

# More Majorum

**2023 ISSUE 3**



**Something from your Collection**

**Ferguson rifle**

**Footnote in History ;  
Battle of Jezzine**

**Nos. 8 and No. 9  
hand grenades**

**James Hannah  
Gordon; VC**

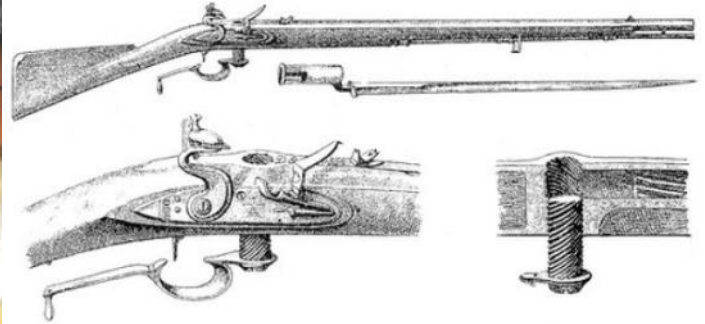
**2/30th Battalion**

**USCGC Cobb  
(WPG-181)**

**M56 Scorpion**

**Walther P38**

**6.5x53Rmm Ammo**



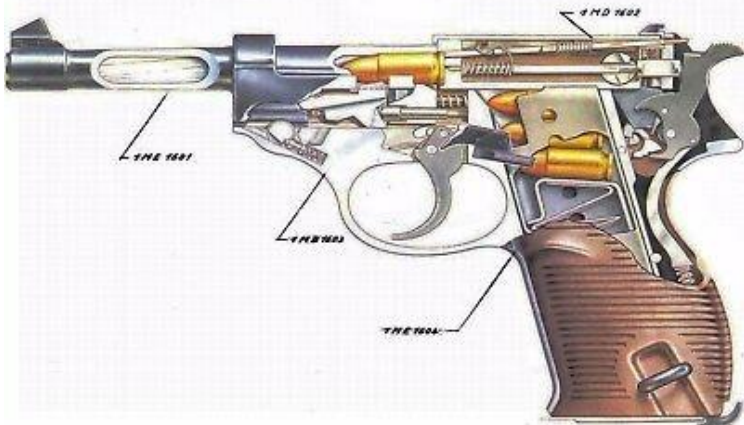
**Left & Above  
Ferguson rifle**



**To the right is  
Nos. 8 & 9 hand  
grenade**

**Bottom Right and to the  
Right mid-page M56 Scorpion  
on the gunnery range, and in  
action in Vietnam.**

**Bottom Left & Below is a  
P38K and P38 drawing**



# Guild Business

## N.V.A.C.G. Committee 2023/24

### EXECUTIVE

**President / Treasurer:** John Mc

**Vice Pres / Safety Officer:** John M.

**Secretary:** Carl W.

**M/ship Sec / Expo Co-Ordinator:** Graham R.

**Newsletter:** Brett M.

**Sgt. at Arms:** Simon B.

### GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John H.

Scott J.

Sol S.

Peter R.

Rod D.

Ned M.



## Achtung !!

From the Secretary's desk



### Purchasing of Equipment

The past 3 months we have update some of our equipment for the Collectors Guild. We have purchased a New Name Badge Machine, Guild Trailer and a Plastic Card Machine. The trailer will be used to store all the equipment for the Militaria Expos and be stored in our container. This will allow us to do one trip and bring all items required for our annual expo. The badge machine will allow us to do our own name badges, as well as dealer badge for the expo. The plastic card machine will mean that when you renew you membership, you will get a plastic card instead of a cardboard one.

### Annual Swap Meet

Our annual Swap meet will be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2023 on the SSAA Club Rooms at Pine Lodge. This year I have mailed out over 150 invitations to our guild members, and will also be getting a reminder email this week. The event is from 10am to 2pm. Hoping to see as many members as possible. It is FREE with BBQ lunch.

### 2024 Militaria and Collectables Expo

Work as already begun and preparing for next year's Militaria Expo which will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024. Graham Rogers our Expo-Co-Ordinator has done the artwork for the brochures and signage. Tables can NOW be booked, with forms available from our website. The show will be at the MacIntosh Centre. Last year was a scramble with a late change of venue due to forces outside our control. Even so was one of the most successful. This year will be able to iron out the bugs to make it even better.



## CATEGORY A/B & H FIREARMS LICENCE TESTING

Firearm safety coarse & license testing conducted by Victoria  
Police authorized safety instructors, available to any N.V.A.C.G. member.  
Contact Graham Rogers 0417 137 232 or Alan Nichols 0408 142 733



### SNIDERS WANTED

Hi all. Several members are looking for a .577 Snider in good working order with good barrel. Most are after Mk 3's, but if a good Mk 2 is available that will be good also. Order of preference is: Military carbines, two band short rifles, three band long rifles, then sporting Sniders.

