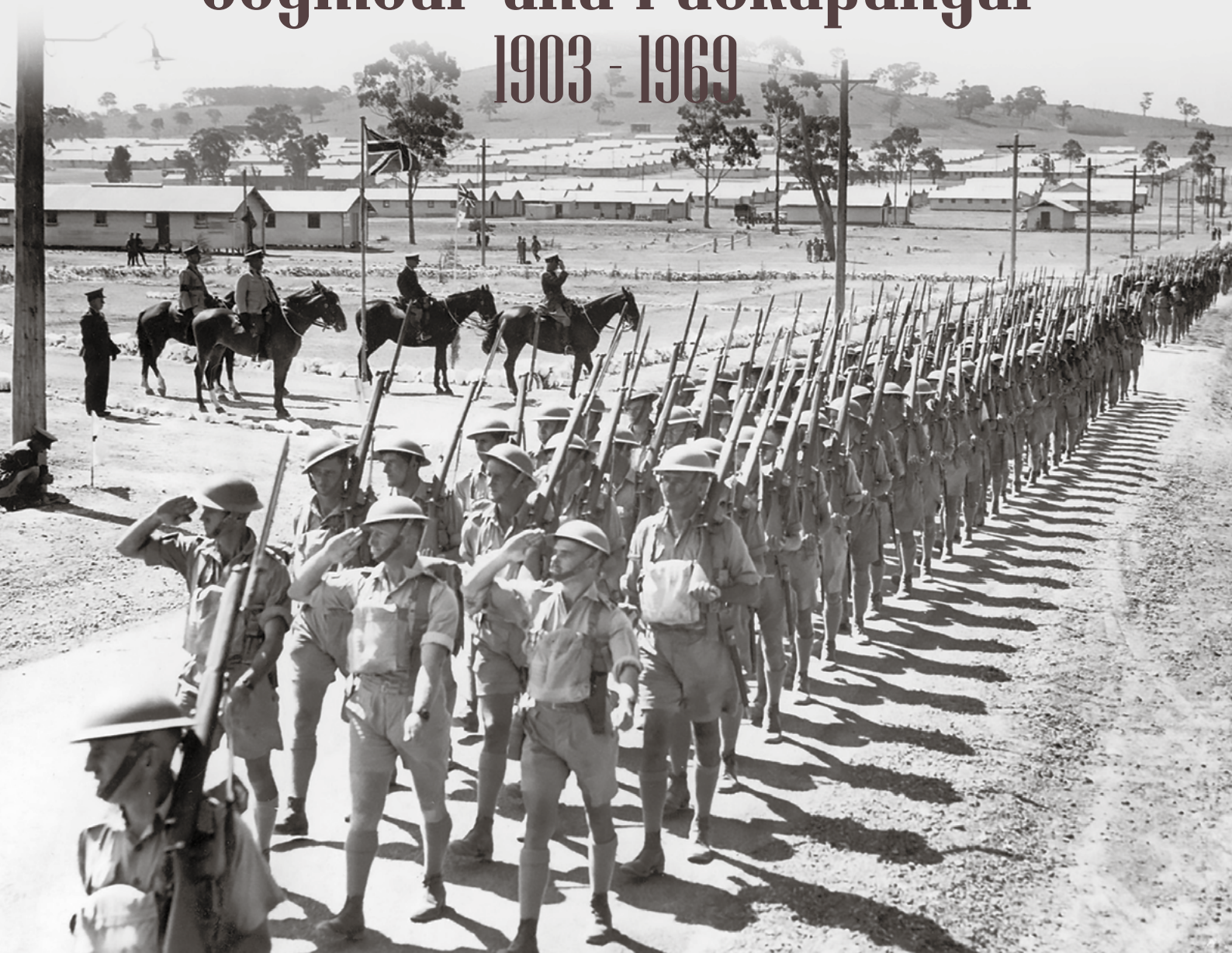




Army

June 2021

Military History of Seymour and Puckapunyal 1903 - 1969



Serving our Nation

Foreword

Much has been written about Australia's proud military history with a large proportion of accounts and analysis focusing on the First and Second World Wars, Korea and Vietnam. However, while many locations within Australia where Australian soldiers mobilised and trained for these conflicts are of great significance, this side of history has been largely forgotten. The book you hold in your hands takes steps towards correcting this oversight by bringing to life the military history of the largest mobilisation and training site within Victoria; the Seymour district and the Puckapunyal Military Area.

Seymour and Puckapunyal have been an integral component of mobilising and training Australia's military forces for over 100 years and the name 'Puckapunyal' or 'Pucka' as it is better known, is synonymous with our proud military history. As the Army unit responsible for knowledge management, I am especially pleased to add the Military History of Seymour and Puckapunyal to our collection.

This book details several significant historical markers in our military history including the visit by Lord Kitchener in 1910 as part of his review of Australia's military forces, the mobilisation of troops for both World Wars and the transition from a part time citizen Army to an integrated full-time Regular Army with a Reserve force. Captain David Adams is to be commended on his diligence and thorough research in marshalling and presenting this valuable information in such an engaging and accessible fashion.

I found the details pertaining to the Lord Kitchener visit, as well as the training areas which were used, along with the personalities involved, especially interesting. I am sure this volume will act as a fine reference for anyone interested in the Seymour and Puckapunyal areas military history for many years to come.

I commend this excellent book to your military history reading list.



Nick Surtees, AM
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Commandant
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Military History of Seymour and Puckapunyal

The Seymour and Puckapunyal districts have a rich military history that spans well over 130 years from the colonial days, the post federation era, the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and 1st National Service scheme to the Vietnam War and the 2nd National Service scheme. In this publication, we will explore the military history of the Seymour and Puckapunyal areas by bringing back to life some of the key military events of the time.

Chapter 1:

Pre World War I

In the pre-federation and early post federation days, the Victorian Mounted Rifles detachments were based and trained all over country Victoria, including the Seymour area from 1887. In 1903, the Federal re-organisation of the Defence Force resulted in the regional detachments of the Victorian Mounted Rifles being formed into the 7th Australian Light Horse Regiment which was headquartered at Yea in 1904. The 1st Squadron of the Regiment covered the Seymour, Broadford, and Avenel districts with a Light Horse troop established at Seymour which marked the official Australian Army association with the area.

In March 1905, the 7th Australian Light Horse Regiment conducted its Easter holidays camp at the Seymour Race Course and part of Goldie's Paddock near the Tannery which was part of the Marengo Run. Later in July 1905, the Regiment conducted a week long military instruction course for Junior Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers at the Race Course. The camp was well attended and the instruction was reported to be of a very high standard when inspected by the Assistant Adjutant General of Victoria, Lieutenant Colonel Lee.

In April 1908, the 7th and 8th Regiments of the Australian Light Horse held their annual camp at Seymour. The camp and training manoeuvres were inspected by the Army Inspector-General, Major General John Hoad and the Victorian Commandant, Colonel Stanley who declared they were well satisfied with the general layout and details of the camp. Later that day, both General Hoad and Colonel Stanley observed both regiments conducting tactical exercises using live ammunition against a mock enemy rear guard position camped in Goldie's paddock along the Trawool Road. The Goldie brothers

owned the 'Marengo' run which was bordered by the Goulburn River on the western side of Goldie's Road which is the present day Hume and Hovell Road, and the paddocks on the eastern side of the road. After driving off the mock enemy rear guard, the Light Horse established a line of outposts on a line through the intersection of the Camp Road and the Goulburn River through to the eastern side of the Old Telegraph Road and Upper Kobyboyn Road.

At the conclusion of the exercise, the General stated that it had been one of the most intelligently delivered exercises he had seen. On the last day of the camp the State Governor, Sir Reginald Talbot, KCB, motored to Seymour to view the exercise and lunch with the officers of the regiments in the open in Goldie's paddock adjacent to the tannery and the Goulburn River. Sir Reginald was a former Major General in the British Army and had fought in the Anglo-Zulu War and the Nile Expedition to relieve Khartoum. The Tannery was located on the eastern side the Goulburn River, North West of the modern day site of the Seymour waste transfer station on Hume and Hovell Road and is marked on the Monash Map on the following page.

In April 1909, the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, comprising the 7th, 8th and 9th Australian Light Horse Regiments, conducted their annual



Major General Hoad

Easter holiday camp in Seymour. Squadron level drills and skirmishing were practiced and tactical exercises were conducted on numerous days. A scheduled route march which the soldiers did not want to participate in was cancelled after they strongly protested. It appears even 100 years ago, mounted soldiers were opposed to walking in place of riding! Hundreds of people from Seymour and surrounding areas visited the camp to view the drill and manoeuvres.

In December 1909, our future World War 1 Australian Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Sir John Monash, at the time a Lieutenant Colonel in charge of the Victorian

section of the Australian Intelligence Corps, completed a detailed military map of the Seymour, Mangalore and Avenel districts. Monash was aided in this endeavour by the staff officers of the Victorian branch of the Australian Intelligence Corps as well as the Victorian section of the Australian Volunteer Automobile Corps (Established in 1908) under the command of Major Harley Tarrant who used their vehicles to transport Monash and his officers all over the prospective training area on numerous weekends and holidays between 11-20 December 1909.



*The Victorian section of the Australian Volunteer Automobile Corps at the Kitchener Camp.
Photo credit: Motor Volunteers and the Australian Volunteer Automobile Corps – Dux and Grant*



The Monash Map, which has been described as 'A marvel of detail and accuracy', was compiled in preparation for the large military inspections and manoeuvres associated with the visit of Lord Kitchener to Seymour in January 1910. The extract from the Monash map to the left shows that the intended camp location was the race course on what was then called Upper Kobyboyn Road. Delatite Road was called Camp Road at the time and the map also indicates a rifle range straddling Anglesey Street in the vicinity of the present day Seymour College.

In late December the final preparations for the eight day Kitchener Camp in January 1910 were completed. This would be the first all

arms mobilisation of the Victorian forces and it would occur at Seymour. The camp would see the forming of a large force consisting of two Light Horse Brigades and one Brigade of Infantry with attached supporting arms such as Engineers, Signallers, Medical Corps and Service Corps personnel. Conservative numbers indicated over 5,000 soldiers attended the camp. The training plan for the Light Horse consisted of Squadron and Regimental training with live fire ammunition training followed by Brigade, culminating in the two day special manoeuvre exercise incorporating all of the arms which Lord Kitchener would observe.



Signallers of the 6th Infantry Regiment at the Kitchener Camp. Photo credit Australian War Memorial.



The Kitchener Arch over the Trawool Road. Photo credit: 'New Crossing Place' HG Martindale 1958

Lord Kitchener arrived at Seymour by a special train on 13th January 1910 as part of his inspection tour of the country's Defence preparedness and proceeded toward the Camp at the race course in his motorcar. Along the way, he was welcomed by the residents of Seymour at an arch that had been erected across the Trawool Road (Now ANZAC Avenue). The arch was erected across the road at the intersection of Railway Place and Trawool Road and a memorial stone commemorating the visit was unveiled in 2010 in the J.W. Elliot Reserve on ANZAC Avenue.

After stopping briefly to thank the residents for their kind welcome, and pose for several photographs at the arch, Lord Kitchener continued to the Camp. When the Kitchener motorcade approached the sole 8th Infantry Regiment sentry at the gate leading to the camp, the sentry scanned the occupants to determine who the highest ranking person was so he could

present arms to them.

Seeing several occupants of the cars in civilian attire, including Lord Kitchener, Minister for Defence Joseph Cook and Lord Kitchener's staff officers, the sentry instead presented arms to the sole occupant in uniform, Captain Alexander Hore-Ruthven. Hore-Ruthven was the Governor General's military secretary at the time. A Victoria Cross recipient from the Sudan War, he would later become Lord Hore-Ruthven, 1st Earl of Gowrie and the Governor of South Australia as well as New South Wales and the longest serving Governor General of Australia. He would visit the troops at Seymour and Puckapunyal numerous times during the Second World War during his tenure as the Governor General.

Over several days, Lord Kitchener inspected the camp lines and various minor training exercises in the area which culminated in the



Lord Kitchener in the centre with Minister for Defence Joseph Cook on the right with Major General Hoad seated opposite. Photo taken in Melbourne in January 1910. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial

two day special manoeuvres exercise which incorporated the Infantry, Light Horse and Artillery battles in the vicinity of Avenel, Mangalore and the Trawool Bridge. The battle for the Trawool Bridge involved the 4th Light Horse Brigade and the 2nd Infantry Brigade acting as the enemy or red force with the 3rd Light Horse Brigade advancing from Yea acting as the friendly or blue force. The 14 Australian Volunteer Automobile Corps vehicles were also used by the exercise umpires to quickly and effectively adjudicate the numerous mock battles as well as carry armed reconnaissance parties around the area. Two motorcycles belonging to the Corps were also used as despatch riders during the exercise. One of the vehicles was even used to test an early lightweight wireless telegraphy plant for battlefield communication.

Lord Kitchener toured the area and observed the exercises by motor car and horses which were located at strategic points of interest. This enabled him to reach many of the high features in the area so he could observe the surrounding terrain and troop movements. Many notable military and political figures accompanied him and also visited the camp. These included the Chief of the Imperial Staff Major General Hoad, the Minister of Defence Joseph Cook, and Major General George Kirkpatrick who would be appointed as the Inspector General of the Australian Army later in 1910. Also rather oddly, Captain M. Dvorgetshy of the Imperial Russian Guards visited the camp as a foreign military observer.



*Colonel Stanley, Victorian Commandant.
Photo credit Australian War Memorial.*

At the conclusion of the camp, Lord Kitchener's requested Colonel Stanley "convey his expression of pleasure" at the conduct of the camp and that he considered the "turnout and appearance of the troops was very creditable".

Lord Kitchener's report submitted in February 1910 recommended Seymour as a suitable location for troop mobilisation and training. It was centrally located to Victorian units but still close enough to Melbourne and the larger population centres, close to road and rail links and had suitable terrain over which to train. The details of this report would be recalled at the commencement of the First World War when the Broadmeadows Camp could no longer sustain the numbers of troops required for overseas service with the 1st Australian Imperial Force and a larger, more appropriate mobilisation point was required.



*Members of 3 Squadron 7th Australian Light Horse Regiment at the Kitchener Camp 1910.
Photo credit 'Flickr' social media*

Chapter 2:

World War I

The Easter holiday camp conducted in early 1914 at Seymour was inspected by General Sir Ian Hamilton in his role as Inspector General of Overseas Forces. Hamilton would later become very well known to Australia as he commanded the forces at the Dardanelles which included the 1st Australian Imperial Forces (AIF). General Hamilton also used the Australian Volunteer Automobile Corps to travel around the various military sites not only in Victoria but in the other states that had a Volunteer Corps. The Corps would be disbanded in 1915 when the requirement for greater control and employment of motor transport was established under the control of the Motor Transport Board with newly promoted Lieutenant Colonel Tarrant in command. Tarrant would later be promoted to Colonel and be appointed as the Director of Automobile Transport.

When the First World War broke out in August 1914, the Victorian recruits were initially camped in the courtyard of Victoria Barracks and the Showgrounds in Melbourne before a generous Victorian, Mr Robert G. Wilson,

offered his property 'Mornington Park' at Broadmeadows as a training camp for the Victorian forces being mobilised. However, the spartan conditions combined with wet weather and poor drainage led to an increase of illness amongst the recruits. This resulted in the Seymour Shire being advised on Wednesday 26 May 1915 that the new primary training and mobilisation camp for Victorian forces would be located at Seymour. Broadmeadows would still be used, but to a lesser extent. The racecourse and the adjacent property, part of Mr Goldie's 'Marengo' property (785 acres), was used to establish the camp in June 1915. The Seymour Camp facilities were initially as spartan as the Broadmeadows Camp, which saw the troops sleeping in tents with limited washing and laundry facilities available. The Salvation Army and YMCA quickly established themselves at the new camp with large marquees which catered for the religious and recreational needs of the soldiers as well as providing ample writing material for soldiers to write letters home.



