

# Cavalry in SA

To commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Raising of the first Cavalry Squadron in South Australia

## Reedbeds to Regiment

In 1840 the 4 year old colony of South Australia established the 'South Australian Volunteer Cavalry' as part of a South Australian Volunteer Militia Brigade. This Brigade was to comprise a company of infantry and two troops of cavalry, and by April 1840 had a total strength of 77, all ranks.

By June 1840 the colony was suffering from a severe economic depression and a wave of lawlessness and all training requirements for the Militia were dispensed with indefinitely. Whilst the Brigade ceased to operate as an effective force, records of the time indicate that the officers continued to 'dine' together.

To counter any possible threat of Russian annexation of the colony, the Legislative Council of South Australia introduced a Bill, on the 2nd of August 1854, to raise a Volunteer Force of 850 men, excluding officers and to provide 14 troops of Artillery, 4 troops of Infantry and 8 troops of mounted Infantry. Initially there was no provision made for cavalry.

Citizens of the day protested at the proposed low pay of 1 shilling (approximately 10c) per day and decided to establish their own 'volunteer' forces and established 'Municipal Troops' who elected their own officers and commenced training. Several bodies of horsemen formed themselves into 'Independent Cavalry Corps.' The title Independent signified that they were independent of any Government control. Most notable of these were East Torrens, 'Para' and Goolwa.

There is no actual record of any mounted troop until the issue of the Government Gazette for December 20, 1854, under the heading Volunteer Militia Force.

*Appointment is confirmed of Sam Davenport, Esq. to Cornet vice Beck resigned; in the troop of Volunteer Cavalry known as the South Australian Mounted Rifles - giving conclusive proof that SAMR was formed under that title before December 20, 1854, although it was often referred to as the Adelaide Mounted Rifles. This Adelaide Mounted Rifle Corps received no pay, found their own arms and equipment and comprised of 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 1 cornet, 1 surgeon and 27 troopers.*

In 1856, as the tide turned in the Crimean War, military training became unpopular, the Military Force Act was repealed and the 'regiment' was disbanded.

Between 1860 and 1870 various troops of voluntary cavalry, including the Reedbeds Cavalry in Adelaide, were formed and subsequently disbanded due to lack of finance and support.

The outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey in 1877 caused the citizens of South Australia to again look to their lack of a military force. At the request of concerned citizens, The Lord Mayor of Adelaide called a public meeting on the 8th of May 1877 to discuss the state of the colony's defences, which resulted in lists being opened for volunteers.

Two young men, who were destined to become great soldiers, attended that meeting, a Mr Rowell and a Mr Dean. Both enlisted in the Mounted Rifles as troopers and reached General rank.

The first parade of the Mounted Rifles was held on 10 August 1877 and the force was divided into two troops, each of 32 men and one officer. Weekly parades were held on Saturday afternoons in the parklands.

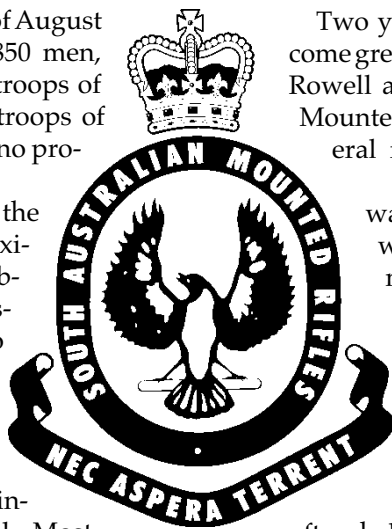
By 1887 the SAMR had a strength of over 1000, with troops in major country centres as well as the two troops of Adelaide Lancers.

Training now included annual camps, often held over Easter. At the 1897 camp, a contingent of 25 all ranks was selected to represent the S.A. Military Forces in England at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. Col. J. Rowell, CO of SAMR commanded this contingent.

In December 1899, 125 members of the Regiment formally volunteered for service in a mounted force to fight in South Africa against the Boers. Amongst the signatures appearing on the undertaking to serve was one Harry Harboard Morant (The Breaker).

