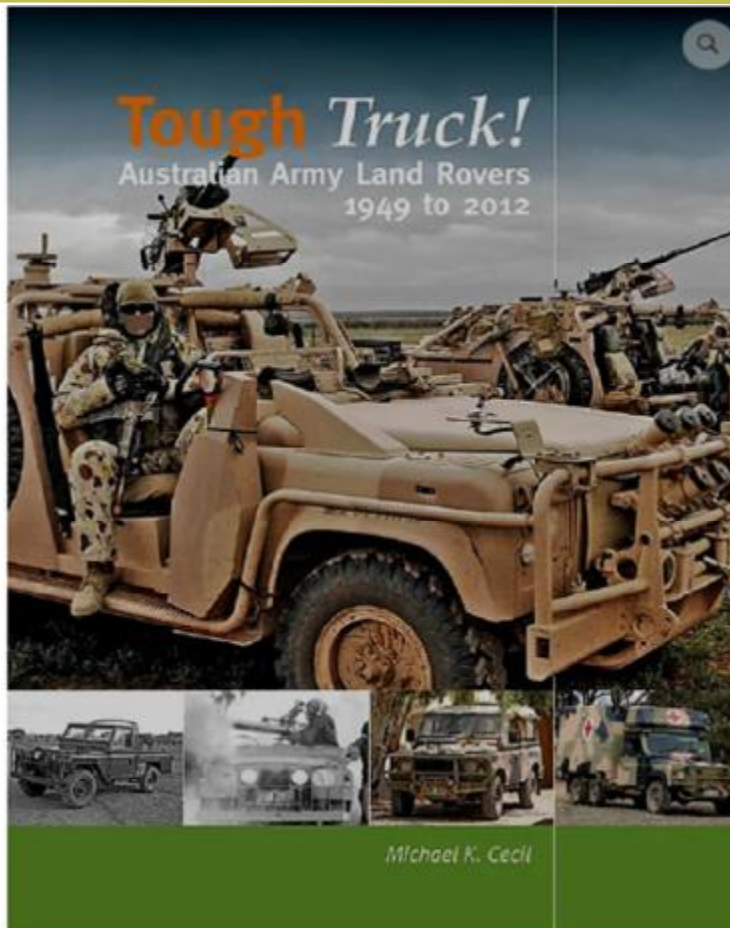




Using bear claw door latches but staying with roll up windows. One-piece glass in the front doors, originals had a fixed wing window. Quarter panels will get solid glass instead of sliders. It has A/C now and the four front windows should provide enough ventilation.







New book
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ISBN: 978-1-9998867-0-7

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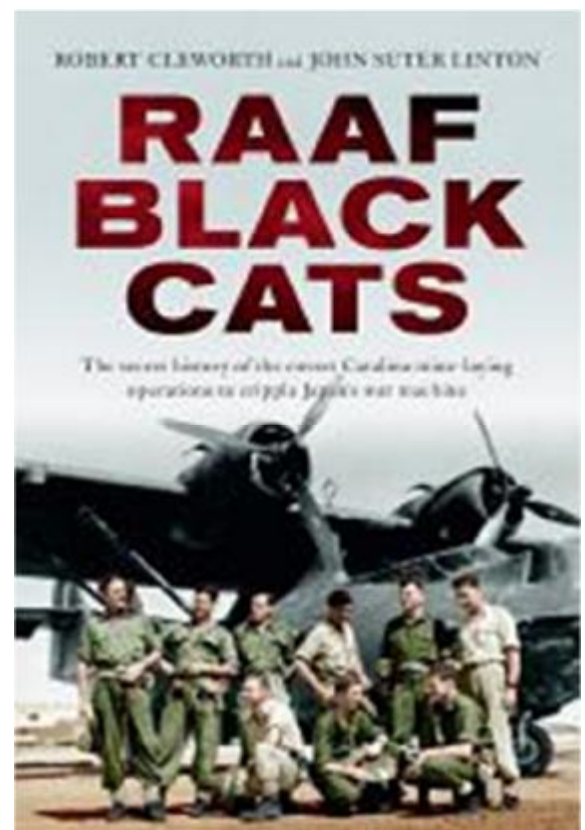
It is indeed one **Tough Truck!**

For more information go to www.michaelkcecil.com

RAAF Black Cats: The secret history of the covert Catalina mine-laying operations to cripple Japan's war machine. ~~\$18.39~~ **\$14.71**