*Part of the Seymour Camp in 1915 with Trawool Road in the foreground.
Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.*



*Light Horse reinforcements on the Trawool Road with the Seymour Camp in the background.
Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.*

On Saturday 17 July 1915, the Governor General, Lord Ferguson 1st Viscount Novar, and his Wife Lady Ferguson visited the camp. The Vice-Regal party attended two football matches played by the soldiers in the camp that afternoon. Lady Ferguson also attended a Red Cross meeting at the Federal Hall on Station Street in Seymour that evening. Built in 1902, the Federal Hall would later have a facelift in 1929 and become the Seymour Town Hall. The building was located at the current site of the entrance to the Seymour Mall.

The following day, specially allocated trains from Melbourne brought 3,000 visitors to Seymour and the camp to visit the new recruits. On Saturday 24 July 1915, a large military carnival and sports gymkhana was held at Kings Park. 8,000 Soldiers took part in marching displays with numerous marching bands, as well as mock battles with blank ammunition

and horsemanship displays. With the spectators included, it was estimated that greater than 15,000 people were in attendance.

During the Gallipoli campaign, the Seymour Express newspaper ran numerous articles informing the district of the wellbeing of its residents who were overseas fighting the Turks. These articles included excerpts from soldier's letters to family back home as well as notices regarding men from the district who had sadly been killed, were missing in action or wounded in action. On Friday 01 October 1915, the paper reported Lance Corporal Clark of Avenal who had been listed as missing in action, was 'now reported to be a prisoner of war and is being treated in a Turkish hospital'. The paper consistently ran front page Roll of Honour notices which included the names of the men from Seymour and Avenal who were serving. At times this roll was over 220 strong,



The 37th Infantry battalion formed up on Tallarook Road in preparation for marching back to the camp site. Photo credit Australian War Memorial.

and included Private Ernest Alfred Jaensch, a bootmaker from Seymour who had enlisted in September 1914 in Seymour. Listed as 'missing' in the newspaper on Friday 13 Jul 1917, a court of enquiry had determined in November 1916 that he had been killed in action on 25 April 1915 during the landing at Gallipoli. He is one of many heroic fallen soldiers who have no known grave. He is remembered on panel 24 of the Lone Pine Memorial as well as the Memorial Gates at the Seymour District Hospital.

Recruiting was actively pursued in Seymour during the war with several recruiting drives organised by the council's recruiting committee and the local recruiting Sergeant. In June 1916, a Seymour resident, Sergeant Percy, who had worked at the Seymour Railway station as a porter was appointed as the Recruiting Sergeant for Seymour. Percy was a former member of

the 4th Australian Light Horse and had served at Gallipoli. The former Post Office on Emily Street which is currently used as a café and art gallery was used by the Light Horse and recruiting units during the First World War and would again be used for recruiting during the Second World War.

In February 1916, the 37th Infantry Battalion was formed at Seymour with recruits from Melbourne, North-East Victoria and Gippsland. A military carnival and parade was held at Kings Park to farewell the Battalion on Thursday 18 May 1916 and an arch was constructed across Tallarook Street in the vicinity of the entrance to Kings Park and the primary school which can be seen in the photo above. In the photo, the Battalion is formed up on Tallarook Street ready to march back to the Seymour Camp site to prepare for their imminent departure.

During the farewell proceedings, the local Red Cross branch presented the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Woods, with a steam powered travelling kitchen which was capable of preparing food for over 500 men in an emergency and for 300 men under normal conditions. Prior to the Battalion's departure from the Seymour train station on 03 Jun 1916, Lieutenant Colonel Woods was also presented with a scarf which was knitted by the local women who donated 3d per knitted row toward the 37th battalion comfort fund. The 37th Battalion comfort fund would continue to hold regular fund raising events throughout the war. A further £38 was raised for the comfort fund

after an Anzac fair was held at the Seymour Federal Hall on 17 Jun 1916. The 37th Battalion would be disbanded in October 1918 due to a shortage of reinforcements to reconstitute the battalion after heavy fighting. At the time of its disbandment, the Battalion strength was down to 60 men. Over the course of 1916-1918, the Battalion suffered 1,968 killed and wounded and was awarded 14 Battle Honours. The 37th Battalion's sole Victoria Cross recipient, Robert Grieve was a Lieutenant in A Company and participated in the parade and farewell proceedings shown in the picture on the previous page.



The 37th Battalion marching through Seymour to the train station on 03 Jun 1916. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



The 37th Infantry Battalion Band at Seymour 1st May 1916. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial



In addition to recruit and reinforcement training, Seymour was also used for specialist training during the war. In August 1916, a bombing school was established at Seymour. Bombing at the time referred to the use of hand grenades which were used extensively during the trench warfare on the Western Front. The officers, non-commissioned officers and specially selected men attended a 10 day course of instruction which qualified them to wear a distinguishing badge in the form of a grenade on their sleeve and be classed as 'Grenadiers'. The school was qualifying approximately 200 men per month.

Families and individuals were especially keen to mark their military service with photographs that the family could remember them by when they were on active service overseas. The well-known pioneer Melbourne photographer, Algernon Darge, who owned the Darge Photographic Company, was provided a concession to take photographs at the Broadmeadows and Seymour Camps. The company's tents enjoyed a brisk business as soldiers made time to be photographed before deploying overseas. In 1923, Algernon approached the Australian War Memorial to inquire if they were interested in purchasing the approximately 40,000 glass negatives with registers. After a protracted negotiation with the Australian War Memorial regarding the value of the collection, in which the value was knocked down from £250 to £30 over a 15 year period, the Australian War Memorial finally purchased the actual 19,000 glass negative collection in 1938. The collection is now available to view on the AWM website and comprises the largest single collection within the AWMs vast collection. The indoor photos are reminiscent of the well-known Vignacourt series of photos

from the Western Front as they use a common background painted onto a canvas backdrop. The company also took numerous outdoor photos of unit and reinforcement groups as they passed through the camps.

One of the most auspicious occasions in Seymour's history occurred on Saturday 21 July 1917 when Trawool Road was renamed ANZAC Avenue as a means to perpetuate the memory of the soldiers who had enlisted for service abroad. The ceremony commenced at 10 am with speeches at the Kitchener Memorial trees which had flanked the Kitchener Arch in 1910. One hundred and fourteen oak trees were planted along the avenue recognising the soldiers from the district who had served in the War up until that stage. The state school children planted trees from Goulburn Street toward the camp sites on the way to Trawool and the dignitaries planted trees between Guild Street and Goulburn Street. The ceremony was attended by several Federal and State members of parliament as well as the local council dignitaries. The Minister for Defence, Senator George Pearce planted the first tree of the row. A memorial shield for Lord Kitchener, who had been killed in action the previous year when his ship was sunk, was also unveiled and fixed to one of the Kitchener memorial trees which read:

'This tablet is erected to the memory of Lord Kitchener, of Khartoum, to mark the spot where the citizens of Seymour presented him with an address of welcome on the 13th day of January 1910, when inspecting the Commonwealth troops'.

The military band and soldiers from the Seymour Camp marched along the avenue and a basket picnic was held at Jordan's Hill after the ceremony had concluded.



Darge Photographic Company Tents at the Seymour Camp 04 July 1915. Photo credit Australian War Memorial.



Darge Photography portrait of Officers from the 71st Citizen Forces Seymour 1917. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



ANZAC Avenue taken from the Goulburn Street intersection looking east toward Trawool. The size of the oak trees may indicate this picture was taken in the 1920s or 1930s. Photo credit: Seymour Historical Society.

Sadly the trees along the avenue would be removed during the expansion of ANZAC Avenue into a dual carriageway in 1986 and the brass plaques commemorating Lord Kitchener and the soldiers were subsequently lost.

When the armistice concluding the war was announced, the Honour Roll for the Seymour and Avenel districts on the front page of the Seymour Express had reached over 320 names and Private Jaensch had now been listed as Killed in Action. The Memorial Gates at the

Soldiers Memorial Hospital would later record 147 Seymour residents who served during the war as well as a further 33 who paid the ultimate sacrifice. The names of those who served also included Sister Alice Heywood who served as a Nursing Sister throughout the War in Australia, England, France and Egypt. The Seymour Express reported that the town rejoiced at the ending of hostilities and a town holiday was announced. On Monday night, 11 November 1918, a torch light procession



The Royal Hotel on Emily Street as it would have looked around the time of the First World War. Photo credit: Royal Hotel Seymour



ANZAC Ave taken from the near the Chisholm Crescent / Howe Street intersection looking West back toward Seymour. The oak trees are visible in the far centre of the picture. Photo credit: Seymour Historical Society.

through the town ended at the Royal Hotel where speeches were made and an effigy of 'Kaiser Wilhelm' was burnt.

At 11pm, a large group of soldiers from the Seymour camps, led by the remnants of four military bands arrived in town and crowded along Station Street. There was generous amounts of flag waving, cheering and singing but by midnight the celebrations had begun to dwindle. The following day, the shops remained closed as large crowds from the local district flocked to the town. A military and fancy dress procession marched from the Kitchener memorial trees to King's Park where sports events and amusements were organised. Over 2,500 soldiers and four bands took part in the procession.

The first of many welcome home events for Seymour's returned soldiers was conducted at the Federal Hall on Station Street on Tuesday 26 Nov 1918. Organised and conducted by the shire councils Welcome Home Committee, the event was very well attended with every available seat taken and many local residents turned away due to a lack of space in the hall. Several returned soldiers were in attendance and included Corporals RH Ward, CC Doyle, EE Jones, JH Roberts, Lance Corporals T Egan

and Clarence Stillman and Privates Esmond Turner (37th Battalion) and Andrew Callen; all of whom are listed on the Seymour Memorial Hospital gates.

Other forms of remembering the service and sacrifice of the soldiers included the invitation in November 1918 for all returned soldiers in the Seymour area to form a branch of the Returned Soldier's Association in Seymour. The Glenaroua Returned Soldiers Committee presented the Anderson and Brown families with valuable clocks in remembrance of their sons who did not return from the war. The clocks included an inset photo of the soldiers with a brass plaque recording their details.

As more soldiers began to return from the war, numerous trains carrying returned soldiers stopped at the Seymour train station. On each occasion they were welcomed and entertained by the Local Red Cross Society and the Rest Station committees. The welcome included refreshments, and light entertainment.

Chapter 3:

The Interwar Period

The repatriation of our servicemen and women from the war zones of the First World War took over a year in some cases with soldiers still arriving back to Australia in early 1920. As the repatriation of our servicemen and women remained the focus for the Department of Defence at the time, little training was conducted in the immediate aftermath of the war due to personnel shortages and funding constraints. However, there were still several key military events that occurred in Seymour before training commenced once again in 1921.

On 3 March 1920 a captured German 77mm Krupp Field Gun was allocated to Seymour from the captured gun park at the Australian War Museum (AWM) as it was then known in Melbourne. The AWM documents pertaining to the gun indicate it had been captured by the 57th Infantry Battalion during an attack near Bellicourt on 29 October 1918. However, the Battalion War Diary indicates that the Battalion had been withdrawn from the front line by the start of October 1918. The month listed on the official documents is therefore incorrect and it is surmised it was captured by the Battalion during the attack over the Bellicourt Tunnel which was part of the Mount St Quentin Canal Battle that commenced on 29 September 1918.

As War trophies were allocated to the unit that captured the trophy whenever possible, the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) 2nd Battalion 57th Infantry Regiment was allocated the gun and it was sent to Seymour by rail to be prominently displayed within the unit or local area. This gun is still on display at the War Memorial on ANZAC Avenue.

A public meeting was held in Seymour on 22 September 1919 to decide how the service of the town's servicemen and women in the war could be commemorated. It was decided that a soldier's memorial hospital was the ideal solution. In May 1920, the Seymour Soldier's Memorial Hospital was opened in the former residence of Mr J Bullen to treat the returned soldiers' injuries and illnesses at little or no cost to the servicemen and women. The hospital was funded by public subscription and operated until 1958 when the new hospital was built



*77mm Krupp Gun captured by the 57th Battalion.
Photo credit: Monument Australia.*



The Seymour Soldier's Memorial Hospital in the 1920s. Photo credit: Seymour Health

on the same site. The memorial gates which list the men and women from the district who served and died in the 'Great War' was unveiled on 16 November 1927 by the State Governor, Lord Somers, 6th Baron Somers, KCMG, DSO, MC, who was himself a veteran of the Western Front in both the Infantry and the fledgling Tank Corps. The gates were later restored in 1966, 2004 and 2012. The gates were built by returned serviceman at a cost of £412 and over one thousand Seymour residents turned out for the unveiling. An honour guard from the 20th light Horse Regiment and a contingent of returned servicemen was also in attendance. The Repatriation Department purchased land fronting High Street for the purpose of building

20 concrete houses for returned soldiers.

At the end of the War, the Seymour Camp had grown extensively and it was decided that it would be maintained as the mobilisation point for the Victorian forces. In 1921, the permanent buildings that existed at the Seymour Camp included 16 sleeping huts, eight mess huts, three cookhouses, numerous latrines, 24 large huts, a 25-bed hospital, a caretaker hut and stores huts. The camp had extended to encompass both the southern and northern sides of ANZAC Avenue from Kobyboyn Road to Telegraph Road which included the areas currently known as Light Horse Park, the Industrial Estate, the Seymour Golf course and the Granite Park Raceway and Motocross Track.

To support the build-up and maintenance of the stores of equipment needed to train large formations of troops, the Mobilisation Siding was constructed in 1921. The siding was a mile long branch of the railway which was built off the main line toward an extensive area of storehouses, ammunition magazines and vehicle parks. These storehouses held all of the equipment units needed in time of war that were not normally held during peacetime. This included ammunition, tents, vehicles, blankets, field kitchens and many other assorted pieces of equipment. At times the depot held up to 1,200 vehicles ranging from motorcycles to tanks and enough stores to equip a brigade of 3,000 soldiers. Colloquially called 'Mob Siding', it was named Tel-El-Kebir Barracks in 1965 and was home to the 331 Supply Company of the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps until it closed in the late 1980s. The siding branched off the main line at what is now Chittick Street and ran east across Oak Street and along Mentor

and Upton Streets. Three of the large storage buildings are still standing in the Seymour Business Park.

By 1921, the Light Horse were once again training at Seymour and by March 1924, Infantry Brigade sized training exercises were being conducted at the Camp with over 2,000 soldiers in attendance. They were supported by Artillery, Engineers, Field Ambulance, Service Corps and Mobile Veterinary Sections. These exercises frequently occurred during the Easter Holidays and also included live fire artillery training on the range approximately five miles north of the camp. The Artillery range used Mount Alexina as the impact area for these practices. In 1927 a drill hall was established on Emily Street in Seymour adjacent to the Royal Hotel for use by local militia units.



Part of the Seymour Camp building complex in 1917. Photo credit Australian War Memorial.



*March Past of the 22nd Australian Field Artillery Brigade at Seymour 10 April 1928'.
Photo credit: National Library of Australia.*



An 18 Pounder Field Gun at the Seymour Camp in 1928. Photo credit: National Library of Australia.



*The Seymour Camp site in 1928. The road in the foreground is ANZAC Avenue / Trawool Road.
Photo credit: National Library of Australia.*



A rifle range was constructed on ground leased from Mr Edward Heywood, south west of Seymour Hill in the mid-1920s. The range was used extensively during the interwar period as well as during the Second World War until more permanent ranges were constructed at Puckapunyal. The range was located in the open paddock on the northern side of Heywood's Road opposite to the site of the old Seymour drive-in theatre. The 1939 Army Survey Map above shows the rifle range south west of Seymour Hill and the Aerodrome on the southern side of Tarcombe Road to the East of Dead Horse Lane.

Edward Heywood was the older Brother of Sister Alice Heywood who had served in the Great War. Two of his sons, John and William, would both serve in the Army during the Second World War. Edward Heywood had lived at the 'Daisyburn' homestead at Glenaroua, south of Puckapunyal, before he died at the Seymour Soldiers Memorial Hospital in 1942.

