

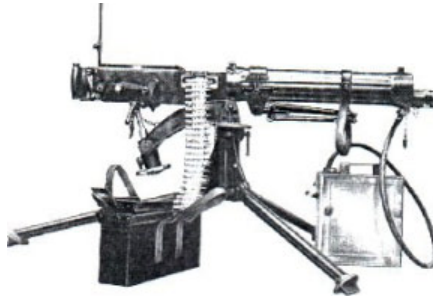
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**THE 2/2ND AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN BATTALION
ASSOCIATION**

MUZZLE BLAST

October November 2013



www.2nd2ndmachinegunbn.com
muzzleblast22@gmail.com

2/2nd AUST MG BN ASSOCIATION

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FROM THE COMMITTEE

The Annual General Meeting

is November 23rd, 2013

at 11.30am, Roseville Memorial Club,

64 Pacific Highway, Roseville, (opposite Roseville Station)

All members and Associates are welcome to attend

and most importantly share company at lunch afterwards, either at the club or at a local venue, (yet to be arranged). Either would be reasonably priced

MONTHLY MEETINGS, Members and Associates

are held on the *fourth Saturday of the month at 11.30am, Roseville Memorial Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville, conveniently opposite Roseville Station*

An exception is in April, when there is no meeting. It is replaced by the ANZAC Day function, at the Menzies Hotel

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Of \$20 are due annually in April. If you are not an original member or a widow and you receive this Muzzle Blast, please check your financial status.

It is notable that in this issue of Muzzle Blast that there are no 'vale' notices; a first in my short time as editor and a pleasure to report.

Health issues however remain a constant for many. We are aware of several hospitalisations for various members, so we wish everyone improved health and wellbeing during the summer months and particularly over Christmas and New Year.

At the ANZAC Day function it was suggested that the history of the herb Rosemary as a symbol of remembrance would be a good article for Muzzle Blast. Unfortunately I did not copy the name of that person volunteering the research! However the origins and history of both Rosemary and the Remembrance Poppy are interesting and relevant to this time

ROSEMARY



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Rosemary *Officinalis*, the botanic name given in the 18th century, is an ever-green fragrant perennial herb. Related to the mint family, it is native to the Mediterranean, Portugal, Spain, and North Africa region; locations where it is known as a hardy plant surviving for many years in average soil hot, dry conditions, flowers constantly (in more temperate regions it flowers through spring and summer). Having the ability to survive on the humidity brought by the sea breezes of the Mediterranean gave rise to the origins of its name and early Roman history: *Ros* translates in Latin as 'dew' and *marinus* as 'sea', dew of the sea. The Spanish cited a more biblical origin, calling it the Rose of Mary. As it was used as incense during religious ceremonies in France it was known as 'Incensier' there. The Romans took it with them to England

Flowers on different bushes can be white, pink mauve purple or blue. The bushes can be upright or prostrate with differently shaped leaves of varying shades of green to yellow. It is easy to grow from cuttings or by simple layering and is suitable for shaping into hedges or topiary

Many attributes have been assigned to the herb. The culinary uses of rosemary are well appreciated, complementing a large variety of meats, breads, sauces, marinades, desserts, pickles and jams. Italian food would be lacking without it. As a herb it is known to be vitamin rich, namely in B6 calcium and iron though large quantities would need to be consumed to gain real benefit. Extracts of the herb, when added to some oils, prolong the shelf life of the oil. It is a great companion plant for beans, carrots and sage, deterring moths in the garden as well as the cupboard

The strength of the bush and its ability to overpower all other flowers in the garden, supported the belief that it enhanced memory, and stimulated the heart.

Rosemary became the symbol of

strength, wisdom, remembrance, love, loyalty and fidelity

Named and described in the Anglo Saxon Herbal of the 11th century

<http://www.homestead.org/GayIngram/Rosemary/AboutRosemary.htm>

Greek scholars wore rosemary in their hair to enhance their wisdom

The early history of rosemary describes its medicinal use when infused in water as a tonic or tea, and wine. As an oil it was dropped on sugar cubes, mixed in a bath or massaged into the skin. It has been used as an ingredient in liniments for muscular pain, and hair lotions for baldness and dandruff. Considered to have antiseptic properties, it was used in hospitals. During the plague of 1665, in England, it was sniffed and carried in a pouch or handkerchief for ladies and in the head of a walking stick for gentlemen

<http://www.homestead.org/GayIngram/Rosemary/AboutRosemary.htm>

Sprigs were placed in the casket of the dead, and when carried by mourners at the funeral it was thrown into the grave. Legend associates it with Aphrodite and the Virgin Mary.

Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) is quoted *'as for Rosemarine, I lett it runne all over my garden walls, not onlie because my bees love it, but because it is the herb sacred to remembrance, and, therefore, to friendship; whence a sprig of it hath a dumb language that maketh it the chosen emblem of our funeral wakes and in our burial grounds.'*

<http://www.herbco.com/t-rosemary-article.aspx> |

In the 16th century brides wore rosemary in their hair; a tradition that extends to some parts of Europe today. Anne of Cleves, during her marriage to Henry VIII in 1540, wore a crown of pearls set with rosemary.

http://www.adlunamlabs.com/History_of_Rosemary.html

Guests were given sprigs of rosemary tied with silk ribbon (Bridal couples of the time, planted bushes on their wedding day; its healthy survival was seen as a good omen for the future. Conversely, it was also thought that where it flourished, the woman ruled the home, so many a bush was ripped out! On Christmas Eve rosemary was spread like a carpet on the floor of the house, as it was walked on the emitting fragrance represented the spreading of health and happiness for the year ahead

Shakespeare referred to the herb in both Hamlet and A Winters Tale

Rosemary, the herb steeped in thousands of years history and tradition, associated with

strength, wisdom, remembrance, love, loyalty and fidelity,

grew plentifully on the Gallipoli Peninsula. It became the special ANZAC symbol of remembrance. A sprig of it is worn on the left chest or lapel, over the heart, on ANZAC Day



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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosemary>

<http://herbgardens.about.com/od/culinary/a/Rosemary.htm>

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Rosemary:-The-Herb-of-Remembrance-and-Friendship&id=47840>

http://www.adlunamlabs.com/History_of_Rosemary.html

<http://www.anzacday.org.au/education/tff/rosemary.html>

<http://www.herbco.com/t-rosemary-article.aspx>

<http://botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/r/rosema17.html>

THE REMEMBRANCE POPPY

The red poppy that we associate with Armistice Day, Remembrance Day 11th November is an annual plant that flowers usually in May-August in Belgium and France (also seen in the Turkish battlefields at the Gallipoli Peninsula)

The seeds of genus *papaver rhoeas*, are carried by the wind and lie dormant, bursting into bloom when the weather warms and the ground is disturbed by farmers ploughing their fields

In 1915, as a result of battle in the Flemish town of Ypres, the ground underfoot was churned up, by horses, soldiers, tunnels, trenches, and graves, increasing lime in the soil. There was little left in the brown muddy landscape. In that year, the weather warmed early in April, stimulating red poppies to grow. By nature they sprang up in the most disturbed ground .

John McCrae, a Canadian poet and physician, the son of a military leader, enlisted at age 41 with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was engaged in the unrelenting second battle of Ypres, 22 April – 25 May 1915



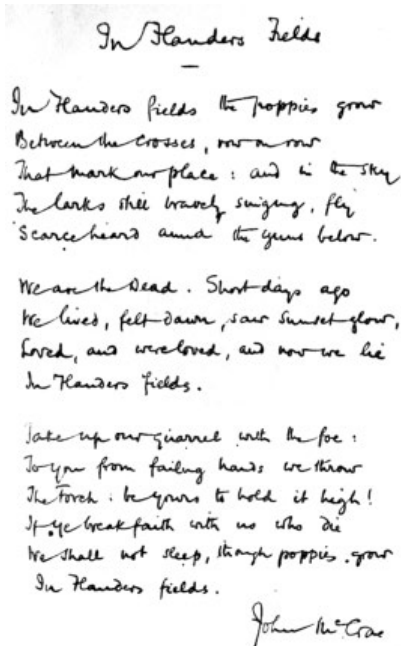
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Battle_of_Ypres

<http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/guerre/second-ypres-e.aspx>

<http://collections.civilization.ca/public/pages/cmccpublic/emupublic/Display.php?irn=1017198>

On May 2 his close friend was killed. When reflecting a day after his friend, Alexis Helmer's burial, McCrae noticed red poppies sprouting up around the disturbed ground of the graves in the area.