On Australia Day 1900, then referred to as Foundation Day, the Regiment sailed from Ocean Steamers Wharf in the troopship 'Surrey'.

The South Australian Mounted Rifles had come of age and would serve with distinction in South Africa.



**A Squadron 3rd/9th South Australian Mounted Rifles**



## Nec Aspera Terrent

3/9 SAMR's regimental badge includes the motto 'Nec Aspera Terrent'. The literal translation from the Latin is 'nor do calamities deter'. This motto was handed down from the 3rd Light Horse to the 3rd Reconnaissance Regiment, which, within one year, became 3/9 SAMR.

The origin of this motto stems from the practice, early this century, of linking regiments and corps in commonwealth countries with similar British units. These alliances were formally recognised in the Army Lists of the countries concerned.

Australian Army Order 610/1925 was the official authority for an alliance between Britain's 3rd Hussars and Australia's 3rd Light Horse, which both bear the motto 'Nec Aspera Terrent' on their badges. In 1930, the Monthly Army List of Great Britain recognised this alliance.

This motto is also worn by other British regiments, not only cavalry, including the Royal Fusiliers and the Prince of Wales Own Regiment of Yorkshire.

Nec Aspera Terrent was introduced to England in 1714 by the new King George I who came from the ruling family of the Kingdom of Hanover in Germany. To those regiments selected to protect him, he issued a warrant instructing them to wear the Arms, Crest, device or livery of his choice. His choice was the badge of the House of Hanover, including the motto 'NEC ASPERA TERRENT'.

## 3/9 SAMR Museum

Rowell Building, the home of the 3rd/9th South Australian Mounted Rifles, now houses the finest collection of historical military memorabilia in South Australia.

Soon after the Unit's move from Unley to Smithfield, a decision was made to take advantage of the new accommodation, and establish and display a collection of the many historical items which the Unit holds.

In 1989 the Army Historical Committee formally approved the 'South Australian Mounted Rifles Historical Collection Inc.' This approval vindicates the excellent work by regular and reserve members of the unit to establish and present such a fine collection of equipment, uniforms, photographs and historical records of South Australian cavalry and its armoured successors.

Present and past unit members are invited to donate any suitable material they may have in their possession.

Donations of suitable historical items from the general public are always welcome.



**A Squadron 3rd/9th South Australian Mounted Rifles**

## OC's ADDRESS

MAJOR M.R. BURZACOTT

On behalf of 'A' Squadron Third Ninth South Australian Mounted Rifles I would like to welcome everyone to our One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations.

Those of us on parade today are both proud and privileged to be carrying on a South Australian tradition which began one hundred and fifty years ago. Yesterday we mounted a Lance Piquet, troopers with lances guarding the entrance to Government House, a re-enactment of one of the original Squadron's duties.

It is our Light Horse heritage for which we will be best remembered.

While our famous Waler horses have given way to M113 Light Armoured Fighting Vehicles we remain "mounted" and we are still a voluntary force. As members of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps (RAAC), our modern role as an Independent Armoured Personnel Carrier Squadron (APC) is to provide the APC lift capacity for South Australia's 9 Brigade.

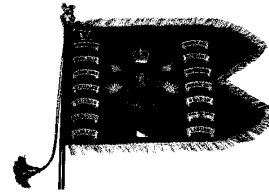
Today we will link our past with the present by parading both horse and vehicle. The horsemen are from our affiliate, the South Australian Light Horse Association.

Of importance to all of us will be the parading of the Guidons of the Third and the Ninth Australian Light Horse Regiments. The Guidons are emblazoned with Battle Honours. Place names like South Africa, Gallipoli, Palestine and the South West Pacific Area are synonymous with Australian history. They are places where South Australian cavalrymen fought and where some of them paid the supreme sacrifice. We owe much to them for their loyalty and courage. Their dedication remains an inspiration for all of us today.