By 1930, a military aerodrome had been established at Seymour to cater for the increased use of aircraft supporting ground operations. The support included area reconnaissance with reports communicated



*The present day site of the Military Aerodrome site from the Inter War period and early WW2.
Photo credit: David Adams.*

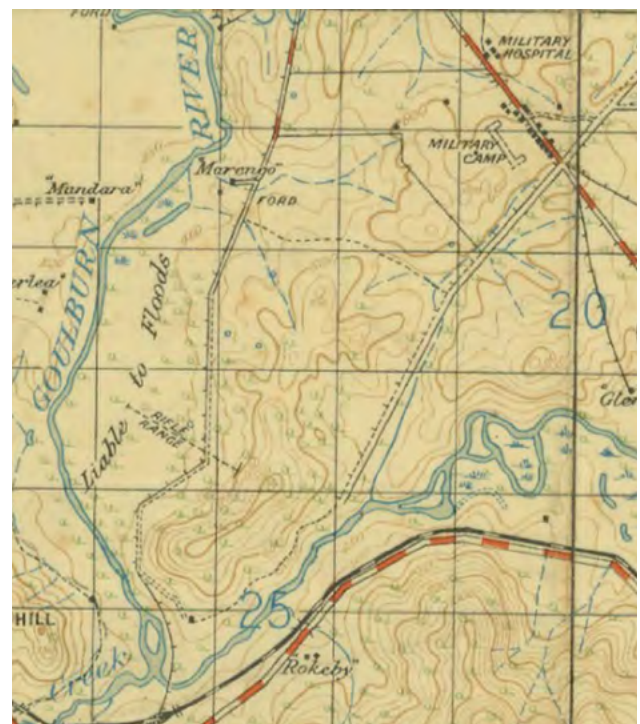


*Present day picture of the shooting range site at the southern end of Hume and Hovell Road.
Photo credit: David Adams.*

back to the soldiers on the ground by wireless radio, artillery spotting, machine gun strafing with blank ammunition and simulated bombing attacks using sacks of flour dropped on the mock enemy during the exercises. The aerodrome was also used by civilian aircraft unable to continue to Melbourne or other aerodromes due to poor weather. The site of the aerodrome is now part of the Seymour Waste Management facility and the shooting range is private property for horse grazing.

Another rifle range was established on part of the 'Marengo' property which was also used during the pre-war and WW2 period. Located at the southern end of the current Hume and Hovell Road, the range was accessible by all of the Seymour and Trawool based Army units.

The post war Army establishment resulted in the 3rd Division and the 4th Division being re-raised and headquartered in Central Victoria and Melbourne respectively. The Victorian Army units of these two divisions regularly trained at Seymour throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The troops involved generally travelled by train to the Mobilisation Siding where they were issued with the necessary equipment before marching to the camp site along ANZAC Avenue.



1948 Army Survey Map - Puckapunyal Seymour Training Area

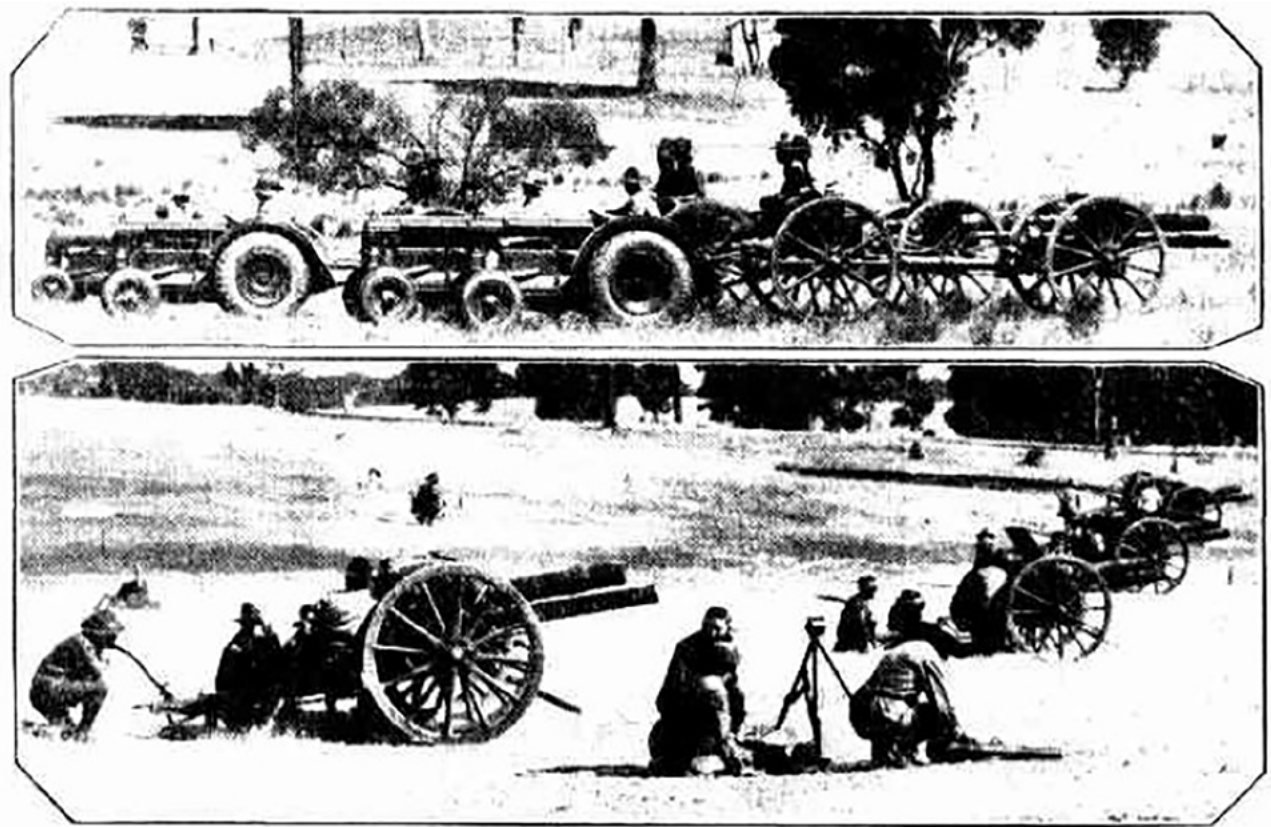
The 15th Brigade camp in 1931 comprised 1,200 soldiers and also included instruction in the use of gas masks and which would be tested in a specially prepared gas chamber or tent. Supervising the training for the 3rd Division units at Seymour was the responsibility of Major General Harold 'Pompey' Elliot from 1927 to 1931 and Major General Thomas Blamey from 1931 to 1937. Both of these men had outstanding WW1 records, Elliot as the commander of the 15th Brigade and Blamey as the Chief of Staff for the Australian Corps. Blamey would later become the sole Australian to be elevated to the rank of Field Marshall.

The mid 1930s saw continual Brigade level training exercises with attendance numbers hovering around the 1,200-1,300 mark. This period saw the consolidation of combined arms training with every exercise incorporating the combat and supporting arms of the Army. The 2nd Cavalry Division camp, held in November 1936, was significant for several reasons as it was the first exercise in Australia that combined all arms of the Cavalry Division in co-operation. It also introduced mechanisation of the Cavalry and Artillery. The Cavalry had approximately 1,200 horses in camp but importantly, a hint of the future of the Cavalry could be seen in the 1st Armoured Car Regiment which was also at the Camp. The 1st Armoured Car Regiment had formally been the 19th Light Horse Regiment based at Horsham before being renamed when they were equipped with Armoured Cars. The Artillery had also commenced the move away from horse drawn gun limbers to using tractors which provided an increase in cross country mobility and proved a faster method of getting the guns into position to complete their fire missions at Mount Alexina.

In 1938, the 2nd Cavalry Division employed a scout troop during the Seymour Camp exercise which comprised Austin Seven motor cars that enabled a Light Horse raiding party to penetrate the enemy lines to detect and report enemy movements. It was so successful that every Light Horse Commanding Officer demanded a scout troop for their own Regiments.

The Easter Holidays Camp in April 1939 was one of the last major exercises held at Seymour before the start of the Second World War. The Artillery Range north of Seymour was again used extensively with Mount Alexina resounding to the impact of high explosive and shrapnel shells from the 18 pounder guns and 4.5 inch howitzers. Over 2,500 Artillery soldiers passed through the camp that year with a 90 per cent attendance rate for the Artillery units. The 3rd Division exercise that year also tested the co-operation between the Victorian Railways and the Army for mobilisation and entraining drills. By this time the Seymour Camp had further expanded to include additional stores and canteen buildings as well as Brigade Headquarters, Guardrooms and a permanent Camp Hospital.

When the Second World War commenced in September 1939, the Seymour Camp would become the primary mobilisation point for the Citizen Military Forces of Victoria once again and importantly, the Puckapunyal Army Camp would be established to train soldiers for the 2nd AIF which was being raised for overseas service.



*Gun tractors and 18 Pounder Field Guns at Seymour in 1936.
Photo credit The Argus.*



*A group of soldiers led by Lieutenant Cyril Lawrence march along ANZAC Avenue toward the Seymour Camp in 1926.
Photo credit Australian War Memorial.*

Chapter 4:

World War Two

When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, the Australian Military Forces 3rd Infantry Division quickly mobilised and by 10 October 1939 there were 6000 soldiers from the Division in camp at Seymour and Trawool. The Infantry, Signallers and Engineers arrived on 10 special trains from Melbourne and the Artillery used numerous trucks to haul fourteen 18 pounder guns, eight 4.5 inch Howitzers and 30 Gun Limbers through the rain and mud to the camp. Other battalions came on special trains from Lilydale and Bairnsdale and marched straight into camp after alighting near the Trawool Bridge.

The Hume Highway was crowded all day long as almost every vehicle was carrying men in uniform to Seymour to commence a month of continuous training. The Federal Government had authorised the militia to train for continuous periods of up to one month in order to increase their readiness. However, a shortage

of funds to pay the soldiers precluded a general call up for all of the militia at this early stage in the war.

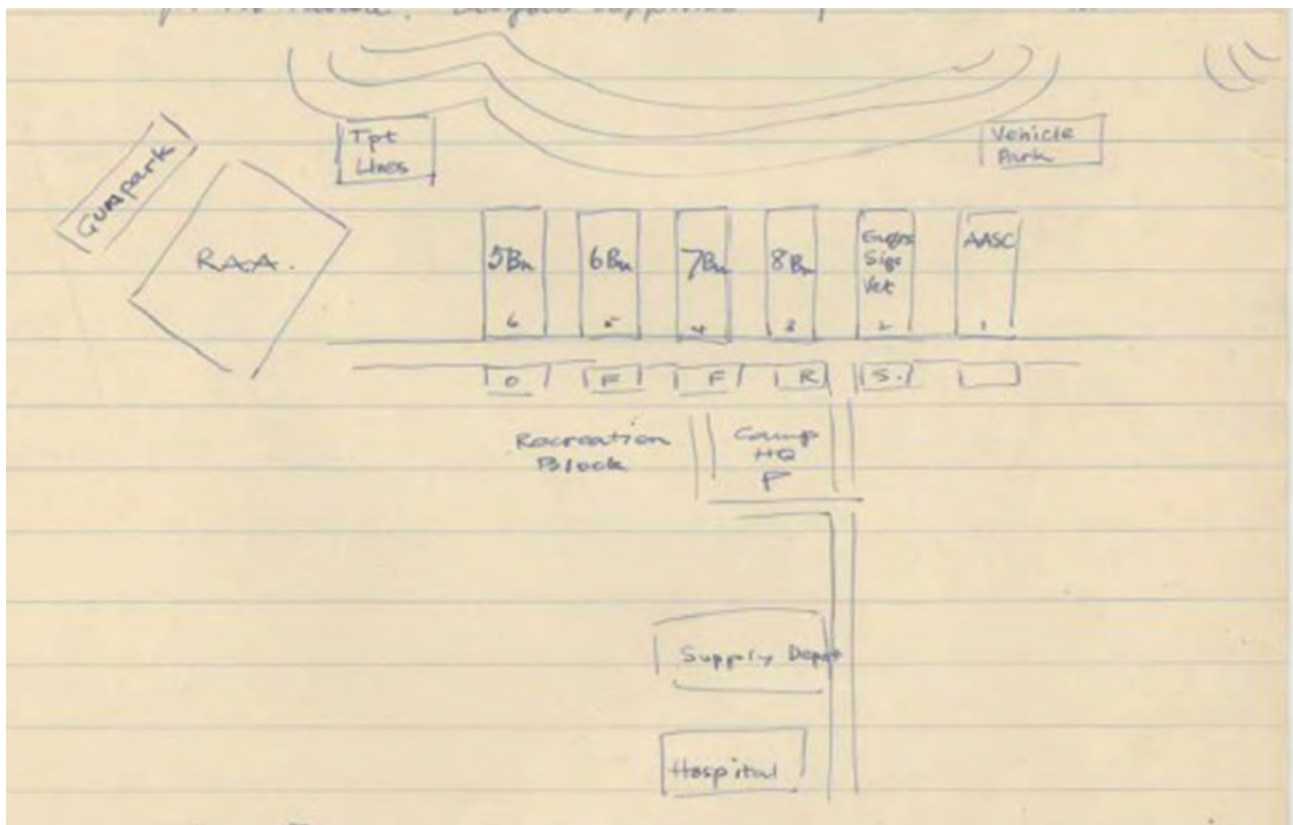
As the Government had committed to raising the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF) for overseas service, a new training area would be required close to the existing facilities at Seymour which were at full capacity with the militia units. This resulted in the camp at Puckapunyal being established in early October 1939 with the 6th Division's 17th Infantry Brigade under the command of Brigadier Stanley Savage, being the first unit to occupy the new camp on 3 November 1939. A hand drawn map of the camp from the Brigade War Diary indicates the initial disposition of the battalions within the camp layout. The 'Grid' as it would later become known is already visible in this early drawing and its basic outline can still be seen on the ground today at Puckapunyal.



4.5 Inch Howitzer and Crew at Seymour, November 1939. Photo credit: National Library of Australia.



*Soldiers from the 15th Engineer Company disembarking from their train near Trawool in late 1939.
Photo credit: State Library of Victoria*



Extract from the 17th Infantry Brigade war diary indicating the grid layout at Puckapunyal November 1939. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.

The camp had not been completed when the advance party from the 17th Brigade began to occupy the camp. The Infantry and the Army Engineers had to clean up the mess left behind by the civilian contractors who had been building the camp, as well as finish off many of the buildings. By November the camp had been completed and the troops had commenced training as additional soldiers continued to fill the ranks of the Battalions in the Brigade. Each of the Battalion areas within the grid were 160m wide and 385m long. They were separated into four distinct sections by access roads for accommodation, messing facilities, parade grounds and administrative areas. The road which comprised the southern border of the grid was to later become 'Passchendaele Parade' and it was along this road that the

camp services and recreation facilities were located. This included the base commanders building at the intersection of Blamey Avenue and Passchendaele Parade as well as the Young Man's Christian Association (YMCA) building, the Catholic Welfare Organisation (CWO) building, the camp post office and the cinema. The WW2 era cinema burnt down in 1952 and was replaced by the current cinema or assembly hall in 1953. The CWO building would later be refurbished and renamed St Ignatius Catholic Church in 1954. It retained the distinctive double pitch roof line and would be dedicated by the National Service Training Brigade Chaplain, Father O'Gorman and the Brigade Commander at the time, Brigadier Charles Kappe.



Puckapunyal Camp under construction in October 1939. Photo taken from Mt Certainty. Photo credit AWM.



The CWO building in 1940. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



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ST. IGNATIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH, PUCKAPUNYAL, VIC.

St Ignatius Catholic Chapel after completion in the 1950's. Photo credit: State Library of Victoria.



Puckapunyal Camp in early 1940. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



LTGEN Blamey and BRIG Savage inspecting the 17th Brigade. The troops in the foreground are likely from the 2/6th or 2/7th Infantry Battalions. Photo credit: AWM

By 1940, Puckapunyal was a hive of activity with the 17th Brigade working toward their eventual deployment to the Middle East in May 1940 and the Victorian elements of the 7th Division commencing their training. In the above photo, Lieutenant General Blamey and Brigadier Savage can be seen in the middle of the image reviewing the Brigade on horseback. The 2/5th, 2/6th, 2/7th and 2/8th Infantry

Battalions that comprised the majority of the Brigade can be seen lined up on either side of the Battalion parade grounds for the inspection. The road in the foreground of the picture would later become Bardia Boulevard and the cleared section that the riders are on would later become the 5th hole of the Golf Course on base. The Battalions often used the more advanced training facilities located in Seymour and the road between Puckapunyal and Seymour would become very familiar to the soldiers as they marched to and from the training sites.