By: Robert Cleworth

In March 1945 Reg Cleworth, a navigator on PBY Catalina seaplanes flying out of Darwin, went missing in action. No details were ever given about the incident that took his life, nor the reason his plane went down. For Reg's younger brother, Robert, the news came as a prophecy fulfilled. The last time they saw each other, Reg confided in Robert, 'I don't think I'm coming back'. Forty years later Robert decided to investigate what happened to his brother. What he uncovered was an extraordinary story of a covert Australian airborne mine-laying operation in cooperation with the US Seventh Fleet to disrupt the Japanese supply routes. One of the riskier and more dangerous RAAF undertakings of the Pacific War, secrecy restrictions were imposed on everyone involved. They were never formally lifted. Had it not been for a chance meeting that allowed Robert access to previously unopened files in the US national archives, this remarkable story may never have been told. What he unearthed revealed the sacrifice and achievements of the RAAF Catalina crews and the vital role they played in MacArthur's strategic plan for the south-west Pacific.



First Aussie F-35 clocks up 1000 Hr's



Squadron Leader Chris Myles, left, the Australian Participant Maintenance Lead at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, and pilot Flight Lieutenant Adrian Herenda, with the F-35A A35-001

By: Brian Hartigan

The first Australian F-35A aircraft to roll off Lockheed Martin's Texas production line back in 2014 has completed 1000 flying hours over the skies of Arizona.

Australian F-35A pilot Flight Lieutenant Adrian Herenda was at the controls of A35-001 as the clock ticked over 1000 hours.

The former F/A-18A pilot has been flying the F-35A for about 12 months and said it was a good feeling to be flying the jet when it reached the milestone.

"The F-35A provides the pilot with phenomenal situational awareness, which is a significant benefit when operating in complex threat environments," Flight Lieutenant Herenda said.

Aircraft A35-001 is currently being operated by the international Pilot Training Centre (PTC) at Luke Air Force Base (AFB) in the US as part of a pool of training aircraft qualifying F-35A pilots and maintainers from across the globe.

Director General Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Air Commodore Damien Keddie said A35-001 reaching 1000 flying hours was an important achievement for the Australian F-35A Project.

"It demonstrates the maturity of our F-35A capability and showcases the importance of the international F-35 partnership," Air Commodore Keddie said.

"A35-001 is one of five Australian aircraft at Luke AFB, with other F-35 partner nations also contributing aircraft to the PTC in a show of global collaboration that has been the cornerstone of the F-35 Program since the earliest days."

Air Vehicle Sub-Project manager Squadron Leader Brook Porter, of JSF Branch in Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG), said as the first Australian F-35A, A35-001 was the visible symbol of a new type of weapon system that had already provided reliable pilot training for Australia and the F-35 Cooperative Partnership.

"In reaching this milestone, A35-001 typifies the extraordinary contribution that Australia has made as a partner nation within the global F-35 Program," Squadron Leader Porter said.

"It's another significant step forward as the F-35A weapon system continues its successful path to becoming our future fighter capability – a capability that provides obvious benefits to Defence but is also highly profitable to Australian industry, with more than 50 Australian companies winning more than A\$1.7 billion in production contracts to date."

Project Engineering Manager Timothy Rafferty, of JSF Branch, said the milestone signified the maturity of the platform and associated support systems.

"Given A35-001 completed most of its 1000 flying hours at the PTC, this milestone highlights the contribution Australia has made to the collaborative training environment, with more than 1000 F-35 pilots now qualified and flying with their respective services," Mr Rafferty said.

Australia has now accepted 26 F-35A aircraft in total. In addition to the five at the PTC, 17 are operating at

No. 3 Squadron and No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit at RAAF Base Williamstown. The remaining four jets are scheduled to transit from the US to Australia before August. Mr Rafferty said JSF Branch personnel played a key role in the acquisition, initial certification and airworthiness management of Australia's F-35A fleet from 2014 until mid-2018. In 2018, the Air Combat Systems Program Office (ACSPPO) in CASG assumed responsibility for airworthiness and overall sustainment management of the fleet. "This demonstrates the critical and ongoing collaboration taking place as we work to ensure all 72 jets are delivered to Australia by the end of 2023 for Final Operating Capability [FOC]," he said. Squadron Leader Porter said the Mission Systems team in JSF Branch was focused on ensuring Australia's needs were rolled into the weapon system as the aircraft evolved over its life cycle. "Since 2014, we [Australia] have grown our fleet to 26 aircraft, established training systems, simulators and the complex Autonomic Logistics Information System, developed electronic warfare reprogramming capabilities and upgraded RAAF bases to handle the F-35A. We have also assisted in the creation of Australian-based industry support," Squadron Leader Porter said. "We have increased our pace from a crawl to a jog, with ACSPPO and Air Combat Group rapidly taking up the reins and doing so with aplomb." It was important to acknowledge that the achievement of the 1000 flying hours milestone was the result of "tireless work by so many people, past and present, working together". "There is a lot more work to be done and we are well prepared," he said. This is the final year of the RAAF's contribution to the PTC. From 2021, all F-35 training is planned to be conducted in Australia.

