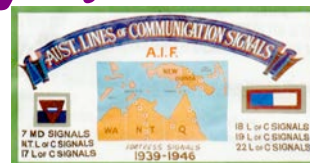




THURUNKA

April 2025

Newsletter of the
Royal Australian Signals Association (NSW) Inc.
Remembering
Aust. Lines of Communication Signals Association



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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS ASSOCIATION (NSW) Inc.

Association Matters

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Certa Cito 100

Our Signals Corps is off to a great start in celebrating its 100th birthday since separating from the Australian Engineers Corps on 14 February 1925.

On 14 February 2025, a Ceremonial Parade and Commemorative Service were conducted at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. You can watch a video of this parade by clicking on: [Royal Australian Corps of Signals -Ceremonial Parade and Commemorative Service](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFgGRDSM7zU) or typing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFgGRDSM7zU>

A Centenary Message from our Head of Corps and a Centenary Video Message from Our Colonel in Chief, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, have been loaded onto *The Signaller* website. Click onto [Certa Cito 100 – The Signaller | RASIGS](#) to access both messages.

For our members without internet access, the Centenary Message from our Head of Corps is printed on page 6 of *Thurunka*.

Certa Cito 100 gives us an opportunity to commemorate the proud history of the Corps and to reflect on the legacy of all those Sigs who have served our nation in war and peace with great distinction over the last 100 years.

In NSW, we launched Certa Cito 100 at the North Bondi RSL in the early evening on 14 February 2025. Despite significant public transport disruptions and road gridlock in Sydney, many Sigs travelled long distances to attend the event. There was a good mixture of “old and bold”, serving

NEXT ISSUE

Copy for the next edition of THURUNKA must be in the hands of the Editor, Chris Johnson by 5 June 2025

All submissions to be via email at thurunkarasigs@gmail.com

members and their partners at the function, and a good time was held by all.

At the NSW launch of our 100th anniversary, on behalf of the Certa Cito Foundation, we displayed and sold the “hot-off the press” Certa Cito 100 coins that are shown below. These coins are well made and look even better than shown in the photograph.



We have ordered 150 more Certa Cito coins to sell at our Anzac Day post march reunion and at other events in 2025.

The First Corps Parade

What about our first parade as a separate Signals Corps? But first a little bit of background.

By the end of the First World War, the Sigs component of the Australian Engineers Corps was larger than the Sappers component.

In Britain, the Corps of Signals was created on 12 July 1920 and the prefix “Royal” was added on 5 August 1920.

In Australia, it was expected that we would quickly follow the British model by creating a separate Corps of Signals.

Whilst Australian signallers were shown separately from Engineers in 1922, it was not until 14 February 1925 that the Australian Corps of Signals was announced. On that date, Australian Army order 71 was issued: It stated:

“Organisation of Engineer and Signal Units – Citizen Forces – Change of Designation

Approval has been given for the Signal Engineer Units of the Citizen Forces to be formed into a separate corps and designated the 'Australian Corps of Signals'.

In consequence of the above the description of certain of the rank and file as 'Sappers' will be replaced by that of 'Signalmen'. Dated: 1st January, 1925."

There is nothing in Theo Barker's *Signals. A history of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals 1788-1947* that refers to our first parade as a Corps.

However, the father of the Association's Vice President, Paul Hummerston, was on that first parade. Paul recalls his father telling him that the first parade of the Corps was held at the Engineer's depot at Moore Park Road, Paddington, probably on Saturday 14 February 1925.

In 1893, the New South Wales Corps of Engineers opened a new depot at the eastern end of the Paddington Rifle range that had been closed for safety reasons. Over the years, the Engineers Depot at Moore Park Road developed into a substantial depot with two large two-story drill halls – one for Engineers and one for Signals.

In World War 1, the Engineers Depot was a scene of thriving activity. Engineers, signallers, wireless operators and others were trained here. Training included practice in building bridges, pontoons and wireless towers as well as cavalry practice in Centennial Park.

The military retained the depot until the construction of the Sydney Football Stadium in 1988.

Some of you will remember the Moore Park Depot, that was next door to the Sydney Cricket Ground and was a great place to park when attending football and cricket games.

Sydney Anzac Day March

For the Sydney 2025 Anzac Day March, 126, 142, 145 and 301 Sigs Sqns will march in uniform behind the Commander Forces Command (MAJGEN Duncan – a Sig) at the front of the Army contingent. They will be followed by Association members and any other non-serving Sigs.

Details about the march and post-march reunion are set out in this edition of *Thurunka*.

A reminder - we have a new FUP at the top of Hunter Street (near Elizabeth Street) and an earlier start time, so be at the FUP by **0915h**. Look for the **Certa Cito banner!**

Anzac Day Post March Reunion

I am pleased to advise that we have new venue for our post march reunion and that is the **Vibe Hotel, 111 Goulburn Street** – one block or just a few minutes walk down Nithsdale Street from the end of the march that finishes in Liverpool Street.

From 10am, the Vibe Hotel will open their refurbished Storehouse bar and catering centre for the exclusive use of Sigs, their partners and friends.

Beer and wine prices are reasonable, and food will be available.

Good news is the very recent decision by the Chief of Army to allow Army personnel in uniform to purchase and consume alcohol on Anzac Day, subject to approval by Commanding Officers. This brings Army in line with Navy and Air Force.

The Vibe Hotel is close to public transport and there is a large car park in Goulburn Street and one in Nithsdale Street that runs north from Goulburn Street. Goulburn Street is not closed to vehicles on Anzac Day.

Remember, public transport is free on Anzac Day if you are in uniform or wearing medals

Royal Australian Corps of Signals Parade – Sunday 9 November 2025

There will be a Corps Parade held in **Victoria Barracks Sydney**, on **Sunday 9 November 2025** with representatives from all RA Sigs units across Australia.

By a quirk of fate, this parade will be held on the other side of Moore Park Road, from where the first parade of the Corps parade was held in 1925.

This will be the major parade to celebrate our 100th birthday. All former RA Sigs personnel as well as current serving personnel in NSW who are not on the parade will be invited to attend the parade.

National Reunion

There will also be an RA Sigs 100th Birthday Reunion held between 10-18 November 2025 in Healesville, Victoria. The reunion includes a visit to the Simpson Barracks Open Day and a formal dinner on the Saturday 15 November 2025 – for further details, click on [RASigs 100th Birthday National Reunion Healesville Victoria 10-18 Nov 2025](#) or see page 17 of *Thurunka*.

Annual Memorial Service

On Sunday **23 November 2025**, we will be holding our Annual Memorial Service at Signal Hill Reserve, South Head Road, Vaucluse at 1100 hours.

Please put these dates in your diary now.

We will keep you updated of Certa Cito 100 events through *Thurunka*.