The Seymour and Trawool Camps were equally busy with Militia Battalions in camp at both sites. Even though they were training for war, they still found time for recreation and interaction with the Seymour community. In January 1940, the opening of the Returned Serviceman's League hut was attended by several thousand soldiers.



2/6th Infantry Battalion personnel marching along Emily Street in Seymour heading back toward Puckapunyal after using the rifle range. 24 Feb 1940. Photo likely taken from the balcony of the Royal Hotel. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.

In June 1940, the Army Medical Corps personnel of the 3rd Division held a Military Ball at the Seymour Town Hall on Station Street with 500 officers and soldiers attending. The proceeds from the night were donated to the Seymour Branch of the Australian Red Cross Society as a mark of appreciation for the generous donations of equipment made by the Red Cross to the Army units located across the various Seymour Camps.

In July 1940, the 8th Division Cavalry Regiment was raised and began training at the School of Mechanisation at Seymour. The Regiment would train on Vickers Light Tanks and Universal Carriers or Bren Gun Carriers as they are better known. The adjacent photos show soldiers at the School being instructed on the finer points of operating the Bren Gun Carrier. The School of Mechanisation was located where the current Seymour Golf Course is located.



Trainee BREN gun carrier crews under instruction at the School of Mechanisation, Seymour August 1940. Photo credit Australian War Memorial.



The Seymour RSL Hut on the day it was opened. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



Armoured personnel under training using a sand or mud map at the School of Mechanisation at Seymour, August 1940. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



2/21st Battalion Memorial at the Cherry Tree Range Camp site. Photo credit: David Adams.

July 1940 also saw the forming of the 23rd Brigade with two of the three Infantry battalions located at Trawool. The 2/21st Infantry Battalion and the 2/22nd Infantry Battalion camps were located at the 'Cherry Tree Range' Camp and the 'Deep Dale' property on the Upper Goulburn Road respectively and Brigade Headquarters was located at Camp Site 30 which was the 'Rokeby' property. A shift in the location for Infantry training required the Brigade to relocate to Bonegilla in late September 1940 and a film of the 2/21st Infantry Battalion commencing their march is available from the Australian War Memorial. The Cherry Tree Range Camp was located on the Goulburn Valley Highway on the Seymour side of the Goulburn River before the Trawool Bridge whilst the Rokeby and Deep Dale properties are located on what was called the Tallarook to Mansfield Road which is now the Upper Goulburn Road.



*The former 2/22nd Infantry Battalion site at Trawool with the memorial cairn and garden.
Photo credit: David Adams.*



The Cherry Tree Range Camp in WW2 on the left and in 1999 on the right. Note the two large buildings in the centre of the photo still standing from WW2. Photo credit: Trawool on the Goulburn, Helen McCall.

A memorial cairn to the 2/22nd Battalion is still accessible on the side of the Upper Goulburn Road where the camp site was located. A memorial to the 2/21st Battalion is located just inside the entrance gate to the old Cherry Tree Range camp on private property on the Goulburn Valley Highway. Two of the war era buildings are still standing in the centre of the former camp site. The 2/21st Battalion would later form the main component of 'Gull' force on the Indonesian Island of Ambon and they would suffer 309 dead at the Laha Airfield massacre after being captured by the Japanese. The 2/22nd Battalion would form the main component of 'Lark' Force on the Island of Rabual. After the majority of the Battalion were captured by the Japanese, 160 soldiers were massacred at the Tol Plantation. Approximately 300 soldiers from the Battalion escaped capture and made their way back to Australia.

In June 1942, many of the remaining soldiers of 'Lark' Force would be transported to Hainan Island but would lose their lives when the submarine USS Sturgeon sunk the ship they were being transported on. 1053 prisoners and civilians lost their lives during the sinking.

The 'Rokeby' property was later used as a Divisional Headquarters site for the AMF's 3rd Division as well as supporting Signals detachments, Artillery units, Service Corps detachments, Intelligence units, Provost units and Engineer units who used the nearby Goulburn River for bridge crossing drills. The 'Rokeby' property also incorporated small arms ranges and supported a substantial number of buildings, including YMCA and Catholic Welfare Organisation huts. It was used as a training location for numerous smaller units such as the 8th Division Cavalry Regiment after their initial training at the School of Mechanisation.



TANKS AND BREN GUN CARRIERS advance in line.

*Vickers Light Tanks and Bren Gun carriers during a parade at 'Rokeby', Trawool on 23 Nov 1940.
Photo credit: National Library of Australia.*



BRIGADIER F. H. CHRISTISON inspecting 8th Division Cavalry during a parade and presentation of drums by the 3rd Cavalry Brigade.

Soldiers from the 8th Division Cavalry Regiment during the inspection of the parade on 23 Nov 1940 at 'Rokeby', Trawool. Photo credit: National Library of Australia.

In August 1940, the Governor General, Lord Gowrie, inspected the troops at the Seymour, Nagambie and Puckapunyal Camps. You might recall that Lord Gowrie, as a young Captain, was one of the officers who accompanied Lord Kitchener on his visit to Seymour in 1910. Lord Gowrie arrived at Puckapunyal just after lunch and inspected the guard from the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion before inspecting over 5000 troops from the 7th Division. Over 1000 family members and spectators had travelled by special trains and cars to view the parade and march past of the troops on Blamey Avenue. In the adjacent photo, elements of the 7th Division are marching past the saluting point on Blamey Avenue whilst the Governor General returns the salute. Mt Certainty is in the background and the buildings behind the saluting point are the camp stores area which is the present day site of the Puckapunyal Health Centre and helipad.

The 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion was one of four Pioneer battalions raised for the 2nd AIF and was raised at Puckapunyal in May 1940 and sailed to the Middle East in April 1941. Assigned to the 7th Division, it fought in the Syrian campaign against the Vichy French. In January 1942, with the Vichy French defeated and threat of Japanese invasion, the 7th Division



Lord Gowrie inspecting the Victorian elements of the 7th Division marching along Blamey Avenue at Puckapunyal August 1940. Photo credit Australian War Memorial.

began the voyage home to Australia. However, instead of returning to Australia, the 2/2nd Pioneers were diverted to Java to become part of 'Blackforce' under the command of Brigadier Arthur Blackburn VC. Blackforce was forced to surrender when the Dutch forces on the Island surrendered and 865 officers and men of the Battalion became Prisoners of War. 258 of these men died in captivity whilst working on the Thai-Burma railway or whilst being transported on ships at sea. It would be a fair assumption that almost all of the men pictured in the photo below became POWs and almost one third of these men would not return from the war.



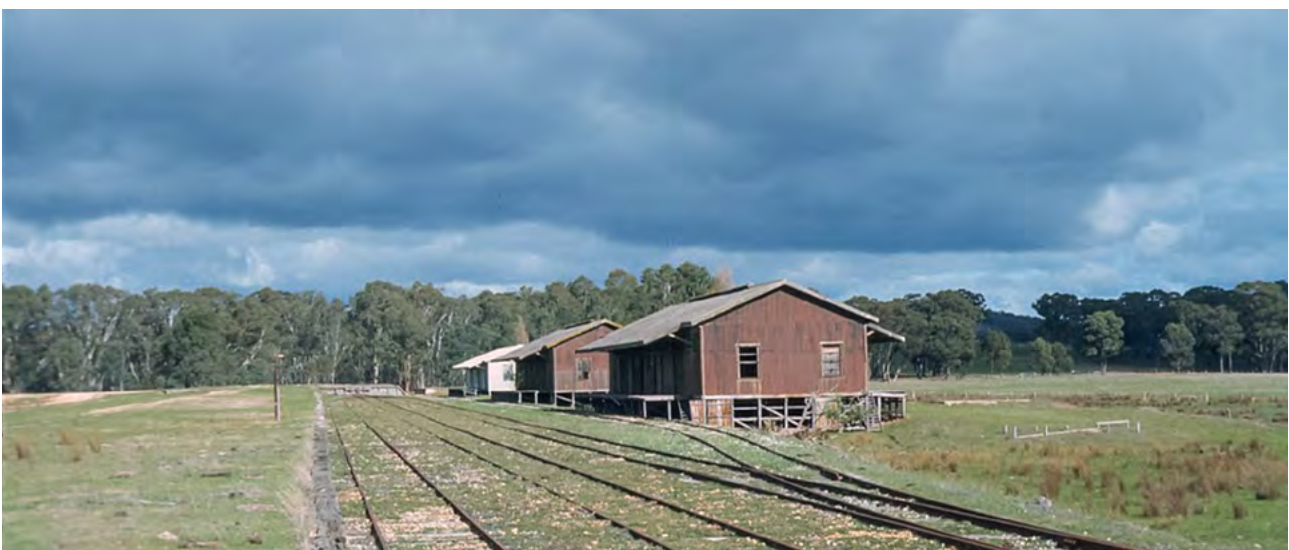
2/2nd Pioneer Battalion marching along Blamey Avenue at the Puckapunyal Camp after completing a 140 Mile march to Shepparton and back. October 1940. The bridge they are marching across is the present day bridge adjacent to the JMPU building. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.

In order to service the new camp at Puckapunyal, a new rail siding was built. It was named Dysart Siding after the property on which it was located. The new siding was eight kilometres away from Puckapunyal and eliminated the need for stores and personnel to travel from Seymour and eliminated the use of the constrictive railway bridge on the way to Puckapunyal. The siding consisted of three large storage sheds, marshalling yards and rail platforms. Dysart Siding would continue to be used throughout the 1950s and 60s and the three storage sheds are still standing today.

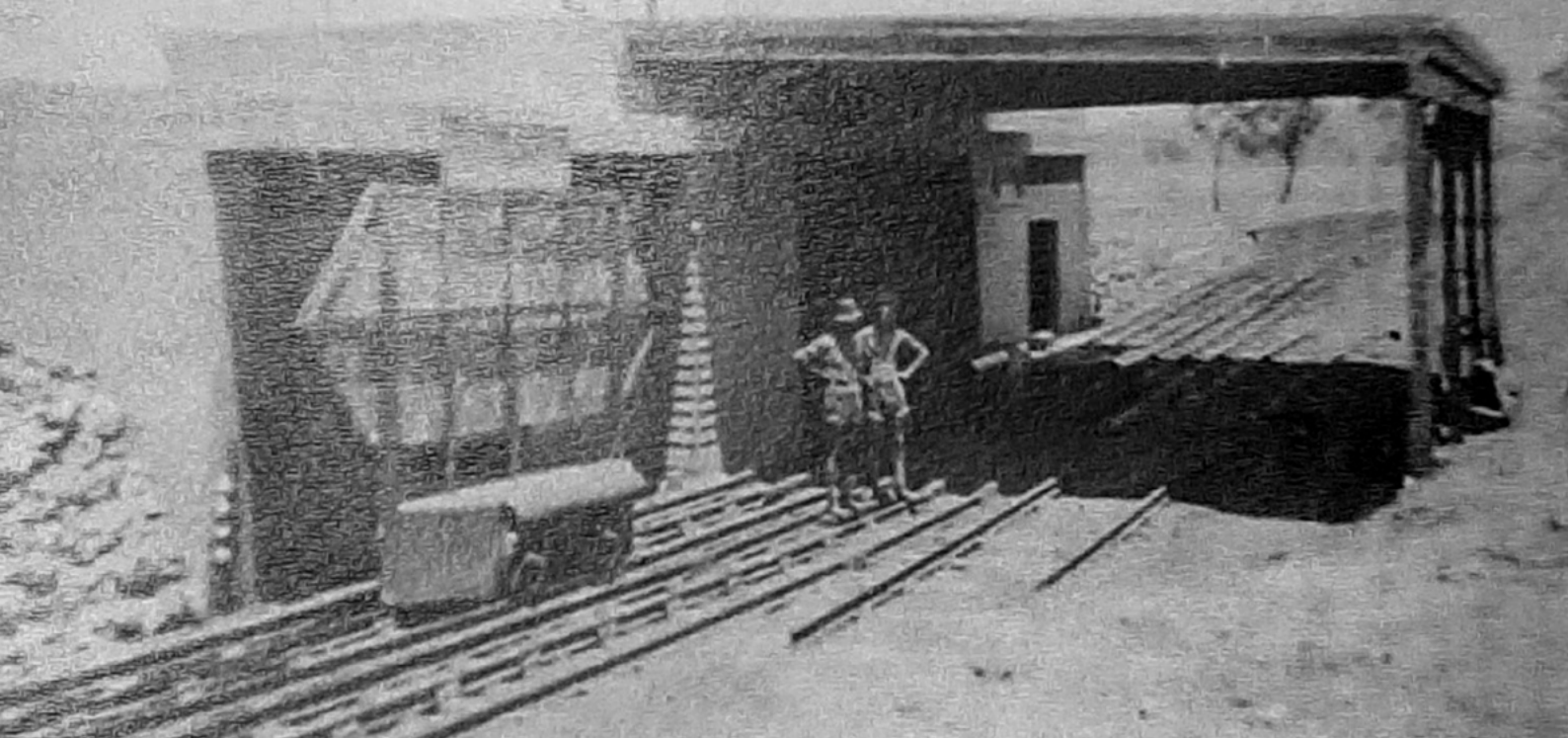
In February 1941, the Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV) School was moved from Balcombe to Puckapunyal. After politely requesting the artillery from the 2nd Field Regiment to vacate the Schools allocated buildings, the instructors prepared to receive the first course on 24 February 1941. The students of these initial courses would comprise the basis for the establishment of the 1st Armoured Division which would be raised with the intention of supporting the Infantry Divisions fighting in Africa. To ensure the training was world class, an electrically powered tank gunnery range was established. Engineers from the Victorian State Electricity commission and Victorian Railways collaborated on the project which was opened on 29 June 1941 by Major General John Northcott.

The 1st Armoured Division was formed in Melbourne on 1 July 1941 and the 2nd Armoured Brigade began to form at Puckapunyal in August 1941. The entry of Japan into the war in December 1941 resulted in the Division being retained in Australia for home defence duties but several of the Armoured Regiments which comprised the Division eventually saw active service in the Pacific theatre. In the adjacent photo, General Blamey and the Commander of the Division, Major General Robertson can be seen taking the salute from the Infantry Regiment of the Division during the parade at Puckapunyal on 21 June 1942.

As well as two Armoured Brigades, the 1st Armoured Division also comprised an Infantry Regiment, Signals and Provost Companies and other Divisional level troops who were also on parade. The parade was so large that General Blamey at times used an Australian built Scout Car to review the parade elements. The inclement weather resulted in the tanks having to use Blamey Avenue as the main parade ground was being torn up by the tracks. In the adjacent picture, M3 Grant tanks are moving south along Blamey Avenue toward the present day front gate of the base. The parade ground was located on what is the current site of the soccer oval and the cricket oval on the Eastern side of Blamey Avenue.



Dysart Siding showing the three WW2 storage sheds still standing with rail lines and platforms.
Photo credit: Wikipedia



The moving target bunker that housing the electrical equipment which powered the moving targets along the rail system. Photo credit: 'The AFV School'. Baines, Branagan and Finlayson, 2011.