Ahead of future fight, US reworks carrier air wing formation



As peer competitors increasingly challenge the supremacy of the aircraft carrier, the US Navy is responding with a range of modernisation and development plans that will reshape the carrier air wing to better support allied operations and power projection in the Indo-Pacific. Many in the strategic policy and defence analysis communities around the world have questioned the continued survivability and relevance of the world's premier, maritime-based power projection platform: the aircraft carrier. The advent of advanced and integrated anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) systems, like China's DF-21, DF-26 and other related anti-ship ballistic missile systems, combined with peer competitor aircraft carriers and land-based aircraft, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, have emerged as the key catalysts for the transition, pushing the limits of current carrier-based aircraft. Further complicating the matter is the growing success of Russian and Chinese fifth-generation fighter aircraft like the Su-57, J-20 and JF-31, the US has kicked off a suite of development programs to replace the ageing F-15 Eagle and fifth-generation F-22 Raptor airframes and the evolving F/A-18E/F Super Hornets operated by the US Navy beginning in the 2030s.

The US Air Force has actively progressed its plans to acquire a next-generation air combat capability to replace the Raptor, as outlined in the 2016 'Air Superiority 2030' study conducted by the US Air Force, which sought to identify the capabilities of the 'Next Generation Tactical Aircraft' air superiority/dominance fighter jet expected to enter service in the 2030

A Soldier Found

A son's mission to honour his father helps locate a trooper's lost remains and heal two Alberta families

By: Bill Miller Jr. for CBC November 11, 2020



Trooper Henry George "Archie" Johnston in uniform, 1944. (Photo supplied by Bill Miller Jnr.)

From deep in the back of the closet came a cardboard box, filled with family heirlooms and precious documents: a family Bible stuffed with newspaper Clippings about births, deaths and marriages, crumbling postcards, faded photos, old silver coins. My father's hand pulls out colourful cloth, with bronze stars and silver discs attached. "What are those?" I ask. "War medals," he mutters, pushing them aside. I inspect them with great curiosity, letting my finger run over all the intricate details. The dates — 1939 to 1945 — seem impossibly old to my eight- or nine-year-old self. The France and Germany Star. A tarnished silver medallion with a very fierce lion on it. Then there were the photos, tucked in the back of a frayed booklet, the Soldier's Service Book. I see my father's name in smudged ink. "Don't ask him about the war." There are black-and-white photos of men I did not recognize. There were trucks and jeeps and what looked like a tank. Tiny photos, faded, worn and blurry. "Is this you? Were you in the war?" I ask. "Yes." "Who are these people?" "People that were in the army with me." My father stopped at one photo and said, rather quietly, "He didn't make it." I was curious. Why were these mementos kept away in a closet? What happened to him so long ago? My father had been wounded during the war, he had a deep scar on his jaw and on any hot, shirtless summer day, you could see the scars on his back and upper arms. "Don't ask him about the war," my mother would later tell me. And so, I did not. We would let him tell it in his own way and in his own time. A photograph cherished; a mission inspired. Today, I am standing at the window of my home office and watching tiny flakes fall, thinking about a cold and snowy battlefield in Holland some 75 years ago. Where do I begin to tell this story, about a mystery that took all these years to unfold? It is a complicated tale, with many twists and turns and unlikely coincidences that had to happen to recover a soldier lost both to time and tragic circumstances. My dad's best friend in the army was a trooper named Henry George "Archie" Johnston. They went through basic training together and served side by side in Holland in the 1st Canadian Armoured Personnel Carrier Regiment, nicknamed the Kangaroos. Johnston was killed by German

mortar shell. His final burial place remained a mystery for decades. His photo was one of the few things that my father kept.