Paul Irving
President

Anzac Day

This Anzac Day we reflect on 110 years since the Gallipoli campaign and commemorate all Australians who have served in times of peace and war.

ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

Anzac Day falls on the 25th of April each year. The 25th of April was officially named Anzac Day in 1916.

On the 25th of April 1915, Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the allied expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula. These became known as Anzacs and the pride they took in that name continues to this day.

The Anzacs landed on Gallipoli and met fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders. Their plan to knock Türkiye out of the war quickly became a stalemate and the campaign dragged on for eight months.

At the end of 1915, the allied forces were evacuated. Both sides suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. Over 8,000 Australian soldiers were killed.

The meaning of Anzac Day today includes the remembrance of all Australians killed in military operations.

This year the Signal Corps will lead the Army contingent celebrating the Corps 100th year.



FUP is in Hunter Street - immediately behind Commander Forces Command. **Step off** is at approximately 0930, so **be there no later than 0915**. **Look for the Certa Cito banner and the Sigs Association banner**. **Post March Reunion is at the Vibe Hotel** - 111 Goulburn Street – a short walk from end of march. **Vibe Hotel open from 1000hrs**.

Corps Matters



THE SIGNALLER

Visit *The Signaller*, the website of the Corps for information relating to *Certa Cito 100* and other Corps related information including the Corps Fund and the Corps Shop! Just click on the picture on the left or visit this website:- <https://rasigs.org/category/certa-cito-100/>



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN CORPS OF SIGNALS
OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF CORPS

Defence Force School of Signals, Simpson Barracks, Victoria 3085, Australia

A message from Head of Corps

As our centenary celebrations commence it is important to reflect on the achievements of the more than 300,000 men and women who have written our Corps' history over the last 100 years. These Signallers served our nation with distinction building on the remarkable legacy of those Australian Engineer Signallers who answered the nation's call in the First Australian Imperial Force.

Since the first days of our Corps in 1925, generations of Australian Signallers have served in all theatres of conflict from the Second World War, through Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, peacekeeping commitments in Rwanda, Somalia, Cambodia, Bougainville, East Timor, Solomon Islands, as well as more recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our people have also proven their utility in domestic humanitarian and disaster relief operations. We honour the sacrifices made by Signallers in war and peace, and the families who supported them in their service.

We have always embraced new technology from line communications through the introduction of wireless sets, the emergence of electronic warfare and cyber capabilities. What stands out the most in the story of our Corps, is the character, resourcefulness and professionalism of our people. We are known for our 'fighting for comms' ethos and relied upon to deliver per our motto, *Swift and Sure*.

What a privilege it is for us all to serve as stewards representing the generations of Signallers before us. Our 100th year is a time for us to connect as a Signals community strengthening bonds between veterans, serving members and families as we write the next chapter of our Corps' history.

Throughout the year many events across the nation, from reunions, parades and open days, present opportunities for us to build on the legacy of those who have served before us. I encourage you all to get involved sharing stories and history to build a stronger Corps for the future. <https://rasigs.org/certa-cito-100/>

Congratulations and thank you for your contribution to our Corps.

Certa Cito.

Deane Limmer, CSM
Brigadier
Head of Corps

14 February 2025

Honouring a Century of Service: The Royal Australian Mint's Royal Australian Corps of Signals Coin

For 100 years, the Royal Australian Corps of Signals has been at the forefront of military communications, ensuring the swift and secure transfer of information across the battlefield and beyond. Since its establishment in 1925, the Corps has played a vital role in every major Australian military mission, pioneering advancements in electronic warfare, cyber operations, and cutting-edge military technology.

To commemorate this milestone, the **Royal Australian Mint** proudly presents the 2025 \$1 Uncirculated Coin – Centenary of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. This remarkable coin pays tribute to the thousands of men and women who have dedicated their service to delivering secure and reliable communications for Australia's defence force.

Designed by the Mint's Adam Ball, the coin's design is rich in symbolism, honouring the Corps' identity and legacy. At its centre stands Mercury, the Roman messenger god, representing the Corps' commitment to transmitting vital information with precision and urgency. Mercury stands on a globe, symbolising the Corps' national and global reach in military communications. He holds a lightning bolt, signifying rapid communication, while a second bolt beneath his foot reinforces the Corps' motto, *Certa Cito* – Swift and Sure.

Surrounding this central imagery, a wreath of leaves frames the design, mirroring the original Corps badge. The background features Morse and binary code spelling out *Certa Cito*, visually linking the Corps' historic roots with its modern evolution in electronic warfare and cyber operations.

This coin is a fitting tribute to the Royal Australian Corps of Signals' century of service, recognising their dedication, resilience, and unwavering role in Australia's defence history. The obverse features the effigy of His Majesty King Charles III, designed by Daniel Thorne.



From its beginnings with signal flags and Morse code, to providing communications today as well as electronic warfare and cyberspace operations support across the tri services. This support enables command and control of deployed forces in peace, crisis and conflict on any operation anywhere in the world.

This stunning coin design also includes coded messages in both Morse and binary code.

Uncirculated \$1.00 Coin:- \$17.50 each – limit of 5 per customer.

<https://eshop.ramint.gov.au/2025-one-dollar-uncirculated-royal-australian-corps-of-signals>

Signals Centenary Commemoration Libations



Celebrate the Signals Centenary with an Exclusive Whisky Release – Ex-Tawny Cask 44% ABV (700ml)

To mark a century of excellence, we're thrilled to present two exclusive offerings from the Chief's Son Distillery:

- **Signals Centenary Bottle**
OR
- **Signals Centenary Pack**

Celebrate the Signals Centenary with an Exclusive Gin Release – 40% ABV (700ml)

To mark a century of excellence, we're thrilled to present this special edition bottle.

Whether you're adding to your collection or celebrating with friends, these exclusive releases are a testament to a century of quality and dedication. Cheers to 100 years of signalling.

Celebrate the Signals Centenary with an Exclusive Tawny Port Release – 17% ABV (700ml)

To mark a century of excellence, we're thrilled to present two exclusive offerings from the Chief's Son Distillery:

- **Signals Centenary Bottle** OR
- **Signals Centenary Pack**

700ml bottle of Chief's Son Tawny Port, 17% ABV and two crystal Glencairn glasses etched with Jimmy, presented in a Signals Commemorative Presentation Box.