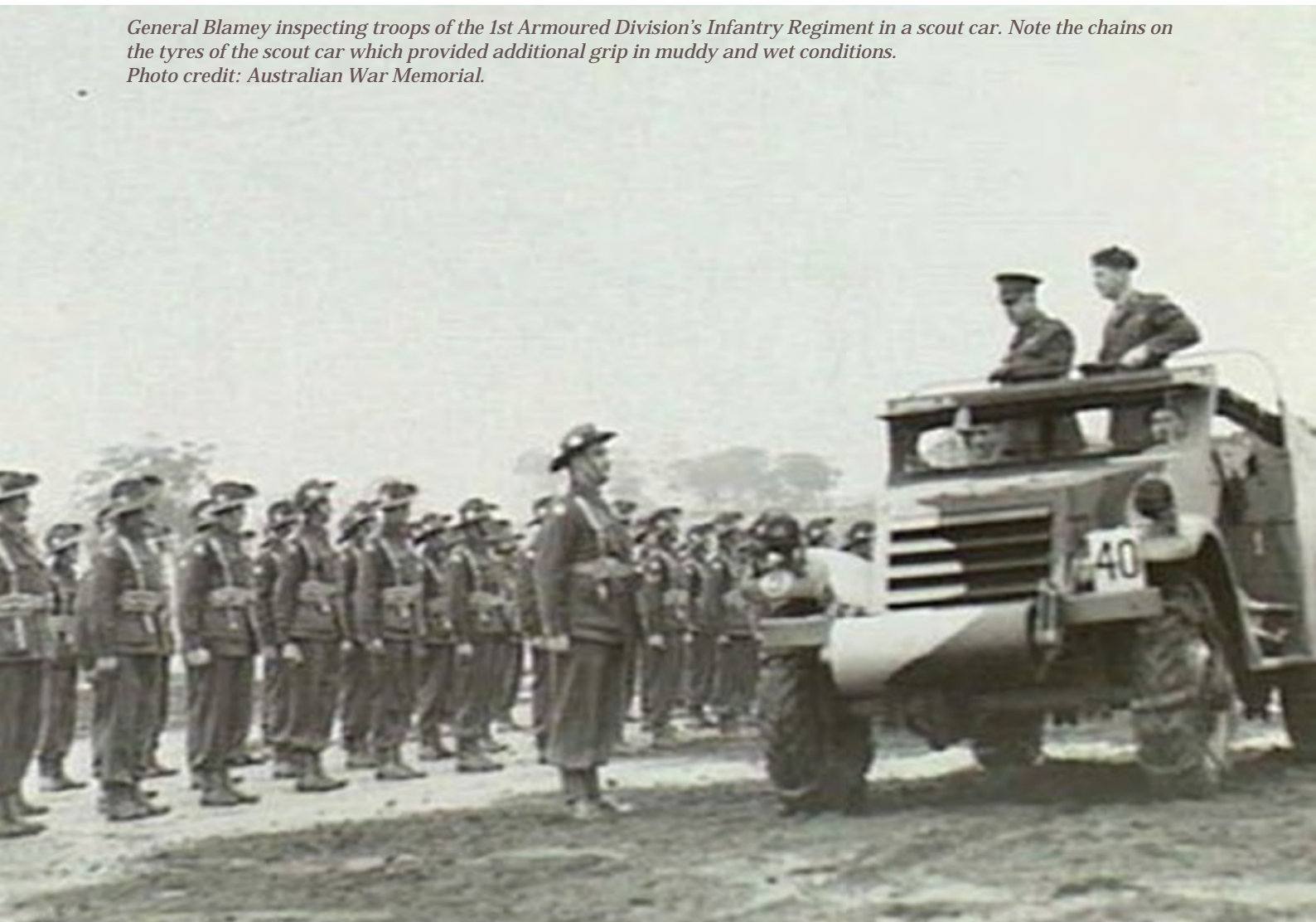
GEN Blamey taking the salute from soldiers of the 1st Armoured Division's Infantry Regiment as they march past the dais. Puckapunyal Camp can be seen in the background as well as Bucklers Hill. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.

1st Armoured Division Parade at Puckapunyal 21 Jun 1942. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.





1st Armoured Division Provost Company soldiers on parade at Puckapunyal. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



General Blamey inspecting troops of the 1st Armoured Division's Infantry Regiment in a scout car. Note the chains on the tyres of the scout car which provided additional grip in muddy and wet conditions. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



LT Tom Derrick VC, DCM receiving his 'stars' from the Chief of the General Staff, LTGEN John Northcott at the Seymour OTW Graduation parade. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.

The Seymour Camp was also home to the Infantry Officer Training Wing (OTW) at the School of Tactics during the war. Located across the areas that now comprise the Seymour Industrial Estate and part of the Seymour Golf Course, one of the School's purposes was to train prospective officers for employment as Infantry Platoon Commanders in the Army. Two very well-known Australian officers trained at this school and graduated in November 1944. Lieutenant Tom 'Diver' Derrick who had already been awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) and Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) and Captain Reg Saunders, widely regarded as the first Aboriginal Australian to be commissioned into the Army.

The School of Tactics area also contained small arms and grenade ranges as well numerous headquarters, instructional and administrative buildings. The remains of this infrastructure can still be seen in the Seymour Bushland Reserve as well as the Granite Park Raceway complex.

The ending of the war resulted in a major shift for the Australian Army. In place of an Army based on part-time soldiers supported by a

small cadre of regular officers and soldiers, the Army would for the first time have a deployable regular Army component as well as retaining the militia units. Puckapunyal was retained as the major Victorian military facility for this purpose and the multitude of smaller camps around Seymour shrunk to the main Seymour camps centred on the pre-war or 'Old Seymour' camp. Puckapunyal and Seymour would remain critical in the training and preparation of soldiers during the Korean War and the 1st National Service Scheme in the 1950s.



LT Reg Saunders and LT Tom Derrick, VC, DCM congratulating each other after the OTW Graduation parade. Photo credit: Benjamin Thomas Photography.

Chapter 5:

Post World War Two, Korea and the 1st National Service Scheme

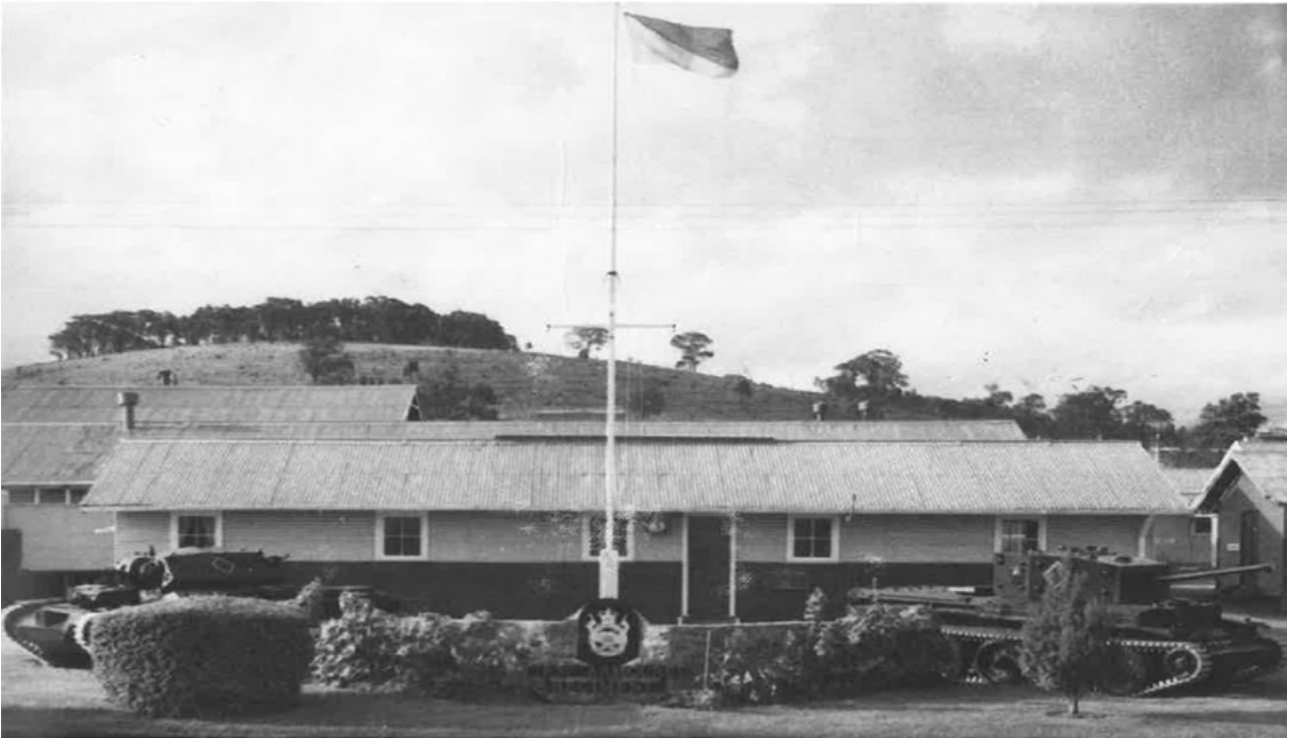
At the conclusion of the Second World War, the allied nations provided occupation forces to Japan as part of the armistice conditions. Accordingly, in January 1946 the 1st Armoured Car Squadron was raised at Puckapunyal for service in Japan as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF). The Squadron was issued Staghound Armoured Cars and Canadian Scout Cars.

The Squadron returned to Puckapunyal in December 1948 and in July 1949 the Squadron provided the nucleus for the raising of the 1st Armoured Regiment at Puckapunyal. The

Regiment moved into the old WW2 lines in the 'Grid' where living conditions were basic. The Regiment was initially equipped with Churchill tanks left over from the Second World War and later reequipped with the Centurions in 1952. Conditions in the WW2 lines were Spartan with a lack of heating for the buildings and adequate storage and servicing areas for the vehicles. Mostly, the vehicles were left out in the open and servicing of the vehicles took place in the open tank park. 1st Armoured Regiment would occupy the old WW2 lines in the 'Grid' until 1959 when the Regiment moved to Kapyong Barracks.



*1st Armoured Car Squadron on parade at Puckapunyal before leaving for Japan.
Photo credit Australian War Memorial.*



1st Armoured Regiment HQ 1955. Photo taken from Bardia Blvd. The Regiment occupied these WW2 buildings from 1949 to 1959. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



Home of the 1st Armoured Regiment 1959-1996, Kaypong Barracks in the 1950s. It would later be renamed Robertson Barracks followed by Bridges Barracks when the Combined Arms Training Centre was established. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.

The Korean War commenced in June 1950 which resulted in Australia committing troops to the United Nations forces. The Government called for volunteers with prior military experience to enlist for three years' service with one of those years serving in Korea under a scheme called K-Force. The purpose being to provide rapid reinforcements to the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment who had been sent to Korea whilst on BCOF duties in Japan. At this time the Regular Army's 1st Infantry Brigade was located at Puckapunyal and soldiers from this Brigade made up the first Victorian contingent of K-Force which left for Korea. On 31 August 1950, the Seymour train station was the scene of another teary farewell as Seymour once again sent soldiers off to war. In the adjacent photo, PTE RW Simpson from Seymour says goodbye to his mother at the Seymour train station.



PTE Simpson being farewelled at Seymour. Photo credit: The Herald

Whilst the Regular Army was focused on Korea, the Seymour Camp was still very busy with additional funding provided to upgrade the facilities for the CMF troops and the School of Tactics and the School of Infantry which had relocated to Seymour from Bonegilla in 1947. The School of Tactics was the pre-cursor to the modern Command and Staff College which trained officers for command and administration in the field during times of war. In November 1950, the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Sydney Rowell, hosted an exercise at the school for senior British, New Zealand and American officers as well as practically all of the senior Australian Regular and Citizen Force's officers. The School of Infantry was also tasked with training Officers and Warrant Officers in the administrative and instructional requirements for employment in the CMF units. The School of Infantry would remain at Seymour until 1960 when it relocated to Ingleburn in Sydney.

The 1st National Service Scheme was implemented in March 1951 and Puckapunyal would become the epicentre for National Service Training in Victoria. The 14th, 15th and 20th National Service Training Battalions (NTSB) would cater for the thousands of



BRIG's Hammer and Macarthur-Onlsow during an exercise at the School of Tactics and Administration at Seymour 1953. Photo credit: State Library of Victoria.

National Servicemen who completed a 90-day course at Puckapunyal before continuing their training at their local Army depots. The first intake marched into Puckapunyal with Regular Army and K-Force soldiers in August 1951.

Dysart Siding was once again put into action with soldiers detraining at the siding for clothing and equipment issues before moving out to Puckapunyal by bus or truck. The base engineers worked overtime to construct additional sporting ovals, 30-yard rifle ranges in the side of Mt Certainty, installation of cool rooms and the renovation of sleeping huts for the trainees and regular soldiers. However, many National Servicemen and staff would be allocated to marquee tents as there was not enough permanent accommodation for the sudden influx of personnel. One of the 14th NSTB instructors in 1951, Captain John Quantrill, had to live in a tent with his family for 27 weeks with no water, electricity or toilet whilst he waited for a married quarter building to become available. Large parades and inspections have always been a fixture on the Military calendar of Seymour and Puckapunyal. 1952 was no different with the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Sydney Rowell, visiting Puckapunyal with over 5000

Regular, K-Force and National Servicemen on parade. The following day, General Rowell also visited the 'Old Seymour' camp where 1000 soldiers from the CMF's 3rd Division were attending a camp. Due to the post World War Two downsizing of the numerous Seymour camps, many CMF soldiers lived in tents during their training at Seymour during this period in a similar fashion to the World War One soldiers. National Service training would continue at Puckapunyal until the scheme ceased in 1959.



National Service March Out Parade in the early 1950s. The soldiers are marching along Bardia Blvd. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



National Servicemen marching out parade in the early 1950s with the UK Chief of the General Staff reviewing the parade. The soldiers are marching along Damascus Road with the battalion parade ground in the background. Photo credit: State Library of Victoria.



Puckapunyal Motorcycle circuit 1952. Photo credit: Old Bike Australasia.

In 1952, the Essendon Motorcycle Club (EMCC) approached Defence to request that a round of their race series be held at Puckapunyal on Easter Monday, 14 April 1952. After an agonising wait, the request was approved and the EMCC members conducted a survey of the road network and developed a 2.1 mile course as depicted in the picture above.

The races included 125cc, 250cc, 500cc, 750cc categories as well as 750cc and 1000cc side car races. Army personnel were used to keep the corners swept and communications around the track employed Army radios. Heavy rain in the morning delayed the start of the racing but it cleared later in the morning. This race remained a one-off event for Puckapunyal and very few people are aware of its existence.

The 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, had been stationed at Puckapunyal since its return from BCOF duties in 1948 and was one of the Battalions of the 1st Infantry Brigade which was part of Southern Command. In mid-1952, the Battalion was given notice for a

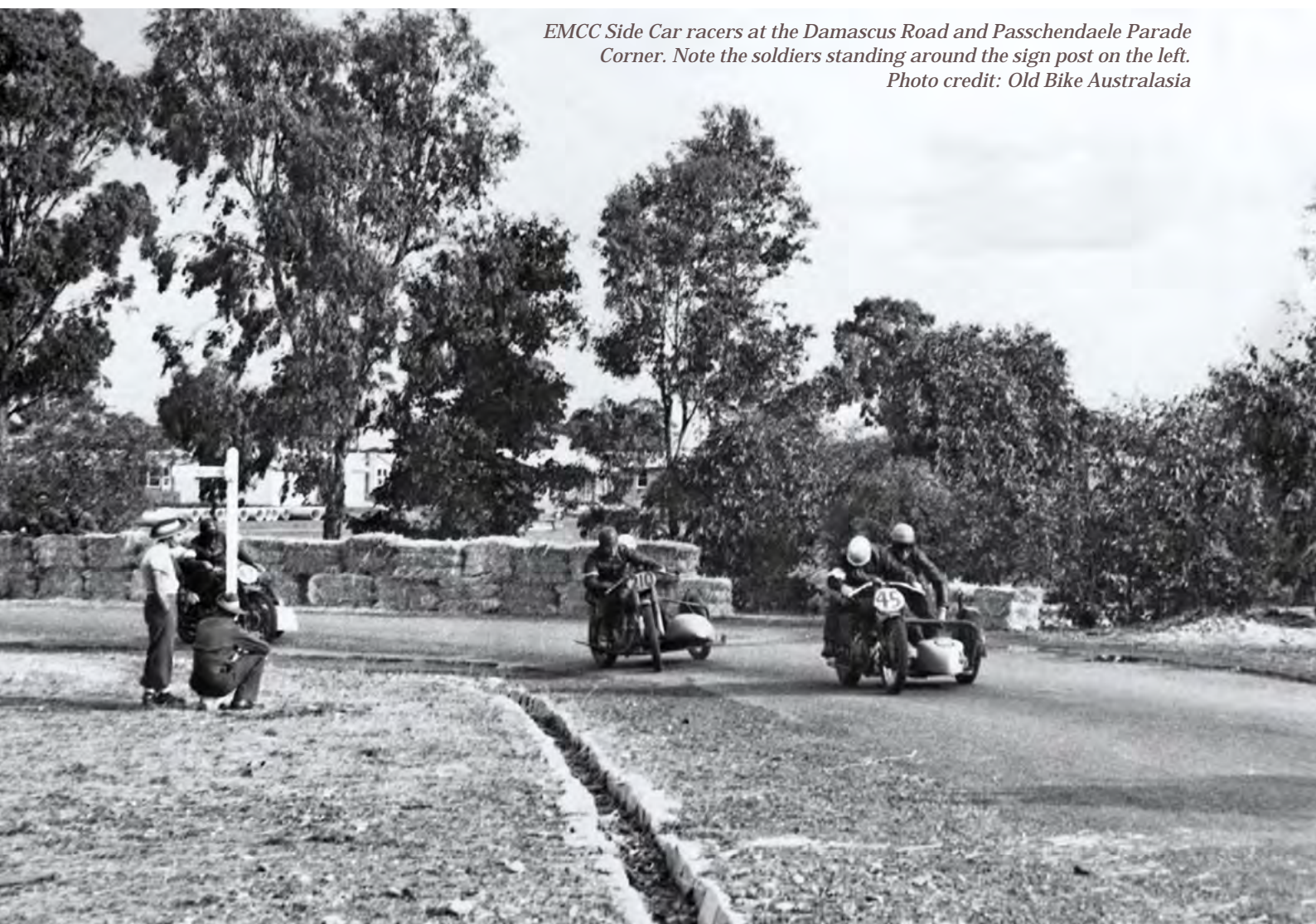
deployment to Korea in early 1953. On 5 March 1953, the battalion entrained for Sydney and the troopship bound for Korea from Dysart Siding. The photo below is the battalion getting ready to board their train. The large building in the background on the left behind the roof of the train is one of the three storage sheds which are still standing today.