At the end of the parade, the 'Old and Bold', members of our affiliated organisations including; the 9th Armoured Regimental Group Association, the 9 Divisional Cavalry Regiment Association, the 3rd/9th South Australian Mounted Rifles Association, the RAAC Vietnam Veterans Association and the South Australian Light Horse Association will march past. Our cadets, the 49 Regional Cadet Unit (RCU) (Gawler) will also march past.

These groups are important to the life of the Squadron, we retain a healthy social and historical association with them and they support us with manpower and fund raising assistance for our extra regimental activities.

At the completion of the parade I invite you to participate in the programme organised for the afternoon.



## GUIDONS

Since earliest times banners have been carried into battle. They served as rallying points and as a means of identification. Standards and guidons have evolved from these banners. Guidon is a corruption of the French "Guide Homme" which means guide man.

The standard was a square banner and in early times was carried by a "banneret" and usually represented a baron and his force. The baron's knights carried guidons, (a standard ending in a tail or point); each guidon having its own distinguishing colours and signs.

Standards or guidons were carried into battle by all cavalry regiments until 1834 - the increasing accuracy and range of musketry making it a wise move not to pinpoint the leaders!

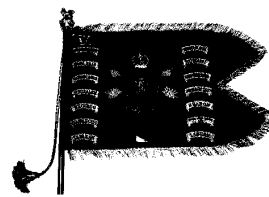
The custom grew to emblazon on the guidons and standards the battle honours won by the knights and barons, and after 1834 these honours were then carried on the drum banners or the drums themselves.

Regiments of cavalry authorized to carry guidons on conversion to a mechanized formation retain their guidons and carry them on ceremonial parades, whether mounted or dismounted.

On dismounted parades the guidon is carried by the senior squadron sergeant major, with an escort of two senior NCO's. On mounted parades, the guidon is carried in a vehicle with an escort of two vehicles echeloned in rear.

Lieutenant-General Sir H.G. Chauvel, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., (then Chief of the General Staff), presented guidons to the 3rd and 9th Light Horse Regiments at the 6th Cavalry Brigade Camp, Gawler on the 25th March, 1928. At this parade guidons were also presented to the 18th Light Horse Regiment and the 23rd Light Horse Regiment. All four of these guidons have since been laid up in St. Peter's Cathedral.

The present guidons of the Regiment were presented by Lieutenant-General Sir Sydney F. Rowell, K.B.E., C.B., on the 7th February, 1960 and are displayed in the Officers mess at Smithfield.



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# Beersheba



Beersheba was a town built around a well in the Sinai Desert at the foot of the Judean Hills.

**THE** enemy was Turkey, Imperial Germany's Eastern ally. They held the line, Gaza-Beersheba.

**LTGEN.** Sir Harry Chauvel commanded the Desert Mounted Corps.

**CHAUVEL'S** orders were to capture the town and the all important wells. The mission was to be executed on the first day of the battle. He had two divisions, each of three brigades. The ANZAC Mounted Division (ANZAC's) included the 1st and 2nd Australian Lighthorse Brigades and the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade. The Australian Mounted Division included the 3rd and 4th Australian Light Horse Brigades and the 5th (British) Yeomanry Brigade. In support were the Light Batteries of the Royal Horse Artillery.

**THE** Battle of Beersheba was preceded by a night ride from wells at Asluj and Khalasa 20 kilometres to the south in the Sinai, to positions South and South-East of the town. At Asluj and Khalasa the men of the Desert Mounted Corps watered; they carried three days' rations. Despite great loads, the horses were touched with excitement. Smoking was forbidden and talking subdued. The bare hills of Sinai sounded with the beat of thousands of shod horses. They rode 30 kilometres through the night.

**301800:** Asluj and Khalasa were cleared. **310555:** 100 British guns opened in support of the preliminary operation.

**0700:** The Desert Mounted Corps halted, and patrols were pushed forward. Beersheba with its mosque was clearly in view; it offered no prize in rations or quarters, but something more coveted were the ancient wells to water those parched men and their Waler mounts.