He was inspired to write the poem "In Flanders Fields"



In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies grow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

By John McCrae

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_Flanders_Fields



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There are several stories about how McCrae was dissatisfied with his poem and who and how it was preserved. The word 'grow' in the first line is liberally transposed to 'blow' and it is believed that McCrae made the change himself. It is known that the poem, prepared for publication by McCrae, was accepted and published by Punch Dec 8th, 1915

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punch_\(magazine\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punch_(magazine))[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punch_\(magazine\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punch_(magazine))

In the following years the poem was translated into many languages. It became synonymous with remembrance and sacrifice, used also as encouragement and for the propaganda supporting Canadian conscription in 1917

John McCrae was later promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, acting Colonel and Consulting Physician to the British Armies in France. Having contracted pneumonia, complicated with meningitis, in January 1918, he died in a military hospital. He was given full military honours

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_Flanders_Fields

On 9th November, 1918, just months after McCrae's death, and two days before the Armistice declaration, Moina Michael was present at the Conference of the Overseas YMCA War Secretaries, in New York. It was a place where soldiers could meet and say goodbye to family and friends before embarking on overseas service. She was passed, by a young soldier, a copy of "Ladies Home Journal". As she browsed through it she saw

McCrae's poem titled "We Shall Not Sleep" (another title for In Flanders Fields)

She was so moved by the poem, almost spiritually, that she pledged to "keep the faith with all who died" <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/article/remembrance-poppy.htm> and to always wear a red poppy as sign of remembrance on Armistice Day. At the conference some delegates gave her a donation for flowers she had prepared for general display. So inspired by the poem, she went out to buy red poppies just the ones she had just read about. She found only artificial silk ones. Later at the conference she distributed the poppies she had bought, whilst wearing one on her own lapel and thereby disseminating her vision. Moina wrote her own poem in response called "We Shall Keep the Faith".

<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/poems/moina-michael-we-shall-keep-faith.htm>

Through the continuing work with the YMCA and largely supported with her own funds, she realised a more practical vision of supporting ex servicemen through the production and sale of the red poppy itself. Throughout the British Empire her vision was being adopted. A resolution was passed in Australia by the Returned and Services League (RSL) that the Red Memorial Poppy was the emblem of remembrance, to be worn on 11th November, 1921 and on all following Armistice Days

<http://www.army.gov.au/Our-history/Traditions/The-Red-Poppy>

They announced:

“The Returned sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia and other Returned Soldiers Organisations throughout the British Empire and Allied Countries have passed resolutions at their international conventions to recognise the Poppy of Flanders’ Fields as the international memorial flower to be worn on the anniversary of Armistice Day”

Australians wear a Red Poppy on Remembrance Day for three reasons:

Firstly, in memory of the sacred dead who rest in Flanders Fields

Secondly to keep alive the memories of the sacred cause for which they laid down their lives;

and Thirdly as a bond of esteem and affection between the soldiers of all Allied nations and in respect for France, our common battle ground”

<http://www.army.gov.au/Our-history/Traditions/The-Red-Poppy>

Today, cloth poppies are sold on, or around 11 November each year. They are an exact replica in size and colour of the poppies that bloom in Flanders’ Fields. The RSL sells millions of them with proceeds going towards funds for welfare work

It became very popular in wreaths for ANZAC Day and as a symbol in ceremonies at the Australian War Memorial. On November 11th 1993 people waited, each with a Remembrance RSL poppy, to ceremoniously place at the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier, immediately after its interment. The queue was long and filed beside the Roll of Honour. During the waiting time in the queue people pushed poppies into the crack between the panels bearing the names of the fallen

The practice continues today in remembrance of individuals or groups of fallen comrades.



Roll of Honour,
Australian War Memorial

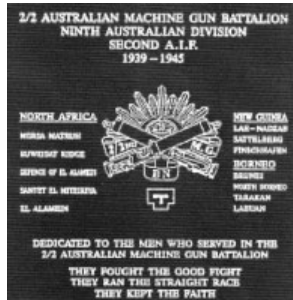
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The Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial

2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion



Photo taken by Andrew Gyles (grandson of Jim Stewart)



ODE

(For The Fallen By Laurance Binyon)

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
 Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow,
 They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
 They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
 Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
 At the going down of the sun and in the morning
 We will remember them

LEST WE FORGET