2 RAR entraining at Dysart Siding for Sydney. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



*EMCC Motorcycle racer Gordon Laing after turning from Beersheba Road onto Brallos Road.
Photo credit: Old Bike Australasia*



*EMCC Side Car racers at the Damascus Road and Passchendaele Parade Corner. Note the soldiers standing around the sign post on the left.
Photo credit: Old Bike Australasia*

In June 1953, Her Majesty the Queen's coronation was celebrated at Puckapunyal with a 6.30 am service at Bucklers Hill on the training range. The 14th NSTB had been planning for this occasion for some time and had constructed a rock cairn on Bucklers Hill as part of the celebrations. The cairn was unveiled by Mrs Kappe, wife of the Commander of the National Service Brigade at Puckapunyal, Brigadier Charles Kappe. The cairn would become well known to all National Servicemen and permanent staff posted to Puckapunyal for the next 60 years as Bucklers Hill would become part of the field training area and the cross country running track. The remains of the cairn are still visible on the hill and the bronze commemorative plaque has been moved to the remembrance park on Blamey Avenue.

In 1956, the Olympic Games were being held in Melbourne. As part of the lead up training for the athletes, various regional track and field meetings were held around the state and Puckapunyal was included in this roster. On 10 November 1956, one of the races held was the 3 mile or 5000m track event. A number of Australian Olympic hopefuls were racing and the adjacent photo shows Al Lawrence



*QE2 coronation cairn on Bucklers Hill.
Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.*

narrowly beating Dave Stephens to win the race. Al Lawrence would go on to qualify for the Olympics and win the first Australian medal of the games, Bronze in the 10000m race. Mt Certainty is in the background on the left of the picture and the cinder running track is still in use by soldiers today.

The CMF's 2nd Armoured Brigade trained at Puckapunyal throughout the 1950s with regular camps which included the National Servicemen allocated to the Royal Australian Armoured Corps units. The two Regiments which comprised the Brigade, 4th/19th Prince of Wales Light Horse and 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles, trained predominantly on surplus World War Two vehicles with the obsolete M3 Grant tank featuring on many exercises until they were withdrawn from service prior to conversion to the Centurion Tank in 1956. However, with limited Centurions to train with and a reorganisation of the Army structure, the Brigade was disbanded in



*LT R Parker from 4/19 PWLH leaning on the main gun barrel of his M3 Grant Tank during an exercise in 1955.
Photo credit: State Library of Victoria.*



Al Lawrence narrowly winning the 3 mile race at Puckapunyal. Photo credit: State Library of Victoria.

1957. The two Regiments would continue as part of other formations and be converted to reconnaissance regiments equipped with scout cars and a small number of Centurions but they would continue to train at Puckapunyal for many years to come.

The end of the 1950s saw many changes to the original layout of Puckapunyal as the regular Army units began to spread out from the central 'Grid' system of buildings into new purpose-built facilities. This resulted in many of the wartime buildings being torn down and others being refurbished or sold to local land owners. Many of these World War 2 era P1 huts can still be seen on properties around the Seymour area. The 1950s also saw an expanse of recreation facilities for the serviceman and their families who lived on the base with an outdoor pool and shopping precinct established and the completion of married quarter accommodation.



*Puckapunyal Grocery Store in 1957
Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.*



*Puckapunyal outdoor swimming pool in 1957.
Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.*

Chapter 6:

Vietnam and the 2nd National Service Scheme

The early 1960s brought significant change to the Seymour military facilities with the School of Infantry moving to Ingleburn in Sydney, the School of Tactics and Administration which would later become the Army Command and Staff College moving to Queenscliff and the remaining land being disposed of with the exception of the married quarter blocks in the old site 13 area along the Goulburn Valley Highway (near the Seymour Golf Course). Any remaining smaller units either moved interstate or relocated to Puckapunyal. However, Mob Siding and the Tel-El-Kebir Barracks in Seymour continued to operate throughout the decade but with reduced significance as the Army presence in Seymour drew down. Dysart Siding would still be in use but became less important as movement of troops and stores became less reliant on rail and more reliant on road and air movement.

Since its establishment in 1949, 1st Armoured Regiment had been fairly secluded at Puckapunyal, the excellent field training and gunnery ranges as well as a perception that the Tanks were not transportable over long distances had precluded the Regiment's attendance at interstate training exercises. However, that did not mean that the training could not come to them at Puckapunyal. In the early 1960s, 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers, a Citizen Military Force (CMF) armoured unit based in Sydney which was also equipped with Centurion tanks, regularly sent troops to Puckapunyal to train with the 1st Armoured Regiment and the Armoured Centre or the School of Armour as it is now known. In 1960, 150 men from B Squadron of the Lancer

Regiment spent their annual camp participating in two weeks of intensive tactics, gunnery and wireless operation with the regular soldiers of the Armoured Regiment and the Armoured Centre. This type of training was repeated again in 1962 with soldiers from all three squadrons from the Lancer Regiment qualifying on the tank's weapons and wireless equipment. Many of the tank crews were national servicemen who had continued to serve in the CMF after their national service commitment had been completed. 1964 saw some variety from the seclusion of Puckapunyal for the 1st Armoured Regiment with B Squadron being moved by rail, road and Army landing ships to Tin Can Bay and later Shoalwater Bay in Queensland for Battle Group exercises. This was the first time the tanks had been moved across two state borders using the standard gauge rail network and proved the concept of the tanks being able to participate in interstate exercises.

1965 was a significant year for Puckapunyal with the raising of the 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (7 RAR) at Puckapunyal and the introduction of the second National Service scheme which resulted in the 2nd Recruit Training Battalion (2 RTB) also being raised at Puckapunyal. The raising of 7 RAR and 2 RTB was directly related to the Australian Army's commitment in Vietnam and the increase in troop numbers that the war required. The commitment to Vietnam was not fully supported in the community and as early as September 1965, a mere three months after the National Service scheme was implemented, anti-Vietnam protests were planned for Puckapunyal. In one instance on

Sunday 12 September 1965, 20 mothers from Melbourne travelled to Puckapunyal for the 'passing out' parade of the first National Service intake at 2 RTB. After stringing themselves out along the road, they raised several banners with slogans such as 'Save our sons', 'Keep our sons out of Vietnam', and 'Thou shalt not kill'. The demonstration lasted from 10:30am to 2:20pm and only ceased after the Military Police threatened to call the civil police unless the mothers moved on.



33 platoon C Company 1st Intake National Service
2RTB Puckapunyal Vic. July 1965

Instructors and soldiers from the 1st NS Intake at Puckapunyal, July 1965. Photo credit: Nashos Photos.

7 RAR would slowly build up to its first deployment to Vietnam in April 1967. Approximately one-third of the Battalion would be comprised of National Servicemen, many of whom had presumably trained at 2 RTB before being posted to 7 RAR. The Battalion departed Puckapunyal on 2 April 1967 via train from Dysart Siding. The photos below show soldiers from 7 RAR boarding the train at the siding and waving farewell as the train pulls away on its way to Sydney. The Army band that was in attendance played the tune 'now is the hour', traditionally used as a farewell song, as the Battalion left the siding. The departure of 7 RAR from Dysart Siding would be significant as this lonely rail siding south of Seymour would have seen the departure of soldiers to the Pacific theatre in World War Two, the Korean War and now the Vietnam War, a period of 35 years.



Soldiers from 7 RAR boarding and waving goodbye from the train at Dysart Siding. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.



7 RAR boarding Uh-1 'Hueys' at Luscombe Field Nui Dat during Operation Puckapunyal. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.

7 RAR's shake down operation in Vietnam would be quite fittingly called Operation Puckapunyal and would result in one of the most well-known photos from the war which can be seen in the photo above. On its return from Vietnam, 7 RAR would be based in Sydney and this would bring to a close the era of the regular infantry battalions based at Puckapunyal.

2 RTB march out or 'passing out' parades were a regular calendar event at Puckapunyal as every three months a new intake of National Servicemen completed their training. These parades were often visited by senior dignitaries and in 1968 the Governor General, Lord Casey, the Minister of State for the Army, Phillip Lynch and numerous senior Army officers attended the parades. They would often plant a tree within the 2 RTB lines as a mark of their visit and fix a brass plate to either a small concrete plinth or large rocks near the trees. Sadly, the trees have mostly been removed along with the brass plates although the Army Knowledge

Centre at Puckapunyal is in possession of six of the plates. The 2 RTB lines were the old World War Two and National Service lines from the 1940-50s which had been refurbished in the 1960s. Many of the company buildings, the other ranks mess and storage buildings are still standing and are currently used as transit and overflow accommodation lines. The parade ground used by many thousands of young Australians to mark the completion of their training is still in good condition and it is not hard to visualise the parades from the 1950-60s when walking around the area.

In June 1960, A Squadron 4th/19th Prince of Wales Light Horse (4/19 PWLH) was formed in Seymour as an armoured reconnaissance squadron equipped with the M113A1 Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC). The squadron relocated to Puckapunyal in 1962 and in 1965, a troop of eight vehicles from the squadron deployed to Vietnam to support the infantry operations. The troop was later renamed the 1st APC Troop in 1966. The troop was very busy as



2 RTB march out parade at Puckapunyal 1969. Mt Certainty is in the background along with WW2 era buildings at the rear left and the 2 RTB accommodation buildings on the rear right'. Photo credit: AWM

they were the sole Australian armoured unit in Vietnam at that time. This operational tempo resulted in the remaining vehicles from the troop deploying to Vietnam in mid-1966 which brought the complement to 15 M113's. Whilst 1 APC Troop was in Vietnam, the remainder of A Squadron 4/19 PWLH relocated to Holsworthy and the 1st APC Squadron was formed at Puckapunyal to provide reinforcement vehicles to the troop deployed in Vietnam. In January 1967, 1 APC Squadron was renamed A Squadron 3rd Cavalry Regiment and moved to Holsworthy in Sydney.

March 1968 would see the deployment of tanks to Vietnam. This would be the first time since the end of the Second World War that Australian tanks had served overseas. C Squadron 1st Armoured Regiment was the first squadron selected to deploy to Vietnam and prior to departing, the squadron was visited by the future Prime Minister of Australia and Minister for Army at the time, Mr Malcolm Fraser. During the visit Mr Fraser was asked if he would like to try his hand at driving the Centurion. He agreed and was put through an abbreviated driver's course and issued with a licence. His instructor reported that Mr Fraser was 'aggressive and rather fierce at times' in his handling of the tank.



CPL Cadzow familiarising a 1 RAR soldier with the Centurion Tank at Nui Dat. Photo credit: Australian War Memorial.

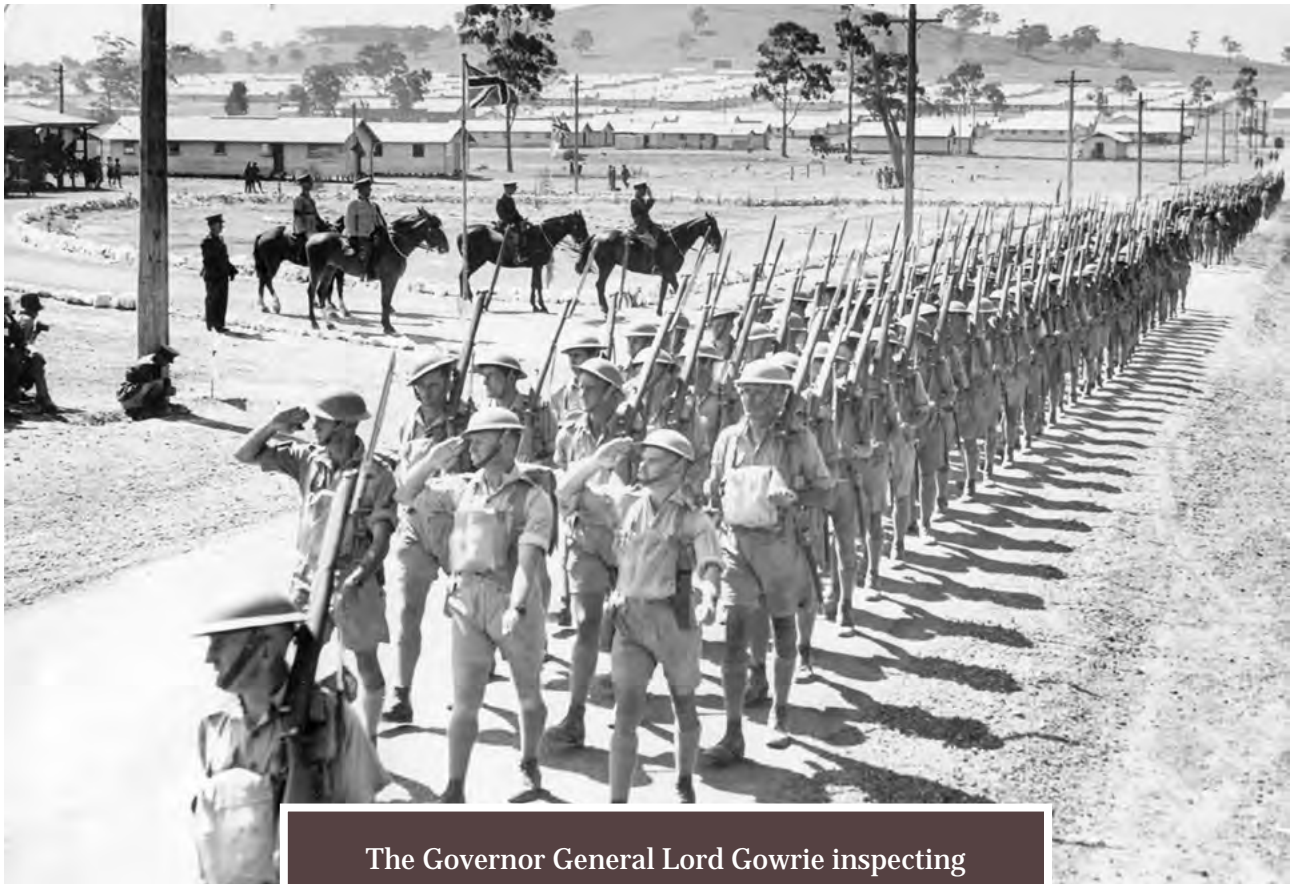
There was a learning period for the armoured crewman and the infantry once C Squadron arrived in Vietnam. The infantry were somewhat unfamiliar with tank operation due to 1st Armoured Regiment being secluded in Puckapunyal for so long. In the adjacent photo, CPL Len Cadzow of Seymour (Sitting on the tank with Beret) points out some of the features of the driver's position on the Centurion to a soldier from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment at the Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat in March 1968. The Centurions would continue to rotate through Vietnam for the next four years before the last Squadron returned to Puckapunyal in September 1971. Of the 52 Centurions deployed to Vietnam, 42 suffered battle damage and six of them were beyond repair.

