
◆ RIFLEFIRE ◆

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PO Box 752 Ringwood 3134 Vic. Australia

Newsletter of the **Victorian Colonial Infantry Association Inc**



Incorporating Mt Alexander Rifles

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Next Meeting

TBA

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AIMS & OBJECTIVES

1. To research the history of the Victorian Colonial Infantry Regiments with particular reference to the Volunteer Rifles in the period 1865 - 1895, and particularly the Mt Alexander Rifles Regiment.
2. To establish & maintain a living history group to recreate the Mt Alexander Rifles in the 1865 - 1895 period.
3. To research and preserve the skills and attributes of the 19th Century Rifleman.
4. To provide a resource to other historical organizations and the Community at large.

Cover Picture
 Victorian Defence Forces from "Australasian Sketcher"
 6th April 1885

THE EDITORIAL

Welcome to our long overdue newsletter, for those of you who are not aware, our Vice President, (Captain) Garry James has left us to visit Poland, and will not be back for quite some time, (if ever). Needless to say his duties have fallen mostly to yours truly.

*My wife & I were
happy for 20
years...then we met*

Our next engagement is Victoria Day at the Melbourne Town Hall on the 1st July, at 10am.

Our encampment at Little River on the weekend of 3/4 July is fast approaching, we hope that most of you will be able to put in an appearance for at least some of the time, even if it is only for the dinner on the Saturday night.

Geoff & I did a recce to LR a few weeks ago and the SSAA has erected a nice new building there that we can use for the dinner.

After that we have the encampment at Tamminick on the 2/3 October.

As to previous activities, we had Australia Day at Ringwood lake, Ringwood Highland Games and Anzac Day, Unfortunately, these events are usually only attended by a few members, it would be nice to see a few more of you there.

While at the Highland games we were approached by the Mayor of Maroonah, who said that he might be able to assist us in finding a hall/ reserve to use for drill practice, (Which I am sorry to say, we all need)

At this stage, I propose to hold our AGM on the 8th August 2004. If this date is unsuitable for anyone let me know ASAP.

I have received notification from the Dept. Of Justice regarding the law relating to swords becoming prohibited on July 1st.

We are listed as a exempt group, meaning that as members we can apply for an exemption with our membership being the reason. Information that I have at the moment is that the exemptions will not cost anything.

In this newsletter I have reprinted 2 letters from our comrades in sunny Qld. That members might find interesting.

I have also obtained some biographies of a few members of the Victorian Defence Force, in this issue I have included that of Colonel Templeton (note: There were 2 Colonel Templeton's in the VDF at the same time)

Tom Corfmat
Secretary
Victorian Colonial Infantry Association Inc.

ANZAC Day 2004

I attended the Dawn service this year with Melbourne University Regiment at Melbourne University this year.

As is customary the Regiment marched from the depot to the university campus for a sombre and reflective service. No bugler was available this year but a lone piper played "Flower of Forest" at the appropriate moment. Also present were many past members of the Regiment and members of MURA .

I accompanied the Regiment back to the Depot for breakfast and, at the invitation of the Regiment marched with them to the shrine that morning. This will have been the first time the Regiment has paraded with a Sergeant Instructor of Musketry since the position was abolished in the late 19th century.

Following this there were the obligatory mess games in the combined messes to raise money for Regimental funds.

As well as being a chance to meet old friends and to help educate the younger soldiers and the staff cadets about the history of the Regiment it was also a time to reflect on those who have served and not returned.

LEST WE FORGET

Geoff Gleadall
President VCIA Inc.

Greetings,

The June issue of "Stand Fast" – the Journal of the Queensland Scottish Volunteer Corps - is now available. Go to <http://qsvc.tripod.com/standfas.html> to download it as a pdf.

This issue contains a lead article by Russian historian Massov covering the first visit to Brisbane by a Russian warship in 1888. Massov has kindly written it in English, and this article from the 'other side' is a good read.

David Spethman has also provided us with text on the development of Brisbane Engineers and Submarine Miners. This article will be reproduced over the next few issues.

As usual "On the Bookshelf" lists some publications that we've located, and "Reading Matters" points you in the direction of a few titles and websites worth investigating. "Another Clever Scot", "Black Powder" and "Digging up the Past" are interesting articles contributed by members.

"New Material" provides an extract from the 1892 edition of Brigadier-General Clery's "Minor Tactics" on 'Advancing by Rushes', and of course there's always a bit on the Nordenfelt machine-gun.

"Contemporary Articles" this issue has pieces from the 1882 'Engineering' jour-

*Snowmen fall from
heaven unassembled.*

nal, and the Brisbane Courier of 1888. There is also 'An Autumn Evening in Whitechapel' a piece written during the infamous 'Jack the Ripper' murders.

I hope you enjoy 'Stand Fast', and don't forget we'd be happy to have some article from you for inclusion in our August issue.

Cheers

Brian Rough
Queensland Scottish

Sir;

There are Chapters of the SCV in almost every country world wide; except for Australia. To establish an Australian Chapter seven descendants are required; To date I have discovered four living descendants in Australia and a number of historic American Civil War grave sites.

My name is James Gray and I am a retired American historical researcher married to an Australian and living in Australia. I am also a member of the international heritage group "Sons of Confederate Veterans" ; descendants of American Civil War veteran soldiers, and the American Civil War Round Table of Queensland and I very much need your help.