Whether you're adding to your collection or celebrating with friends, these exclusive releases are a testament to a century of quality and dedication. Cheers to 100 years of signalling

Details on the website

<https://www.chiefsson.com.au/product-category/defence/certa-cito-defence/>

A variety of other Centenary related merchandise is available through the following outlets:

RA Sigs Corps Shop <https://rasigs.org/corps-shop/>

Centenary2025 Shop - <https://www.redbubble.com/people/Centenary2025/shop?asc=u>

All the right signals

Cpl Jacob Joseph Army Newspaper Feb 6 2025

A quick-thinking and tenacious signals officer has been awarded a Conspicuous Service Medal for her work leading a team to deliver the Vanuatu Government National Emergency Radio Network. Captain Natasha Kirkham, formerly of 1 Sig Regt's 127 Sig Tp, deployed to Vanuatu three times in three years to deliver this flagship project which continued despite multiple natural disasters. 127 Sig Tp and attachments worked with the Vanuatu Police Force to connect police posts and communications hubs across all of Vanuatu's six provinces. The network enables contact between police, government agencies and the most remote areas of Vanuatu for both daily use and in times of natural disaster.

Capt Kirkham was one of a hand-ful of contingent commanders who worked with the Vanuatu Police Force to deliver the project for Defence, which finished last year.

"Once we were on the ground in Vanuatu, we worked autonomously, side by side with our Vanuatu Police Force partners, and often in remote and challenging environments," Capt Kirkham said.

She said movement around Vanuatu's 16 islands was difficult, the team relied on creative problem solving and relationship building to get the job done.

Following an accident by a local charter plane company, and with limited aviation options, it was up to Capt Kirkham to manage her scattered team. She then completed an investigation so her team could move between locations.

"I am an enthusiastic and persistent person, that likely contributed to effective management during challenging situations," Capt Kirkham said.

"I also led teams of talented and dedicated soldiers and junior officers."

Then 1 Sig Regt CO Lt-Col Samuel Ellyard said Capt Kirkham went that little bit further to ensure her team felt empowered and valued.

In one case she coordinated a remote promotion from Vanuatu with family and friends dialled in over video call.

"A small example perhaps, but her impact is in the aggregate of all those continual small touch points that build rapport, trust and inspire those around her," Lt-Col Ellyard said.

127 Sig Tp received an Army Gold Level Commendation last year for its delivery of information communications technology and radio networks domestically and throughout the South West Pacific from July 2020 to December 2022.

"The team regularly performed duties above their worn rank and out-side of their routine trade roles. It was well deserved," Capt Kirkham said. "I am grateful to have commanded and led overseas on numerous occasions, this is not an opportunity presented to many junior captains."



Capt Natasha Kirkham with Ni-Vanuatu during a deployment to Vanuatu.



Capt Natasha Kirkham climbs up a radio tower to repair and upgrade Vanuatu's National Emergency Radio Network.

ALL THE RIGHT SIGNALS FOR 100 YEARS

Sgt Matthew Bickerton:- Army Newspaper February 20, 2025



Army telecommunications riggers Cpl Cameron Poole installs a very high frequency radio microwave antenna onto Erakor cellular tower during Phase 2 of the Vanuatu Government national emergency radio network. Photo: Cpl Olivia Cameron

For a century, Army signallers have kept communication flowing and managed threats via telephone, radio and now the cyber domain. Sgt Matthew Bickerton reports on the rich history of RA Sigs.

From lines to radio transmissions and from analogue to digital, the Royal Australian Corps of Signals (RA Sigs) has kept pace with technology for 100 years on the electronic front line, where today's cyber fight never stops.



A century ago, communication on the battlefield relied largely on line telephone networks, as seen in World War 1, where they connected trenches, bunkers and headquarters positioned at the rear.

World War 2 included an increased use of radio waves and electronic warfare, extending communications across oceans.

In the 1990s, RA Sigs established a computing trade to address the integration of information technology, laying groundwork for a cyber domain that signallers now defend.

RA Sigs Head of Corps

Brig Deane Limmer explained that while encryption was adequate protection against adversaries two or three decades ago, the internet has made Defence more susceptible to cyber attacks.

"We now know tens of thousands of threats hit our networks daily," Brig Limmer said.

"While Defence's strategy is one of deterrence, in the cyber domain, conflict is occurring, with state and non-state actors conducting cyber-attacks as we speak."



2005 WO1 Paddy Neiland, Regimental Quartermaster, with 7CSR's mascot, 'Jack', at Gallipoli Barracks, Brisbane. Photo: CPL Aaron Curran



2015 Sig Thomas Zerna conducts maintenance on a satellite dish during Operation Highroad. Photo: Cpl David Cotton

Because these systems are integrated across Defence and society, any disruption poses a threat to command and control, requiring RA Sigs to constantly adopt new technologies and tactics.

Signallers aren't simply communication technology experts; they're soldiers who'll find themselves at every corner of the battlefield.

A notable example is Sig Martin Wallace, of 152 Sig Sqn, who served with the Special Air Service Regiment during Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan in 2002.

His patrol was surrounded by enemy forces for 18 hours, facing numerous attacks. Fearing their position would be overrun, he armed a grenade both for close-quarter combat and to booby-trap his own body.

That day was filled with equally dangerous scenarios, where Sig Wallace's conduct was recognised with a Medal for Gallantry.

A legendary leader of the Corps is Maj-Gen Colin Hall Simpson, who was a veteran of both world wars.

Wounded twice in WW1, he was mentioned in despatches and awarded the Military Cross.

Maj-Gen Simpson transferred to the Australian Corps of Signals upon its formation in 1925 and after transferring to the 2nd AIF in WW2, he oversaw the expansion of the Corps to about 25,000 members by 1945.

Simpson Barracks was named in his honour.



2015 Sig Brian Sylvester climbs a communications tower in Solomon Islands. Photo: Cpl Zenith King



2013 Members of 7CSR celebrate their second birthday at Camp Growl at Shoalwater Bay Training Area while on Exercise Talisman Sabre 2013. Photo: Cpl Bill Solomou

More recently, RA Sigs had its first member reach a three-star rank, Lt-Gen Susan Coyle, who took the position of Chief of Joint Capabilities in 2024.

RA Sigs' 100-year history began with an order on February 14, 1925, for the Australian engineers, forming the corps that exist today.

They commemorated their centenary at the Shrine of Remembrance in a wreath-laying service honouring their accomplishment.

A series of activities will be held throughout the year in celebration, including International Women's Day, Anzac Day and open days, and will conclude with Corps Week celebrations in November.

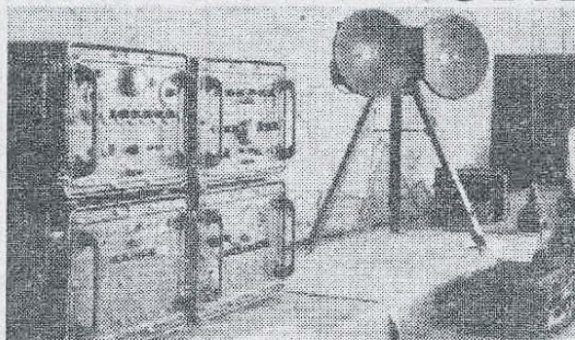


1013 Sigs Adam McHugh, Jacob Wilkinson and Christopher Martin dismantle a section of antenna mast at the Multi National Base – Tarin Kot. Photo: Cpl Mark Doran



2013 Sigs Adam McHugh, Jacob Wilkinson and Christopher Martin dismantle a section of antenna mast at the Multi National Base – Tarin Kot. Photo: Cpl Mark Doran

NEW SIG. EQUIPM FOR MORE MOBIL



A RANGE of new equipment to provide greater scale and mobility of communications for the Army was displayed at the recent Royal Australian Corps of Signals conference at the School of Signals at Balcombe, Vic.