The mid 1960s saw a considerable expansion away from the older WW2 buildings centred on the Grid system. Tobruk Barracks, home of the Royal Australian Service Corps, later the Royal Australian Corps of Transport (RACT), as well as numerous other base services buildings were constructed and are still in use today.

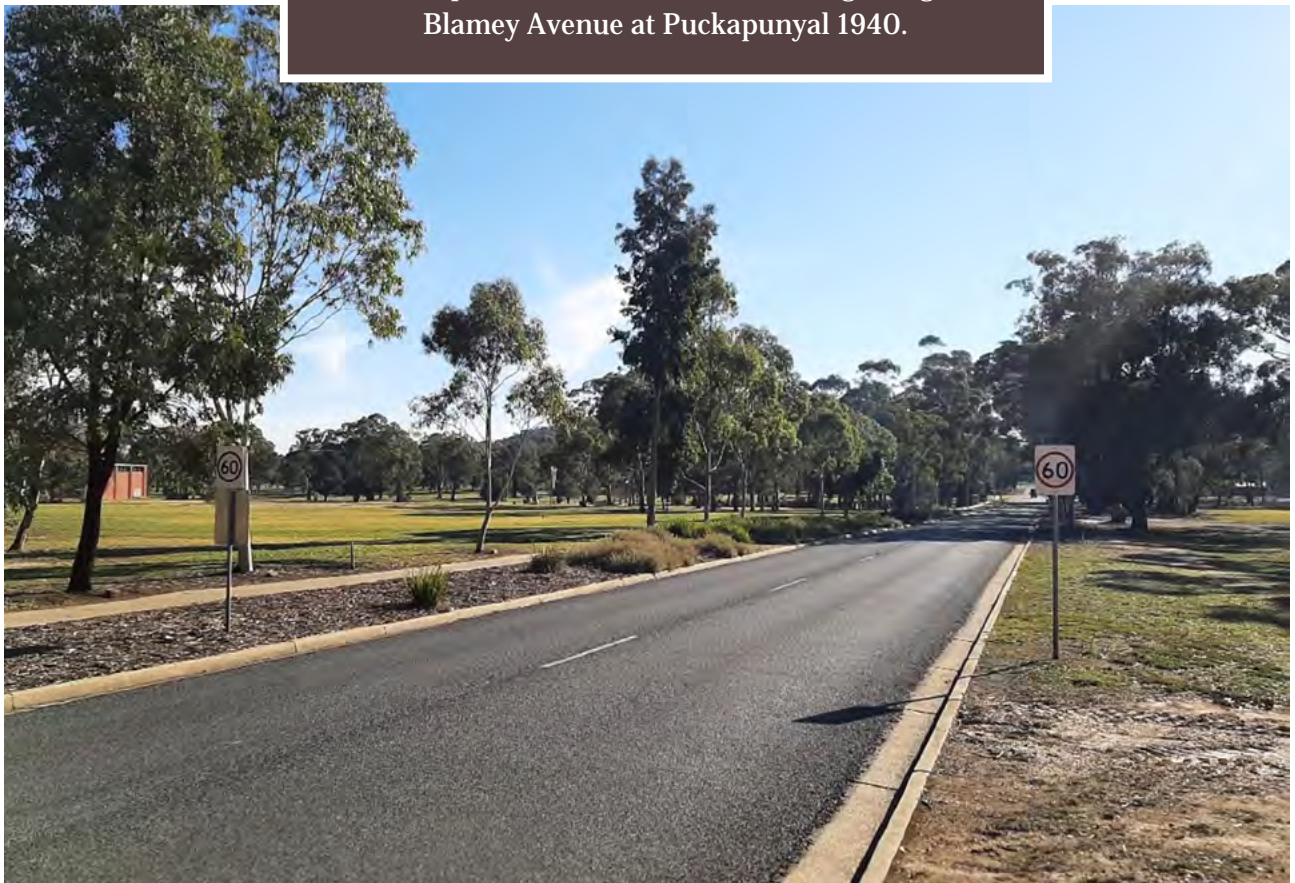
The formal cessation of Australia's commitment to the War in Vietnam in January 1973 as well as the conclusion of the 2nd National Service scheme the previous year resulted in Puckapunyal returning to a peacetime footing with a return to training of soldiers and exercises rather than operations.



Then and Now: Puckapunyal



The Governor General Lord Gowrie inspecting troops of the 7th Division marching along Blamey Avenue at Puckapunyal 1940.





The 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion marching back into Puckapunyal Camp after completing a 140 mile march to Shepparton and back in 1940.



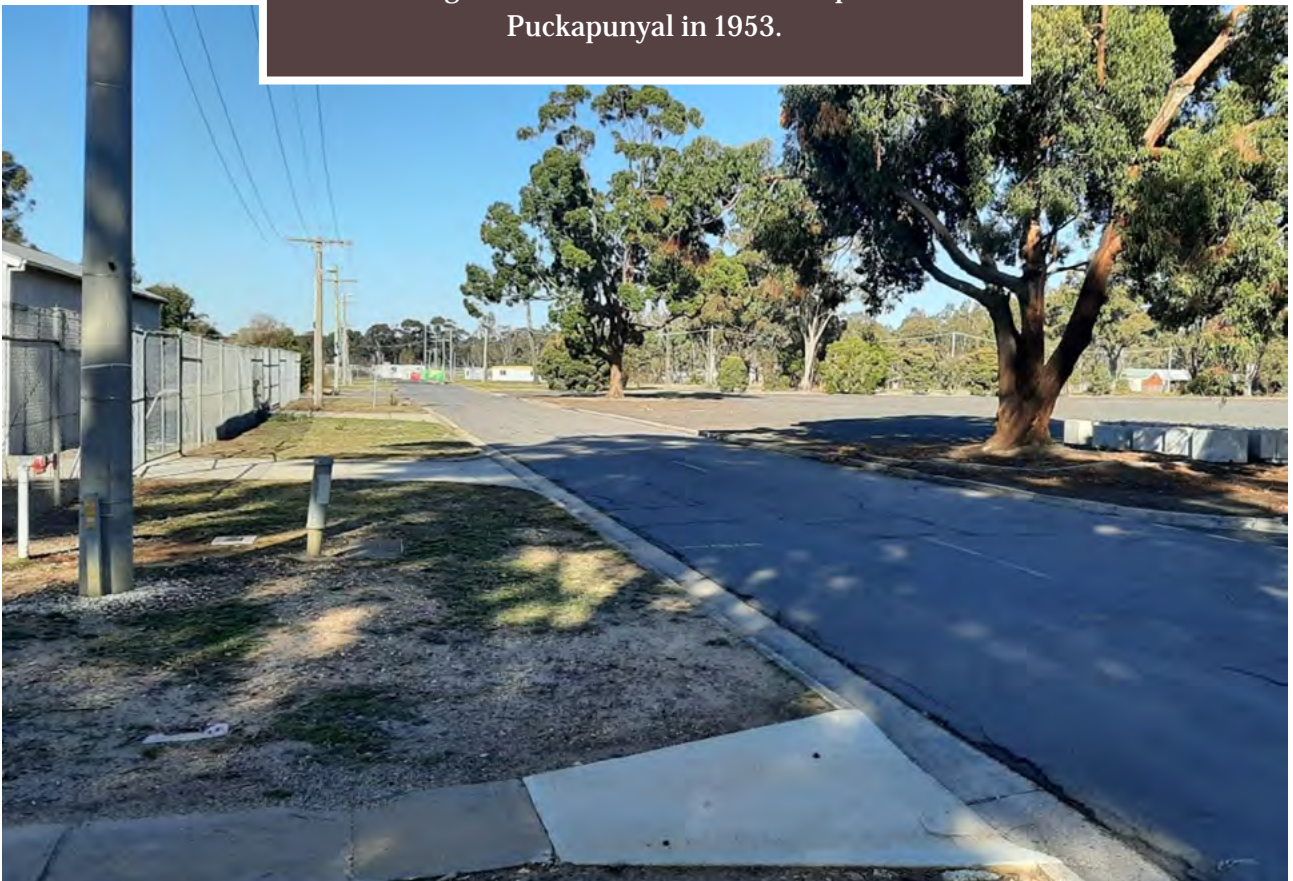


General Thomas Blamey reviewing
M3 Grant Medium Tanks from the 1st
Armoured Division in 1942.

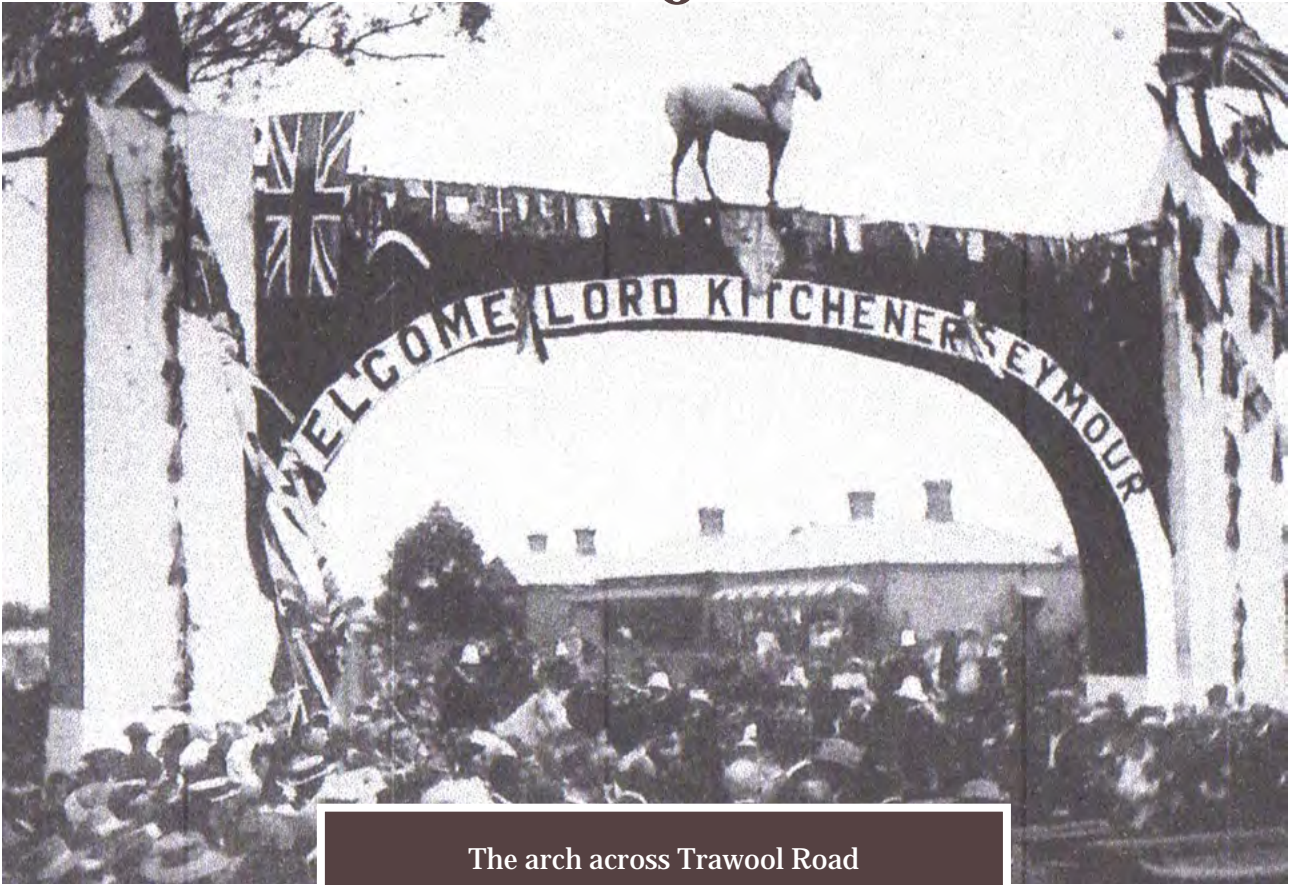




The Chief of the United Kingdom's General Staff reviewing a National Service Battalion parade at Puckapunyal in 1953.