The Johnston family in 1943. Clockwise from top left: Amelia holding Leona, Henry holding Yvonne, Ken, George. (Photo supplied by Johnston family)



On those rare occasions that my father would talk about the Kangaroos, he always made a point to mention Archie Johnston. As an adult, I kept a copy of Johnston's photo, always wondering if his family had a corresponding photo of my dad in uniform. That photo, and my dad's unshakable memory of his friend, fuelled my curiosity about the Kangaroo Regiment. I decided to try to capture and record its history before it was lost for good. I tried finding the Johnston family several times over about 15 years, beginning in the late-1990s. Johnston left behind a widow and four small kids, including a nine-month-old daughter. His widow had remarried, before dying in 1983, but the trail on the surviving Children ran cold. Then, in 2012, came the phone call.

Finding the family, uncovering a mystery

It was Gord Krebs, who is married to Johnston's granddaughter. He and his family had just returned from a trip to Holland where they had tried to visit Johnston's grave at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery. But Johnston had no grave. His name was simply memorialized on a wall for the missing. Krebs had been referred to me by war museum staff in Holland as a possible source of information. "What was your grandfather's name?" I asked. "Henry George Johnston," he replied. You could have knocked me over with a feather. After an exceptionally long pause to regain my composure, I told him I knew all about his grandfather and so did my dad.

Canadian soldier killed in Netherlands in WWII identified

A long conversation followed, and we arranged a family reunion of sorts. Members of the Johnston family were able to meet my dad shortly before his death and talk with him about "Archie." As I had wondered for so many years, their family did have photos of my dad. Not just one, but two. The search was over, or so it seemed. Then came the text message in 2018.

Bill Miller Sr. served alongside Johnston and stood beside him as he died. When Miller did speak of the war, he spoke of his friend Archie. Jr.)



Miller Sr. (far right, back row) and Johnston (far right, front row) were tank mates and best friends. (Supplied by Johnston family)

A Dutch colleague, Ivo Wilms, had been researching some downed airmen and came across a clue about Johnston's final resting place. Johnston had been killed in the village of Baakhoven, and Wilms had found documentation about the burial of four Allied soldiers. One of the bodies that had been buried as an "unknown" was exhumed in 1947 to be reinterred at the official war cemetery in nearby Mook. Upon exhumation, the remains were identified as Trooper Jake Dyck of the 1st Canadian Armoured Personnel Carrier Regiment. Wilms, who was remarkably familiar with the battles of the Kangaroo Regiment, did not recognize Jake Dyck's name as a casualty and a further search of records confirmed the suspicion. Trooper Jake Dyck of Winnipeg had survived the war and died peacefully in 2007.



Headstone of the unknown soldier prior to Trooper Johnston's identification. (Veterans Affairs Canada)

I had never seriously entertained the idea that Johnston's body had been properly interred, let alone the idea of finding that grave 70 years after the fact. Was this the evidence we needed to prove that the unknown grave at Mook was Trooper Johnston? Wilms and I both felt it could not be a coincidence. I made inquiries to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, which was able to tell me that the misidentification came about because of a silver identification bracelet — marked with Dyck's name and service number that was found on the body.



Johnston's original resting place, before his remains were exhumed for burial at Mook War Cemetery. (Photo supplied by Johnston family)

As is the policy of War Graves and the army's Casualty Identification Program, bodies already interred at a war cemetery will not be exhumed again for DNA analysis. It is up to investigators to build an overwhelming and undeniable body of circumstantial evidence to prove a grave's identity. I turned over as much documentary evidence as I could. Finding my case to have merit, investigators began the lengthy and exhaustive record check. They surveyed all the Canadian casualties with no known grave within a 100-kilometre radius of the Johnston battlefield. Ultimately, they concluded that it could be no one else but Johnston. The findings were approved by the Casualty Identification Review Board in November of 2019 a 22-month long process and the family was officially notified in February of 2020. Good work takes time. A rededication ceremony was supposed to take place in May, coinciding with the 75th anniversary of VE-Day, but the COVID-19 pandemic has altered that timeline.

Johnston's grave will likely get a new headstone soon but an official rededication with the family will have to wait. Spider-web of improbable connections Today, I think about Jake Dyck's silver bracelet, found in the grave with no explanation as to why it was there. Did Henry Johnston find it and pick it up? Did the men exchange tank suits at some point and the bracelet was left behind in a pocket? Or was it put there on purpose? Johnston's army-issue identity discs were not on the body, likely destroyed in the blast that killed him. Perhaps a prescient young Jake Dyck thought of the bracelet to tie the body back to his regiment when they had to leave Johnston's body behind. I'm neither a religious nor superstitious man, but I cannot help but think that it was more providence than mere happenstance that brought us to this happy conclusion.

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