Senior officers of the Services and civil servants of the Defence and Services departments saw the new equipment, which is designed to meet the requirements of dispersion and movement in modern war.

The equipment was laid out before a panorama montage (above) on which the signals lay-out for a division in battle stations was set out in pin-point colored lights.

In the left of the picture is the new wireless set C41 Very High Frequency radio relay, which provides 12 channels for speech or telegraph.

Next to the right is the wireless set B70 Super High Frequency radio relay portable field link, easily distinguished by its twin dishes.

This equipment provides four speech or telegraph channels for communication in the field.

In the foreground below are wireless sets C42

and C45 which range equipment Field Force place equipment. The issued to the arms.

To the are existing wireless set HP.



ABOVE, the latest in teletype equipment console, adopted by the Royal Australian Signals Corps, and to be transmitted through a number of perforated tape.

1959 December 17, 1959 edition of Army News featured new equipment on display in Victoria



THE present Corps badge, approved in 1946, is described as:

The figure of Mercury on a globe, the latter supported above by a scroll bearing the motto *Certa Cito*, and a boomerang below bearing the inscription Australia.

The whole is surmounted by a crown, detached.

Mercury and the globe are in silver, the remainder in gilt.

1975 November 17, 1975 edition included the Corps badge in a 50th anniversary feature.



2004 Sig Ben Williamson and Sig Scott Vaughan from 1JSU test communication lines during Exercise Vital Prospect. Photo: Cpl Darren Hilder



2012 Signals Detachment Commander, LCpl Clare Miller, conducts a radio check during Operation Anode.



2015 Sig Nash Hutchinson builds an antenna during the Princess Cup as part of 103 Sig Sqn's 50th birthday at Lavarack Barracks Photo: Cpl Kyle Jenner

Crucial role of winged saviours

Cpl Jacob Joseph:- Army Newspaper 6 March 2025



In the Maruda area, Borneo, July 1945, Sig E. V. Muldt, of Sig Platoon, Bn HQ, 2/17 Infantry Bn, releases a carrier pigeon with a message for D Coy, 2/17 Infantry Bn and HQ at Seria. Accession number 112394.

As the Sigs Corps celebrates its centenary, it pays homage to one of its heroes from a bygone era. Cpl Jacob Joseph reports.

In 1944, a small patrol of US marines hacked through dense jungle towards a waiting enemy.

The Americans were investigating a Japanese force preparing to retake Manus Island.

Shots rang out and soon the patrol was surrounded. Nothing was getting through on the radio.

The marines' only hope of rescue would be carried on the wings of three Australian homing pigeons.

One by one the birds were released, but as they broke the canopy, the first two were cut down by a hail of enemy fire.

Their last messenger was a bluechequer cock pigeon by the name of Q879 from Loft No. 5 of 1 Australian Pigeon Section, Australian Corps of Signals.

Unlike his contemporaries whose poetic names, such as

White Vision and All Alone, befitted heroic actions, unassuming warrior

Q879 soared skywards as bullets zipped past his feathers until he disappeared into the distance.

The little pigeon carried his lifesaving message at the speed of almost one kilometre a minute.



Almost 50km away, Q879 spotted his loft from high above and dove towards his nest.

A tripwire bell attached to the loft let signallers know a message had arrived.

Commanders called a fire mission on the Japanese position. The marines were saved.

For his efforts, Q879 was awarded the Dickin Medal – the Victoria Cross for animals – in 1947.

February 24 was National Day for War Animals and a chance to reflect on the contribution animals have made to Defence.

The Dickin Medal has been awarded 73 times since 1943, with almost half the medals going to pigeons.

Pigeons have flown in the face of danger since before the ancient Greeks.

Few know of these animals' extraordinary abilities better than Peter D'Arcy. He's one of the ACT's top racers and has been involved in the sport for decades.

His pigeons find their way home over distances greater than 1000km.

For the last race of the season, Mr D'Arcy and a dozen or so others will drive to Charleville in outback Queensland.

"We let them go when the sun comes up and on a



reasonable day, depending on the wind, they'll arrive back in Canberra before sunset," Mr D'Arcy said.

Pigeons can see for kilometres, including the ultraviolet spectrum, and it's believed they navigate Earth using magnetic fields.

Predators, storms, rain and fog are trouble – even a solar spike can throw off a pigeon's sense of direction.

With such speed and consistency, it's no surprise they've been used by militaries for eons to span great distances. Wireless communications were an emerging technology during World War 1, but commanders still relied on dogs, pigeons, runners, mirrors and signal lamps to send messages to and from the front.

Technology leaped forward between World Wars, and the mastery of the electromagnetic spectrum took the wind from beneath the pigeons' wings.

But in mountainous regions during WW2, such as Manus Island where Q879 saved the day, radio communications were sketchy – pigeons still had a role to play on the battlefield.

In 1942, the Australian Corps of Signals raised a pigeon unit, made up of personnel who had been pigeon fanciers before enlisting.

About 13,500 birds were donated to the newly created Australian Corps of Signals Pigeon Service, intended to connect coastal-defence outposts in Australia before expanding to Papua New Guinea.

"Pigeon fliers bred birds off their best pedigree for the war effort and they would send them to train with very experienced pigeon racers who joined the Army," Mr D'Arcy said.

"The Army person with birds in the field was very skilled because they've got to move the birds around.

"The birds have remarkable eyesight and were taught to look for a big X on top of their loft."

City pigeons dodging bicycles and pecking around bus stops are not too different to those original signals birds. But Mr D'Arcy said comparing pigeons with racing pedigree to those without was like comparing a thoroughbred to a draft horse.

"The pigeons we use have pedigrees going back generations, sometimes 200 years," Mr D'Arcy said.

The newly raised pigeon service set up breeding lofts all around PNG, as pigeons unaccustomed to mountainous jungle terrain had difficulty homing in tropical rain and mist. And it wasn't long before these little birds made a big impact.

Another Australian Dickin Medal winner, blue bar cock pigeon No 139 flew through a storm to send word about a sinking Army ship near PNG.

All up, 139 pigeons flew more than 20 missions over thousands of kilometres.

By the 1950s, use of High Frequency radios to enable wireless transmission of voice messages over distances of up to 150km were well in use.