**0830:** The British rushed forward and captured their objectives to the South-West and brought forward their guns.

**0930:** The 2nd Brigade advanced through a Bedouin camp, and thundered to the Hebron Road Sakati without slackening. Turkish batteries fired, but formation and ground gave protection.

**1000:** The 3rd Australian Light Horse Regiment was ordered to attack from the South-East. A spirited gallop under heavy fire brought the 3rd to within 1500 metres of the enemy. They dismounted. The ANZAC's were severely punished but they continued their advance.

**1300:** The 2nd Australian Light Horse Regiment was ordered to support the 3rd. They advanced at the gallop, dismounted and placed the enemy under heavy fire.

**1430:** With the day on the wane, it was now, neck or nothing; the time had come to commit the reserve.

Chauvel issued decisive orders for the occupation of Beersheba. Brig. Grant of the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade and Fitzgerald of the Yeomanry were at Headquarters; they pleaded for the honour of the charge. "Put Grant straight at it" was Chauvel's terse order.

**1500:** The New Zealanders rose and dashed up the slopes with the bayonet. The 3rd continued, but the Aucklanders were first in. Some Turks surrendered; others fled into the town. The 2nd and 3rd gave chase then fought off a counter-attack. At last the ANZAC's had secured the Hebron Road and Tel El Saba. Chauvel had not expected to lose as much time. He had already detached the 9th and 10th Regiments from the Australian Mounted Division in support of the ANZAC's.

**1630:** The 4th and 12th Australian Light Horse Regiments drew up behind a ridge. From the crest, Beersheba was in full view. The course lay down a long, slight slope which was bare of cover. Between them and the town lay the enemy defences. The 4th was on the right; the 12th was on the left. They rode with bayonets in hand. Each drew up on a squadron frontage. Every man knew that only a wild, desperate charge could seize Beersheba before dark. They moved off at the trot, deploying at once into artillery formation, with 5 metres between horsemen. Almost at once the pace quickened to a gallop. Once direction was given, the lead squadrons pressed forward. The 11th Australian Light Horse Regiment and the Yeomanry followed at the trot in reserve. The Turks opened fire with shrapnel. Machine guns fired against the lead squadrons. The Royal Horse Artillery got their range and soon had them out of action. The Turkish riflemen fired, horses were hit, but the charge was not checked. The Lighthorsemen drove in their spurs; they rode for victory and they rode for Australia. The bewildered enemy failed to adjust their sights and soon their fire was passing harmlessly overhead. The 4th took the trenches; the enemy soon surrendered. The 12th rode through a gap and on into the town. There was a bitter fight. Some enemy surrendered; others fled and were pursued into the Judean Hills. In less than an hour it was over; the enemy was finally beaten.

The Desert Mounted Corps watered that night at the wells of the patriarchs. For days, the charge was the talk of the camps and the messes. The Australian Light Horse had galloped into history.

South Australians can be proud of the contribution of the 3rd and the 9th in the Battle of Beersheba. "A" Squadron 3rd/9th South Australian Mounted Rifles began as the Reedbeds Cavalry and is privileged to have inherited the honours, the history and the tradition of the Australian Light Horse.



## A Squadron 3rd/9th South Australian Mounted Rifles

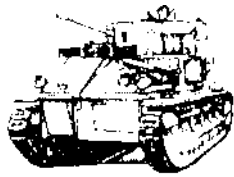
# AFFILIATIONS

5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards  
The Queens Own Hussar  
9th Light Horse Association  
9 Div Cav Association  
2/9 Armoured Group Regimental Association

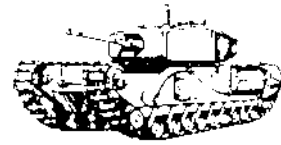
RAAC Vietnam Veterans Association  
South Australian Mounted Rifles Association  
49 Regional Cadet Unit (Gawler)  
411 Regional Cadet Unit (Burra)

## ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLES USED IN AUSTRALIA

BRITISH  
Medium Tank  
Vickers Mark II



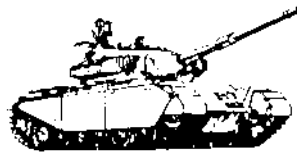
BRITISH  
Medium tank  
(Churchill)



BRITISH  
Vickers Light Tank  
Mark VIA



BRITISH  
Medium Tank  
(Centurion)



USA  
M3 Light Tank  
(General Stuart)



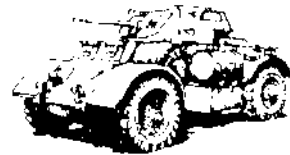
BRITISH  
Scout Car  
(Ferret)



USA  
M3 Medium Tank  
(General Grant  
and General Lee)



USA  
Armoured Car  
(Staghound)



BRITISH  
Infantry Tank  
Mark 2 (Matilda)



BRITISH  
Armoured Car  
(Saladin)



AUSTRALIA  
Cruiser Tank No. 1  
(Sentinel)



USA  
Armoured  
Personnel Carrier  
(M113)



A Squadron 3rd/9th South Australian Mounted Rifles

# THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MOUNTED RIFLES

COL. C.J.H. Hill, RFD, ED; (Hon. Col.)

In the one hundred and fifty years since the first Squadron was raised much has been achieved by the Regiment in both peace and war.

While there have been times when political or financial constraints have caused the Regiment to be temporarily disbanded it has been reformed to meet new roles. While it cannot, therefore, claim to be a hundred and fifty years old, today's celebration is the 150th anniversary of the forming of the first Squadron.

During the Boer War the Regiment served in South Africa with distinction. The South Australian Light Horsemen were mainly country bred. They had grown up with horses and had learnt to shoot at an early age. They were used to living in the bush and caring for their horses in rough terrain. The Boers learnt to respect them, the colonial troops having similar qualities of endurance and determination.

At the start of World War I most of the Officers and senior NCO's were veterans of the South African campaigns. They landed in Egypt on 14th May, 1915 with their horses as preparations were being made for the landings in the Dardanelles. Both the 3rd and the 9th Light Horse volunteered to serve as infantry at Anzac. Their horses were to be left in good care in Egypt.

At Anzac Cove both Regiments suffered heavy casualties in the fierce fighting. The 9th Light Horse lost two Commanding Officers in the first fortnight - Col. Miell and Lt. Col. Reynell. Not only were the troops under constant heavy fire but the heat, lack of water and fresh rations caused disease and dysentery. However, the survivors had learnt to make best use of cover and their shooting skills had developed to marksmanship.

When the decision was made to abandon the Dardanelles the Light Horsemen returned

to Egypt and to their delight were reunited with their horses. After a period of training and recovering from the hardships of Anzac the 3rd and 9th Light Horse joined the big British push to clear the Turks from Sinai and Palestine.

The success of this campaign and the contribution that the Australian Light Horse made to its success are now legendary. It did have a sad ending however. The horses that served so well were not allowed to return to Australia for quarantine reasons.

In World War II armoured vehicles replaced horses. The 9th Australian Armoured Regiment was raised in August 1941 and formed part of the 1st Australian Armoured Division. It did not embark until March 1945, by which time it had been training for three and a half years. While this long period had its frustrations for the troops it resulted in a highly trained armoured regiment. The 9th AAR made landings at Tarakan, Labuan Island and Brunei and proved the use of tanks for infantry support in the jungle.

Since the war the 9th AAR has formed a strong regimental association and many of its members are here today. The comradeship of this Association is unique and reflects their long time together.

In 1948 the South Australian Mounted Rifles was reformed. Although it has not been called on to mobilise, individual members of the Regiment served with other units in Korea and the Malaysian crisis. Many of the younger members were called up for National Service and served in Vietnam. Others volunteered for a tour of service and most of the senior Officers volunteered for Observer Tours of Vietnam.

Today, let us watch the march past with pride in SAMR's present and past associations and our best wishes for its future.



**A Squadron 3rd/9th South Australian Mounted Rifles**