I have begun a quest to locate living Australians who are direct descendants or collateral descendants of American Civil War veterans who migrated to Australia after that tragic war.

I am hoping you will volunteer to broadcast to your members and community groups information regarding this impossible search and invite any and all who believe they might be such descendants to contact me via email, regular mail or by telephone. Information will be taken regarding their ancestors and if they are indeed descendants, they will be given the opportunity to become members in and a part of the international organization of "Sons of Confederate Veterans". As such their lineage will become part of the archival records in Washington, D.C., they will receive regular SCV publications, certificates and all that goes with it.

I would appreciate anything you or your station could do to assist me in getting this message out to the Australian public.

Anyone wishing to contact me can reach me via email at cracker3@optusnet.com.au, by mail at James Gray, 11 Corndale Street, Loganholme, Queensland, 4129 or by telephone at 07 3806 5759.

Very Sincerely,

Your help is greatly needed and will be very much appreciated.

James Gray

American Civil War Round Table of Queensland, Inc.

Sons of Confederate Veterans



Johnstone, O'Shanney and Co. Melb.

COLONEL JOHN MONTGOMERY TEMPLESON.

Colonel JOHN MONTGOMERY TEMPLETON C.M.G., V.D., F.I.A.,

Eldest son of Mr. Hugh Templeton, a schoolmaster, who, with his wife and four children, arrived in Melbourne on 22nd December, 1852, and settled in Fitzroy. The subject of this sketch was born at Kilmaurs, Yorkshire, Scotland, on the 20th of May, 1840, and was, therefore, twelve years old when he arrived in Victoria. At the age of fifteen, during the illness of his father, he took charge of the school in Fitzroy for a period of four months, and was afterwards trained as a teacher in the training establishment of the National Board of Education. His name still appears in the records of the Education Department as classified with first class honors. At the age of nineteen he joined the volunteer force as a private in the Collingwood Rifles, and soon afterwards was promoted to the rank of sergeant. At the age of twenty-two he was chosen as one of a team of ten riflemen to represent Victoria in the first intercolonial rifle match. He maintained his position as one of the best shots in Victoria for more than fifteen years. At the age of twenty-three he passed the first competitive examination for the rank of lieutenant in the volunteer force, being second in the order of merit among 120 candidates who succeeded in passing the examination. His first commission as lieutenant was dated 2nd May, 1864, and he was shortly thereafter appointed adjutant. He performed the duties of captain of the Collingwood Rifles, and adjutant of the battalion to which it belonged for many years. His promotion to the rank of captain was made on 20th June, 1867. In 1868 he gave up the scholastic profession to become accountant of a fire insurance company, and in 1869 he founded the National Mutual Life Association, of which he became manager and actuary, and introduced to the world a new method of keeping policies in force when premiums remain unpaid, and in 1872 was elected a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries, London. On 18th August, 1873, he was promoted to the rank of major, the duties of which rank he had been performing for more than twelve months. Shortly afterwards he was appointed major commanding 2nd Metropolitan Battalion, then known as "Red Rifles," a position which he held for ten years. The volunteer force was disbanded in December, 1883, and the militia was enrolled. Major Templeton was then promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and appointed to command the 2nd Regiment of Militia, and, as the senior commanding officer of the Militia Infantry, he became a member of the Council of Defence, a position which he held until December, 1897. On 1st July, 1895, he was promoted to the rank of colonel, and appointed to the command of the Militia Infantry Brigade. Up to this time his name had remained on the roll of the (Collingwood) company which he had first joined as a private, and which had become the A Company at the headquarters of the 2nd Battalion. To be on the roll of the same company for more than thirty-five and a half years was a very remarkable experience. He was chosen as captain of the Victorian rifle team which went to Bisley in 1897 was present in London, and took part in Her late Majesty's Diamond Jubilee procession, and, as the senior officer from all the colonies, he rode on the right of the leading section of the Colonial procession. He was then decorated at St. James' Palace as a C.M.G. by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (now His Majesty King Edward VII.). The Victorian rifle team, under his guidance, made a record score, and proved itself to be the best team of the Empire, and the Kalapore Cup was brought to Melbourne, to be held for one year. Colonel Templeton returned to Melbourne in December, 1897, and found that during his absence it had been arranged that he should give up the command of the Militia Infantry Brigade. He was then transferred to the reserve of officers, by which he lost his seat at the Council of Defence. He remained on the Reserve until the beginning of 1900, and did duty as executive officer of the Victorian Rifle Associations at their annual matches. Colonel Templeton was appointed a member of the Victorian Committee of Defence in 1898 ~ and has acted for many years as chairman of the council of the Victorian Rifle Association, and from 1884 to 1889 he was chairman of the Public Service Board of Victoria. Since 1896 he has been chairman and managing director of the National Mutual Life Association of Australasia Limited. When the great movement for establishing Rifle clubs in Victoria took place, Colonel Templeton was asked to take the command, and was appointed on 21st May, 1900—the regulations providing that he should retain his rank and seniority on the active list of the Victorian military forces, that he should be exempt from the provisions of the general regulations as to retirement, and should hold office during the pleasure of the Governor in Council. Under his command the establishment of Rifle clubs proceeded by leaps and bounds and within twelve months the strength exceeded 20,000 men. From July, 1901, the strength has remained about 22,000, distributed throughout the length and breadth of Victoria, in 375 clubs. This is the largest individual command in Australia.