The following decade introduced encrypted Very High Frequency radios, before widespread use of satellite communications during operations in East Timor-Leste.

Head of Corps of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals Brig Deane Limmer said the philosophy that resulted in pigeons serving with Australian forces continued in the corps.

"The use of pigeons was based around a conversation about how we can improve communications and that conversation continues today," Brig Limmer said.

"The 2024 National Defence Strategy provided the formal direction to shape, deter and respond, and that drives our current plans. As in the past, RA Sigs continues to evolve to meet the needs of the Army and to support an integrated, focused force."

This year is the 100th anniversary of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. The theme is 'celebrate, commemorate and connect', with senior corps members encouraging all current and former members and families to join events held across the country this year.

Pigeon facts

- A pigeon's heart beats between 140 and 400 bpm.
- Pigeons have hollow bones; the extra space is filled with air sacs that are part of their respiratory system.
- This helps them fly for hours without fatigue.
- It's a common belief among pigeon racers that a pigeon's eyesight is so good they can see the hour hand of a clock move.
- Even a blindfolded pigeon can find its way home.



In Brisbane, November 1943, Cpl C. Coleman, of the 5th Australian Pigeon Section, Advanced Land HQ Signals, releases a pigeon after attaching a message to its leg in an aluminium container. Accession number 058856. Photos courtesy of the Australian War M

Corps marks its centenary

Capt Andrew Page:- Army Newspaper 6 March 25



Sig CPL Ryan McIntosh uses semaphore flags to call soldiers onto parade during the ceremony at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne. Photo Cpl Campbell Myers

Signallers gathered at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance on February 14 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. The corps formed on February 14, 1925, consolidating technical specialist soldiers trained to operate analogue wireless and radio equipment.

Today, the corps provides contemporary digital communications, electronic warfare and cyber capabilities in support of Defence operations. Head of Corps Brig Deane Limmer said the parade and commemorative service recognised the contribution and sacrifice of signallers in theatres of conflict, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

"A key element in any battlespace or operating environment is the timeliness and reliability of our communications, and the information that guides decision-making to give us a competitive edge," Brig

Limmer said.

"We have always embraced technology and the skills required to meet the dynamic demands of warfare, as per our corps motto: Certa Cito – swift and sure."

Events to celebrate the corps and its achievements will take place throughout 2025.

"More than 100,000 signallers have served in the corps, including 25,000 men and 3600 women who served as communicators in either the Australian Corps of Signals or the Australian Women's Army Service during the Second World War," Brig Limmer said.

"For every signaller serving in the corps there is someone providing strength and support at home, and our centenary celebrations are also about recognising and showing gratitude to them."

RASigs Personnel awarded Australia Day Honours 2025 for Distinguished Service and Outstanding Devotion to Duty.

Captain Natasha Pauline **KIRKHAM.**

26-1-2025

CAG S

CSM

[For meritorious achievement in leadership and strategic engagement while serving as Troop Commander 127th Signal Troop, 1st Signal Regiment.](#)

Captain Kirkham made a meritorious contribution to Australia and its strategic interests through her remarkable leadership of communications infrastructure projects in the South-West Pacific. Her tireless commitment to planning and remarkable interpersonal skills led to several successful deployments in 2023 and set conditions for future project objectives. Her meritorious achievements enhanced Australia's relationship with its Pacific partners.

Corporal **L.**

26-1-2025

CAG S

CSM

[For meritorious achievement in the development of Standard Operating Procedures and Training Laboratories in support of the Integrated Battlefield Telecommunications Network Release Three.](#)

Corporal L has demonstrated unwavering dedication to the Australian Defence Force. He has exhibited excellent technical understanding of strategic and tactical elements that significantly surpass his rank and experience. His efforts in addressing training deficiencies and developing training and policy material has significantly improved the integration of telecommunications technology and enhanced the provision of communications across tactical and strategic elements of the Australian Defence Force.

THE ONCE IN A LIFETIME 100th CORPS BIRTHDAY FORMAL NATIONAL REUNION DINNER

**SATURDAY 15th NOVEMBER 2025, AT THE ROCHFORD
WINERY, YARRA VALLEY, HEALESVILLE, VICTORIA.**

This is the opportunity to join past and current Signals members at the celebration of the Corps 100th Birthday Dinner, which is part of the RASigs National 100th Birthday Reunion in Healesville, Victoria, from Monday the 10th November to Tuesday the 18th November 2025.

We have a limited number of seats so please pay the deposit below as per the instructions to secure your position at the dinner. We currently have 1700 members on the RASigs 100th Birthday Reunion Facebook page and can only take less than 25% for the dinner, so get in early for this great event.

The Function Centre is only 6 minute drive from Healesville city centre, no long bus rides.

The Formal Dinner Menu: (Example only)

Entrée – sharing anti-pasto platters

Main – 2 x proteins, sides of salad

Dessert – Sweet treats on sharing boards

House-baked bread basket.

Most dietaries can be accommodated if known in advance.

Beverage Package • 5 hours

2 x white wines • 2 x red wines • Heavy and light beers • Soft drinks •

Filtered coffee and tea

To Reserve your seat at this special Dinner please pay your deposit of \$70.00 Per Person, to the account below, ensure your name is in the reference. When you have paid your deposit please email PRONTOBRL@gmail.com advising your name and date paid so we can confirm it has been received. If you don't receive a confirmation email from me saying your monies have been received, please follow up. The final payment for the dinner (\$65.00) is due by 30th June 2025, if you fail to pay your final payment you will forfeit your position and someone on the waiting list will take your place.

Payment Details:

Account Name: Royal Australian Signals Association SA

Bank: Commonwealth Bank

BSB: 065 122

Account Number: 00904932

Reference: Your Surname & Initials

RASIGS 100th BIRTHDAY REUNION ITINERARY - Correct as of 27 Feb 25

DATE	DAY	TIMINGS	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	NOTES
10-Nov-25	Monday	1000-1500	Registration Day	Rochford Winery	03 59573333
10-Nov-25	Monday	1200-1400	Option of Lunch at Rochford Winery	Rochford Winery	Individuals must pre book themselves for lunch on this day, number above
10-Nov-25	Monday	1800	Meet and Greet	Healesville Hotel	256 Maroondah Hwy Healesville
11-Nov-25	Tuesday	0900-1500	Open Day Simpson Barracks, Remembrance Day Service, Museum, Sgts Mess Lunch, Leaving Sgt's Mess and return to Healesville 1400.	Simpson Barracks	You Must Book with Bruce at PRONTOBRL@GMAIL.COM to gain access. You need Photo ID. Buses provided for travel to and from
11-Nov-25	Tuesday	1800	Meet & Greet	Healesville Hotel	
12-Nov-25	Wednesday	1100-1500	BBQ by Lions Club at Lawn Bowls Club, including Lawn Bowls try out if you want	Healesville	Bar facilities will be available. Must book with Bruce Long
13-Nov-25	Thursday	All Day	Free Day to visit the sites	Healesville/Yarra Valley	The Sanctuary (Zoo), Chocolate Factory and Gin Makers plus lots more. Maybe golf for those interested.
13-Nov-25	Thursday	1800	Meet & Greet	Healesville Hotel	
14-Nov-25	Friday	All Day	Free Day to visit the sites	Healesville/Yarra Valley	Possible Golf Day
14-Nov-25	Friday	1800	Meet & Greet	Healesville Hotel	
15-Nov-25	Saturday	1800-2330	Formal Dinner - Rochford Winery	Yarra Valley	Times to be confirmed - Buses from town and back
16-Nov-25	Sunday	1000	Late Breakfast	TBC	Must register with Bruce for Breakfast - Lions Club
16-Nov-25	Sunday	rest of day	Free Day to Recover	Healesville	
17-Nov-25	Monday	All Day	Free Day		
17-Nov-25	Monday	1800	Farewell Drinks for those leaving	Healesville Hotel	LAST OFFICIAL REUNION NIGHT

Sadly, we have lost more valuable servants of the Corps and Country...[Information provided by Adam West.
siqsdb@netspace.net.au](mailto:siqsdb@netspace.net.au)

Vale

VALE

William Van Roosmalen (Bill)
86yrs of age.

Service dates unknown.

Rank... Warrant Officer class 2
Q Stores

709 Sig Tp Vietnam 6 Apr 1967 to 01 Nov 1967

NS 8 Jan 1957 to 25 Mar 1957
CMF 26 Mar 1957 to 24 Jan 1958
RMC 25 Jan 1958 to 13 Dec 1960
ARA 14 Dec 1960 to 24 Nov 1985

13 NS Trg Bn (Recruit)
1Cdo Coy (Private)
RMC (Cadet)
PSD<S (att HQ S Comd while attending RMIT)
1 Sig Project Sqn (Tp Comd)
School of Signals (Instructor)
School of Signals (Adjutant)
School of Signals (OC Policy & Planning Section)
709 Sig Tp (OC, SVN)

LTS (att AAS London while attending RMCof S)
AAS London (SO2 Sigs)

2 Sig Regt (2IC)
Australian Staff College (student)
Materiel Branch, Army Office (SO2 Trunk Radio)
Materiel Branch, Army Office (SO1 Electronics)
Dept of Defence Central Office (SO1 Materiel)
2 Sig Regt (CO)
US Armed Forces Staff College (student)
AAS Washington (Aust C-E Rep Tri-Tac Offive Fort Monmouth)

HQ Field Force Command (Comd Field Force Sigs)
Operations Branch, Army Office (DComms-Army)
Operations Branch, Army Office (Dorg-Army)

VALE

3788445 Barry Hadyn SNELL

110 Sig Sqn Vietnam 28 Apr 1967 - 15 Jan 1968

VALE

235222 Duncan Arthur SPENCER

103 Sig Sqn Vietnam 18/05/1966 - 06/05/1967

VALE

235193 Phillip Graeme SKELTON AM

Members all,

It is with deep regret that I advise of the passing of Highgate golden oldie Colonel Phillip Skelton AM, early this morning 3 April, after suffering a massive stroke a few days ago. He was aged 86.

Phillip was Deputy Warden of the State War Memorial for seven years, and a long serving Sub-Warden (driving the PA system in his later years).

A Duntroon graduate, he had a long distinguished service in the RA Signals, was Officer Commanding 709 Signal Troop 1967 Vietnam, Commanding Officer 2 Signal Regiment 1976-77, US Defence TRL TAC Office 1978-80, Commander Field Force Signals '81, Director Communications-Army 1982-84, Director Organisation-Army 1985. He was awarded an AM for duty as Commanding Officer, 2 Signal Regiment, Watsonia: 6 June 1978.

A message from the DRA President to members today, summarised his service as follows:

Phillip Skelton had enjoyed three careers: - in the Regular Army for 28 years; as a senior public servant for 16 years; and an independent telecommunications and broadcasting consultant for 8 years. Phillip studied at RMIT (FRMIT, Communications Engineering 1961 - 1962) and the Royal Military College of Science (UK) - (Management of R&D and procurement of defence equipment 1968 - 1969).

His voluntary community service brought him much satisfaction. He had been a Director of such diverse organisations as a School Foundation, a Music Foundation, a Marriage and Family Counselling organization, and a television station. He had been Patron of three Police Recruit Squads.

He maintained an active interest in national security and defence issues and in commemoration of Defence Force members who gave their lives in securing Australia's interests.

Phillip was a Past President of the Rotary Club of Perth. He was a Past District Governor of District 9455, and a Board member of Armadale Rotary in District 9465.

Our deepest sympathy to wife Jacqui and his family.

Lest We forget.

Greg Wilson
Secretary
Highgate RSL Sub-Branch

Military History

Extract from "Signals:- The story of the Australian Corps of Signals" Published during WW2 prior to award of Royal title.

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST CORPS SIGNALS

FIVE weeks after the outbreak of war, Signals 1 Aust. Corps first saw the light of day. The Commander-in-Chief chose Colonel C. H. Simpson, M.C., V.D., as his Signals adviser for the 2nd A.I.F. and the ex-commander of the 6th Australian Infantry Brigade dropped a "pip" in rank to take over command of Corps Signals. The Melbourne Showground was selected as the H.Q. of the new unit and on the afternoon of the 13th of October the C.O. moved in with his Adjutant (Capt. L. J. Bruton) and Quartermaster (Lieut. S. J. Greville).

Training commenced on radical lines right from the start. Signals 1 Aust. Corps spent their early days learning to be soldiers first and signalmen later. They were disciplined, trained to fight, hardened and drilled until their bearing approached the ideals laid down by their ex-Infantry brigade commander. The period of Infantry training culminated in a march through the streets of Essendon and the general military bearing of the erstwhile bank clerks, laborers and salesmen received favorable comment. Early in December, Lieut. Greville and Sgt. Kearney left for the Middle East as part of an A.I.F. advance party.

Equipment commenced to dribble in and specialist training was inaugurated. As a higher standard of training was reached, the unit embarked on more ambitious Signals exercises, culminating in the sudden move to the Victorian seaside resort



of Barwon Heads. The C.O. insisted that all sections would move at night and with the minimum of noise. So silent and unexpected was the Barwon move that no one on the Showground Camp H.Q. was aware of it until the empty camp area was discovered in the morning. The following weeks were spent on the move and the lesson of mobility was learned. The stay at Barwon Heads concluded with vaccinations and pre-embarkation leave (the first). After this leave, Puckapunyal became the home of Signals and further exercises in the field were carried out with the 17th Brigade.