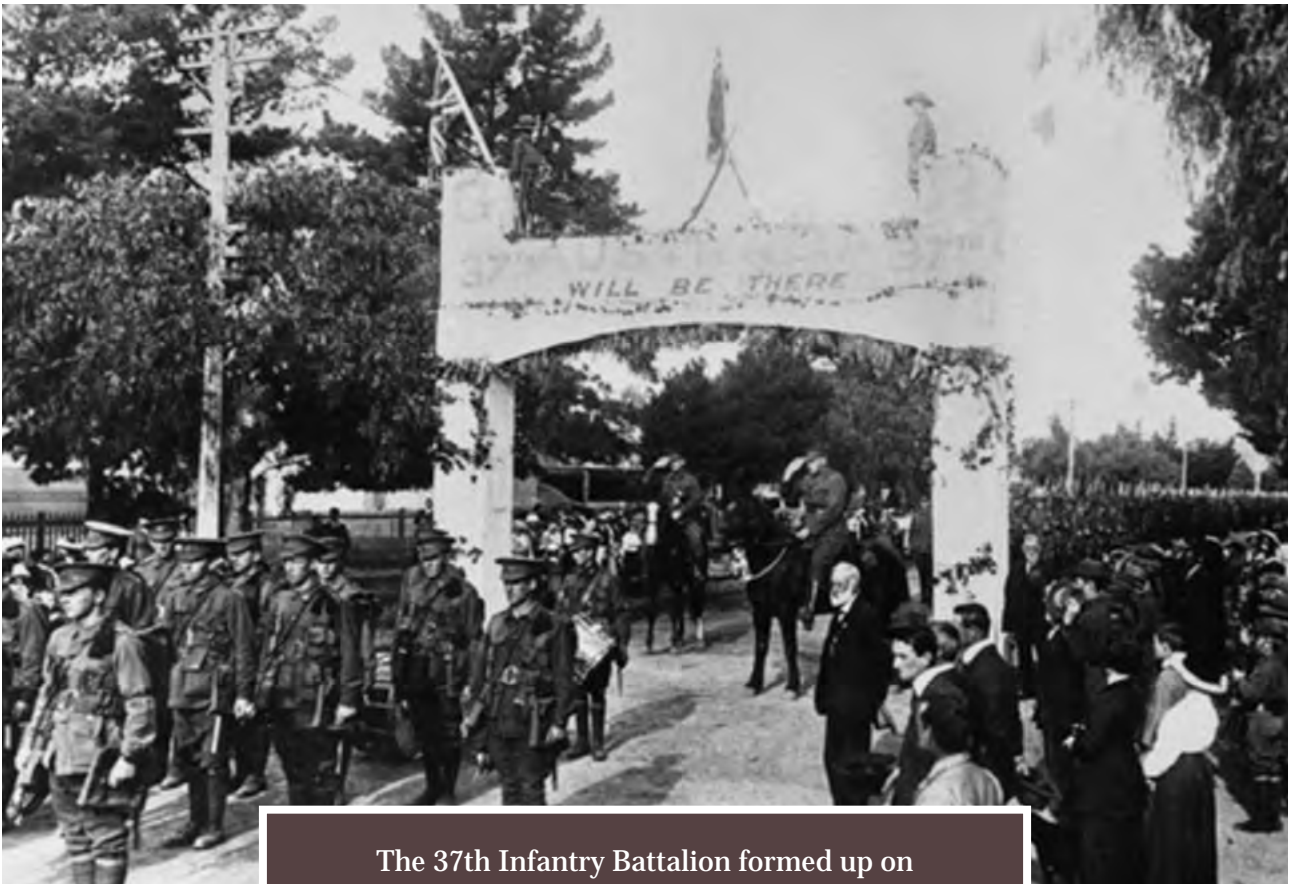


Then and Now: Seymour

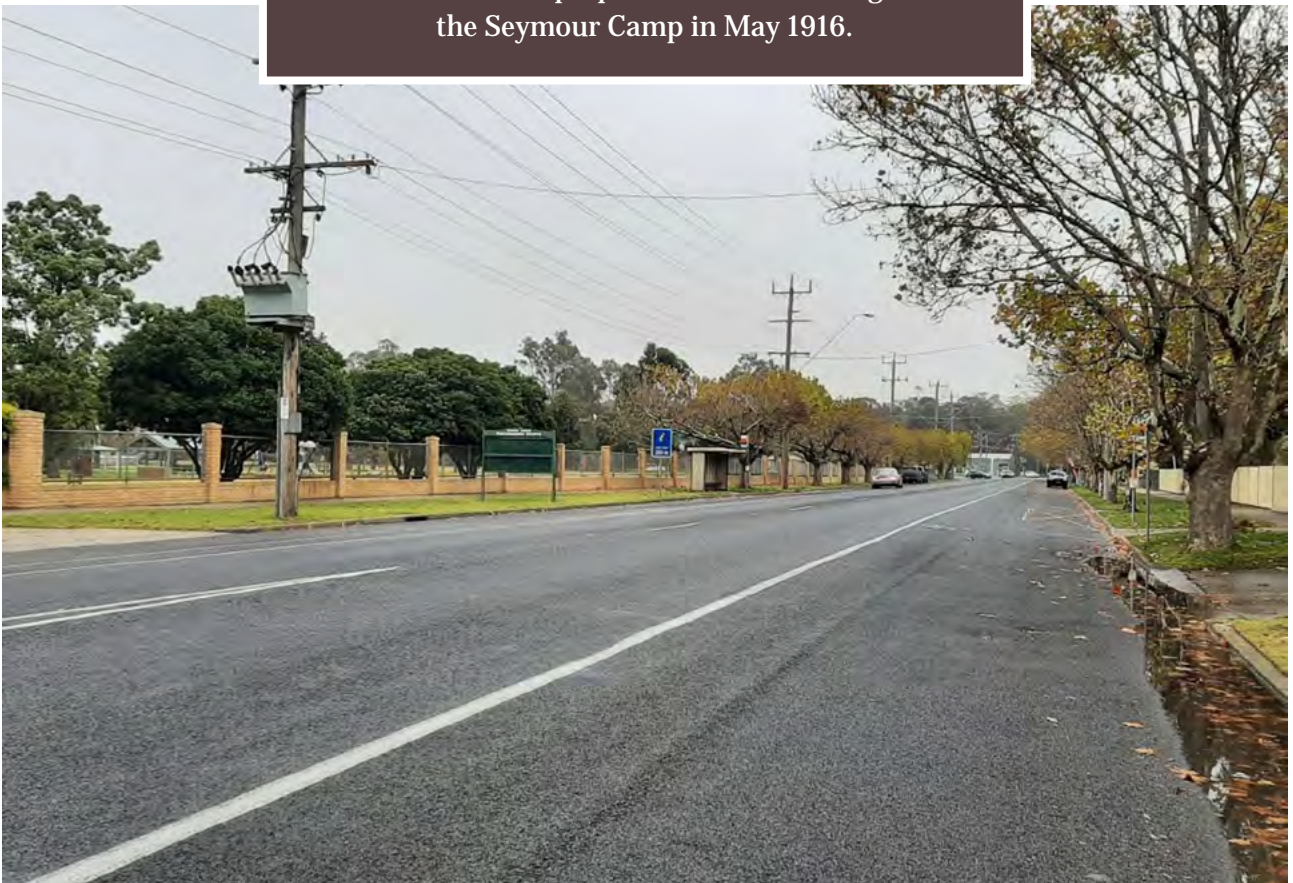


The arch across Trawool Road (ANZAC Avenue) to welcome Lord Kitchener during his visit to Seymour in January 1910.



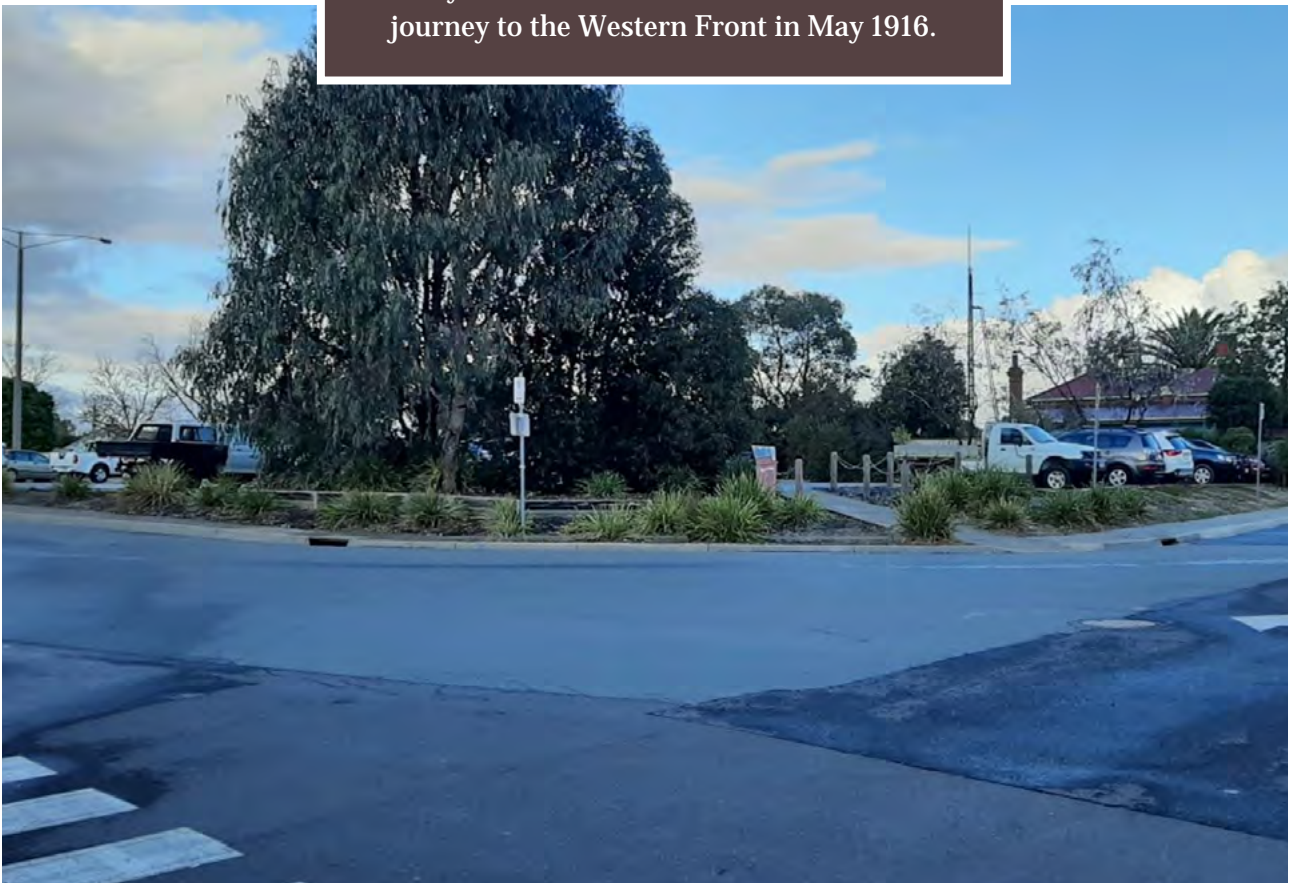


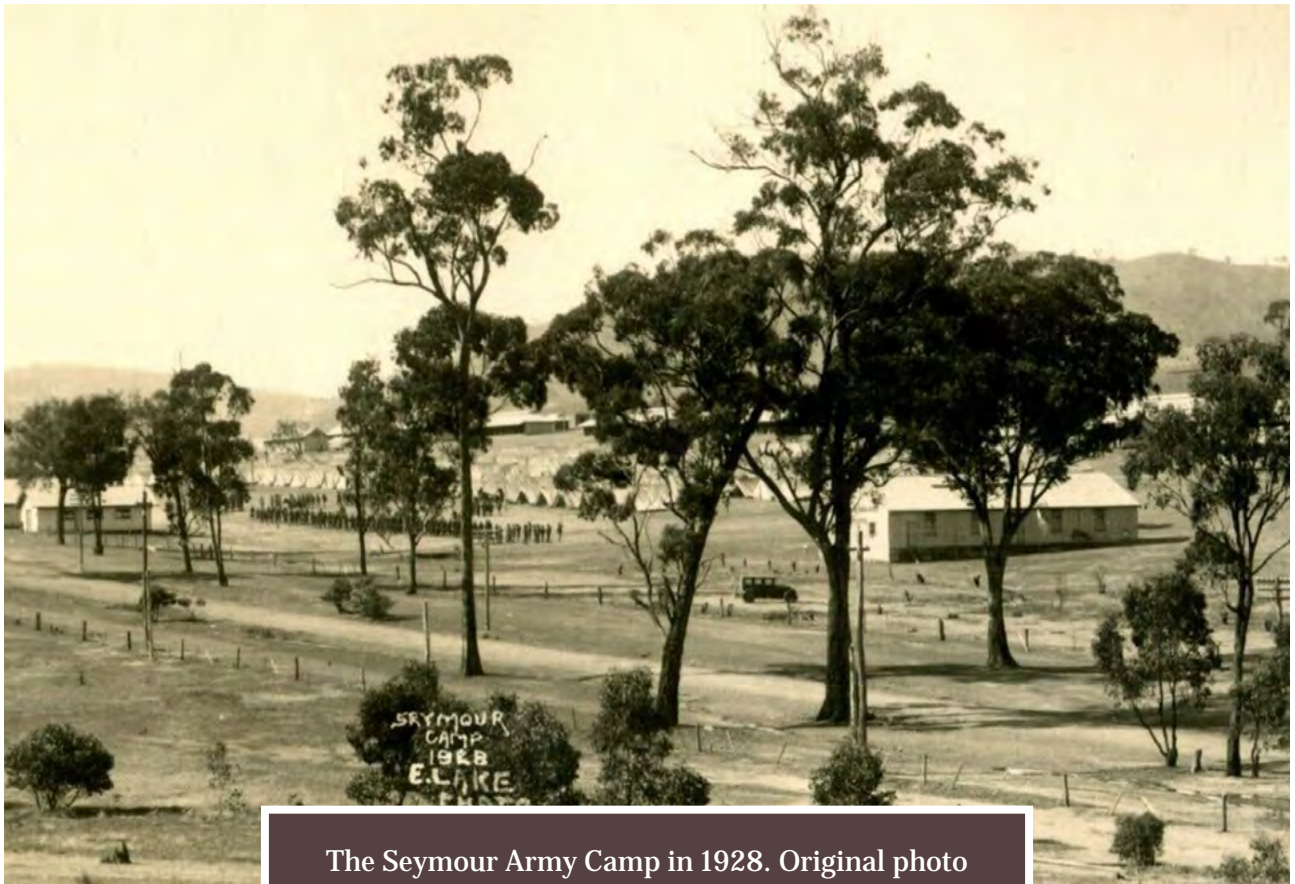
The 37th Infantry Battalion formed up on Tallarook Street in preparation for marching back to the Seymour Camp in May 1916.



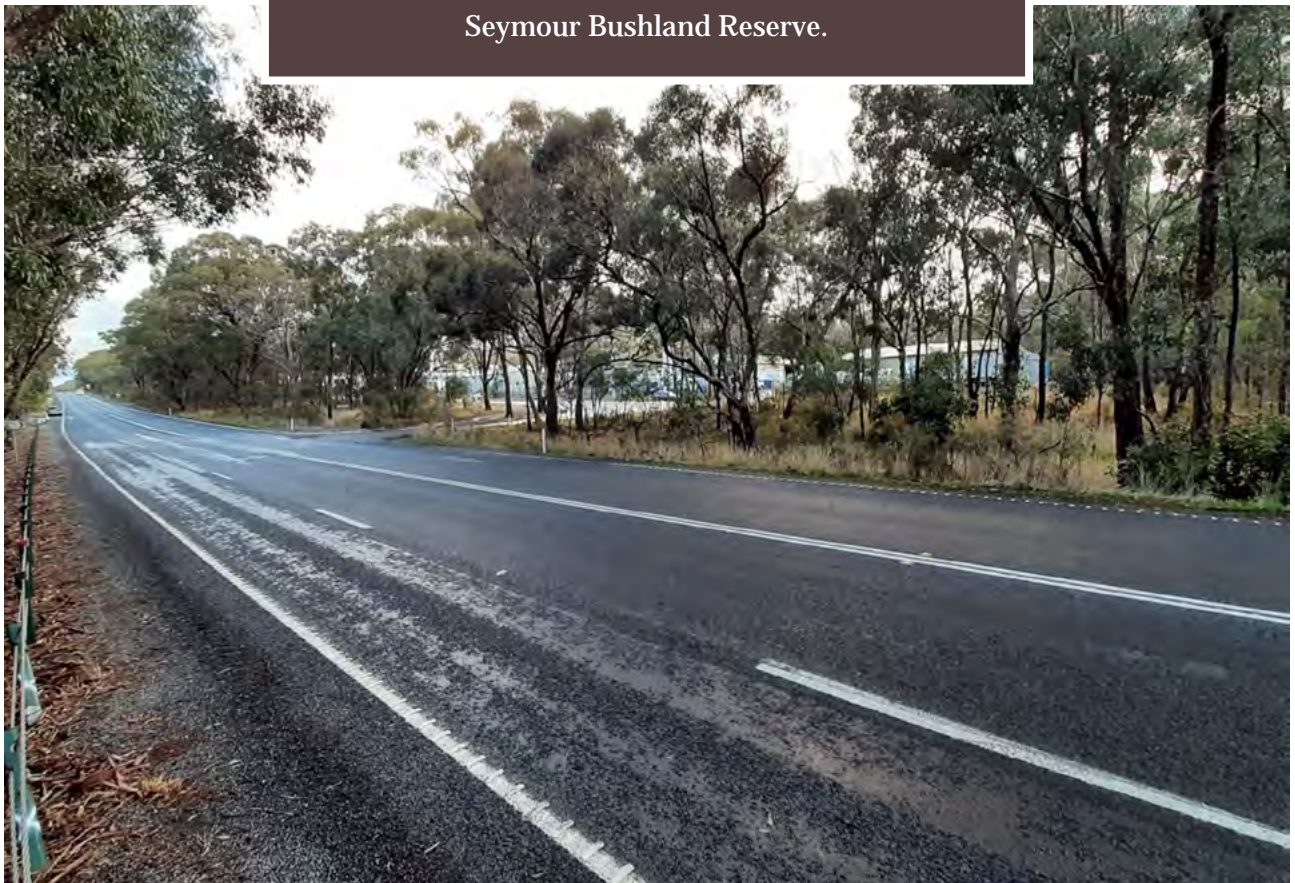


The 37th Infantry Battalion marching into the Seymour Train Station at the start of their journey to the Western Front in May 1916.





The Seymour Army Camp in 1928. Original photo taken from a small hill in what is now the Seymour Bushland Reserve.



In concluding, the military history of Seymour and Puckapunyal, I would like to thank Carolynne Burgess-Blackwell from Burgess Signs in Seymour, Kath from the Seymour Historical Society, and Tony Crook from the Proof and Experimental Establishment at Graytown for their kind assistance. I would also like to acknowledge Major Chris Saultry from the Army Knowledge Centre for the initial development of the concept and editing of the publication.

The following publications and websites were used as the primary reference material for this booklet:

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19,000 glass plate negatives: Algernon Darge's First World War Legacy – Joanne Smedly

Motor Volunteers and the Australian Volunteer Automobile Corps – Rod Dux and Mal Grant

Seymour Historical Society Facebook page

Seymour Health Facebook page

Seymour Rotary webpage

About the Author



Captain David Adams is a Royal Australian Armoured Corps officer currently posted to Puckapunyal. Born and raised in Sydney, he enlisted in the Australian Army in 1994. Captain Adams has served in numerous Royal Australian Armoured Corps units as well as the 1st Recruit Training Battalion, the Adelaide Universities Regiment, the Army Knowledge Centre and Army Headquarters. He has seen operational service in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Captain Adams has a very keen interest in military history and has previously developed a military history walking tour of Puckapunyal.



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