About this time came news of the imminent embarkation of the first "flight" of 6 Aust. Div. and that further A.I.F. divisions were to be raised for overseas service. It became necessary to increase the strength of Signals 1 Aust. Corps to a great extent, and the unit concentrated at Seymour. In April 1940, Lt-Col. Simpson was appointed Chief Signals Officer of 1 Aust. Corps and Lt-Col. R. Kendall was posted to command the now rapidly growing unit. In August and October more sections sailed with elements of Corps H.Q. The A.A. Brigade Signals Section, originally raised as a sec-

SIGNALS

tion of Corps Signals, was divorced from the unit but still retained the old color patch.

At the close of the year, the main body of the unit embarked on a huge luxury liner. Here no relaxation was allowed and training went on day after day on the spacious decks. The unit changed transports at Ceylon and with elements of 7th and 9th Divisional Signals continued the journey to the Middle East on the Dutch transport, s.s. *Slamat*, later unfortunately lost in the Mediterranean.

Signals 1 Aust. Corps disembarked at Port Tewfik late in January 1941 and concentrated at Ikingi Maryut, a few miles out in the desert from Alexandria, where they were joined by the sections which had sailed from Australia earlier. The sections left back in Australia sailed during the following March and joined the completed unit at Deir Suneid, Palestine.

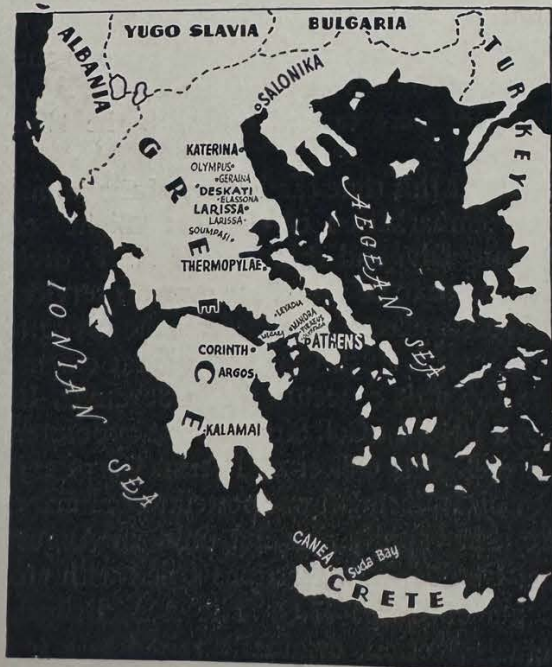
On the 26th of December 1940, just as the main body of the unit was going aboard the transport back in Sydney Harbor, the sections which had arrived in the Middle East in November learned that

they were to move to the desert. At dawn on New Year's Day, the convoy of forty vehicles left for Sollum to act as Signals Advance B.T.E. (British Troops in Egypt). On arrival there, they were greeted by a sand storm and welcomed by the C.S.O. 13 British Corps, who immediately set them to work in a Signals Office which had been established in a large underground cistern. They remained at Capuzzo until the fall of Tobruch. The H.Q. 13 British Corps then moved on to Bomba and it was there that the Australians came under the command of the British Corps.

At Bomba, dust storms were the order of the day and everyone welcomed the news that General O'Connor intended to move. By this time the enemy had been driven back to El Agheila, where the Italians had established defensive positions. The Signals 1 Aust. Corps detachment then formed "Cyrenaica Signals" and manned the old civil post office at Barce. On the 25th of February Signals 1 Aust. Corps was ordered to move back to Alexandria. The detachments made a four days' non-stop run back and joined the main body, recently arrived in the Middle East, at Ikingi Maryut. Two sections became attached to the 9th Division and remained with that division during the siege of Tobruch.

All transport was shipped aboard the *Pieter Mersk* and with the main body on the *Breconshire* Corps Signals set sail for Greece. Disembarkation was at Piraeus and the unit stayed at Glyffada, some miles out of Athens. Glyffada was not destined to see much of Corps Signals because the unit moved north shortly afterwards. It was on this move that the C.O. had his first and only glimpse of his unit and its transport on parade as a whole. The 150 vehicles covered more than fifteen miles of road.

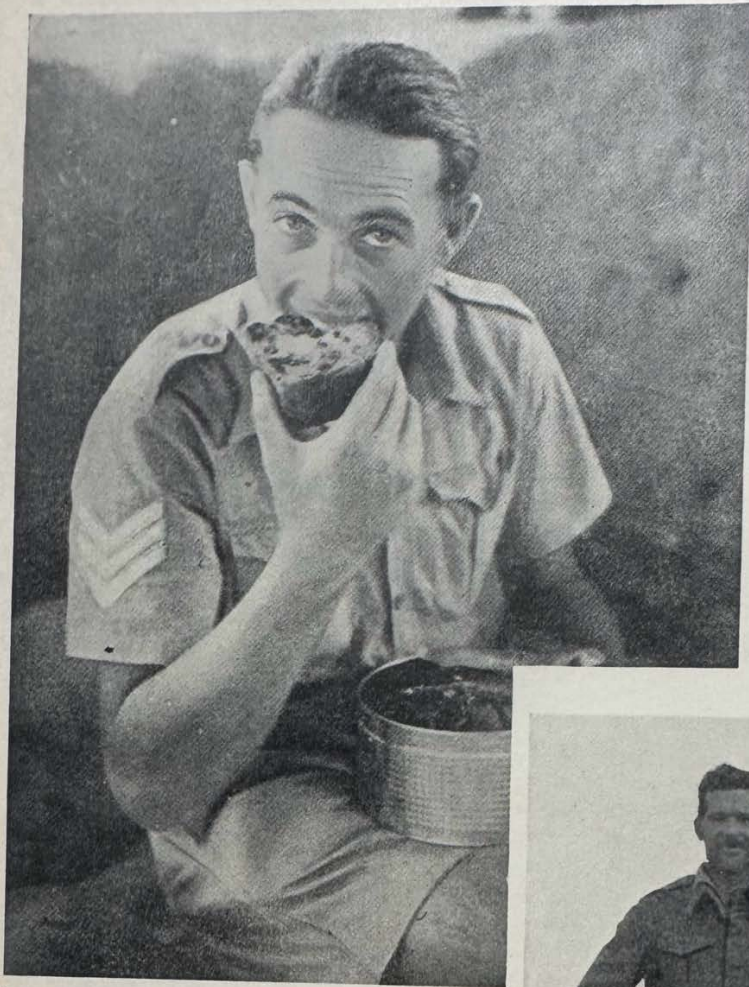
An advance party under Capt. L. L. Scorer had preceded the unit to Greece. This party established liaison with the Greek authorities, surveyed line routes and





Above: A last glimpse of the famous bridge as Corps Signals prepare for embarkation on Boxing Day, 1940. *Below:* The village of Ellason in Greece, one of the sites of the Corps Signals Office, after Stukas had dropped their "visiting cards" there during the retreat.





Getting his cake and eating it (left) and (above) signs of home amid the sands of Egypt. Below, left: Capt. D. Boden before an ancient monument in Greece. Below: Major Molloy and Capt. Fleming (Air Support Signals) shortly after they had escaped from the Germans during the second Libyan drive.



AUSTRALIA'S FIRST CORPS SIGNALS

prepared diagrams of the peculiar types of line installations. From Gerania, where the Corps Signals Office was established, line sections were sent forward to provide and maintain line communications. Wireless elements were perched in mountain eyries above the snow line with forward elements. Wireless silence was imposed until the Germans had crossed the border from Yugoslavia. Line communication to the New Zealanders on the right flank at Katerini was by means of a civil P.L. route which was well above the snow line. This was also the only route for the despatch riders. One rider used up four bikes delivering his despatches.

For tactical reasons Corps H.Q. was moved to Ellason and it was here that Sgt Meade won the M.M. for his bravery in the Signals Office during its first raid. By this time, Greek resistance on the left flank had commenced to crumble. A small operating and wireless group was detached to the Diskata area and it was not until some considerable time later that it rejoined the unit, having been embroiled in the heavy fighting in the Diskata area.

Corps H.Q. and the Signals Office were shifted a few miles from Ellason to Cheochani. This proved to be a wise move. Just after it had been completed, Ellason was wiped out by enemy dive bombers.

By this time, the enemy's advance had mounted rapidly. The armored brigade on the left flank had been fought to a standstill, so Corps H.Q. moved back towards Levadia. The first stop was at Soumpasi where once more the Signals Office was on the receiving end of Stuka parades. The first office at this point was a car with an armlet tied to a post as a "Flag, distinguishing". On arrival at Levadia the unit's vehicles, dispersed in the open fields, were the target of successive air raids, earning for the area the sobriquet of "Murder Flat".

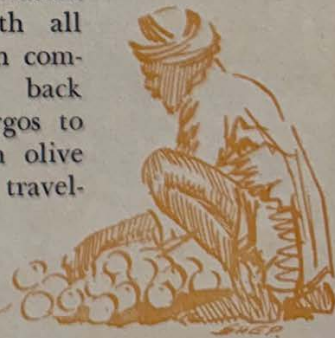
On the move back through Larissa, at the height of the bombing, a train con-

taining explosives was hit and the Greek train crew vanished. Sgt Killalea (M.M. winner of the last war) and two men of No. 1 Line Section found by the process of elimination how to move the engine. They uncoupled the burning trucks and moved them clear of the explosives. The sergeant received the D.C.M. and the two other men the M.M. each for this exploit.

The N.Z. Division was on its way back and line communication to 6 Aust. Div. was by a hotchpotch of quad and field cables and railway and civil telegraph lines. With enemy air superiority, the line sections had an unenviable task of trying to keep this conglomeration through.

When evacuation orders were received, a proportion of R.H.Q., technical maintenance section and operators who were not needed at the time for the maintenance of communications, plus any line section personnel who were available, moved back to "J" Beach and were evacuated to Crete. Special Wireless Section had preceded them and also went to Crete.

Signals were the last troops to leave the Corps H.Q. site south of Levadia. At Mandra, a wireless detachment was in position working to H.Q. 6 Aust. Div., now on the move back. W/T Signals strengths of the Corps-Division link were reported better and better until the old R9 notation was reported. It was discovered shortly afterwards that H.Q. 6 Aust. Div. was in occupation of the area just across the road—400 yards away. Anzac Corps then officially went out of existence. Wireless sets not actually in operation were destroyed with all technical gear. Then commenced the trek back via Megara and Argos to Kalamai. Hiding in olive groves by day and travelling at night, they reached their destination and came under Brig. Allen



SIGNALS

for evacuation. That afternoon all vehicles were destroyed and personal issues of rations were made. During the march in the welcome darkness along the beach to the wharf, a number of personnel became detached and embarked on the *Costa Rica* while the rest of the unit found itself on the *City of London*. The convoy was the target for continual air raids and the *Costa Rica* was sunk. The men taken off by destroyer subsequently went on to Crete. Six enemy planes were shot down and many more were damaged as all available small-arms fire (and even fire from anti-tank rifles) on the transports merged with that from the A.A. guns of the escorting warships in defiance of the enemy's attempts to annihilate them.

The remainder of the convoy reached Alexandria safely and the Corps Signals elements moved on to Deir Suneid where they were joined later by those who had escaped from Crete. Lt-Col. Kendall was seconded to H.Q. A.I.F. (M.E.) and his place was taken by Lt-Col. J. L. McKinlay, M.M.

Operating, wireless and D.R. sections were attached to 13 British Corps Signals for the Syrian campaign. These maintained communications in the Damascus area. In addition, the technical maintenance section proved invaluable in overhauling captured French Signals equipment. After the capitulation of the Vichy French, Signals 1 Aust. Corps took over the Corps communications and the Signals Office at Alep. About this time, a number of volunteer personnel were transferred to the newly formed 1 Aust. Air Support Control Signals and accompanied the British 30 Corps in the second Libyan campaign. It was in this push that Sgt E. M. Simpson won his B.E.M. and other personnel were also decorated.

During the severe winter blizzards at the close of the year in Syria, both the line and D.R. sections did yeoman service. The snow on the high Lebanon ranges between Alep and Damascus covered the roads and mountain passes to a depth of thirty feet. So fierce were the blizzards that steel telegraph poles were bent to the ground, snapping and wrecking the line routes more effectively than any bombs. The D.Rs were the first in the A.I.F. to use the now-famous jeep. They drove just about all round Syria between Baalbeck, Beirut, Tripoli, Homs, Merdjayoun and Damascus. They got their despatches through at any price, even though there were times when they had to be literally lifted out of their jeeps, frozen by the cold.

Early in January came news of a definite move involving certain forces (including Corps Signals). Rumor was rife, speculation was rampant, and in fact a sea trip was in the air. It was. Mosquito nets and tropical equipment were issued and once aboard the transports, opinion as to the ultimate destination varied between at least six different spots on the earth's globe. First guess was Java. After Colombo, cases of tea branded "Sydney, Australia" came to light and "the cat was out of the bag". Australia it was, but a homecoming different from that which greeted the Diggers of the last war on their return. This time things had changed. Blackout conditions had been imposed and Australia was a theatre of active operations. Corps Signals disembarked at Adelaide on the 17th of March to be greeted with a typical South Australian welcome. The Australian Army was in the melting pot, to be remoulded into an even stronger and greater fighting force. One month later Signals 1 Aust. Corps were on the move again—headed northwards.