Please contact John H. on 03 58213192 or email

[jobah450.577@bigpond.com](mailto:jobah450.577@bigpond.com)

Or John M. on 0427 303 357 or

Brett M. at [bnmaag@gmail.com](mailto:bnmaag@gmail.com)

### LOOKING TO BUY

Several items namely:

(A). .577/450 Martini Henry rifle Yataghan Bayonet and Scabbard in very good order.

(B). .577/450 Martini Henry rifle Cutlass Bayonet and Scabbard in very good order.

(C). .577/450 Martini Henry rifle Elcho Bayonet and Scabbard in very good order.

If you can help with any or all of these Bayonets contact John Harrington on 03 58213192 or email

[jobah450.577@bigpond.com](mailto:jobah450.577@bigpond.com)



<b>Produced</b>	<b>Walther P38 1939–1945</b> <b>Pistole P1 1957–2000</b>
<b>No. built</b>	<b>c. 1,000,000</b>
<b>Variants</b>	<b>HP, P1, P38K, P38 SD, P4</b>
<b>Mass</b>	<b>960 g (34 oz) (empty)</b>
<b>Length</b>	<b>216 mm (8.5 in)</b>
<b>Barrel length</b>	<b>125 mm (4.9 in)</b>
<b>Cartridge</b>	<b>9×19mm Parabellum</b>
<b>Caliber</b>	<b>0.355 inches (9.0 mm)</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>Short recoil, hinged locking piece assisted breechblock</b>
<b>Muzzle velocity</b>	<b>1,050 ft/s (320 m/s)</b>
<b>Effective firing range</b>	<b>Sights set for 50 metres (55 yd)</b>
<b>Feed system</b>	<b>8-round magazine</b>
<b>Sights</b>	<b>Rear notch and front blade post</b>

autopistols which eject empty cases to the right, the Walther P38 ejects empty cases to the left. Two recoil springs on either side of the frame and below the slide, having been compressed by the slide's rearward movement, drive the slide forward, stripping a new round from the magazine, driving it into the breech and re-engaging the barrel; ending its return travel with a fresh round chambered, hammer cocked and ready to repeat the process. The hinged locking piece assisted breechblock design provides good accuracy due to the in-line travel of the barrel and slide. Initial production P38 pistols were fitted with walnut grips, but these were later supplanted by Bakelite grips. Sheet metal grips were used for a time on pistols produced in France after the war, being called "Gray Ghosts" by collectors on the account of their distinctive parkerizing and sheet metal grips. Post war P1 grips were made of black colored plastic.

**Variants;** The Walther P.38 was in production from 1939 to 1945. Initial development of the pistol took place 1937-1939, culminating in the first model, designated Model HP or Heerespistole ("army pistol"), which had several variants as engineering changes were made. Early production included a Swedish contract. The designation P.38 indicates Wehrmacht adoption in 1938, although the exact date is unknown. The transition from HP to the mechanically-identical P.38-marked pistols took place 1939-1940. Sweden bought the P38 in 1939.

**Walther P38** is a 9 mm semi-automatic pistol that was developed by Carl Walther GmbH as the service pistol of the Wehrmacht at the beginning of World War II. It was intended to replace the costly Luger P08, the production of which was scheduled to end in 1942.

**Development;** The first designs submitted to the German Army featured a locked breech and a hidden hammer, but the *Heer* (German Army) requested that it be redesigned with an external hammer. The P38 concept was accepted by the German military in 1938 but production of prototype ("Test") pistols did not begin until late 1939. Walther began manufacture at their plant in Zella-Mehlis and produced three series of "Test" pistols, designated by a "0" prefix to the serial number. The third series pistols satisfactorily solved the previous problems for the *Heer* and mass production began in mid-1940, using Walther's military production identification code "480". Several experimental versions were later created in .45 ACP, and .38 Super, but these were never mass-produced. In addition to the 9×19mm Parabellum version, some 7.65×21mm Parabellum and some .22 Long Rifle versions were also manufactured and sold.

**Design details;** The P.38 was a cutting edge semi-automatic pistol design, which introduced technical features still used today in current commercial and military semi-automatic pistols, including the Beretta 92FS and its M9 sub-variant adopted by the United States military. The P38 was the first locked-breech pistol to use a double-action/single-action (DA/SA) trigger (the earlier double-action PPK was an unlocked blowback design, but the more powerful 9×19mm Parabellum round used in the P38 mandated a locked breech design). The shooter could chamber a round, use the safety-decocking lever to safely lower the hammer without firing the round, and carry the weapon with a round chambered. The lever can stay on "safe", or if returned to "fire", the weapon remains safely "ready" with a long, double-action trigger pull for the first shot. Pulling the trigger cocks the hammer before firing the first shot with double-action operation. The firing mechanism extracts and ejects the first spent round, cocks the hammer, and chambers a fresh round for single-action operation with each subsequent shot – all features found in many modern day handguns. Besides a DA/SA trigger design similar to that of the earlier Walther PPKs the P38 features a visible and tactile loaded chamber indicator in the form of a metal rod that protrudes from the rear of the slide when a round is chambered. The moving-barrel mechanism is actuated by a wedge-shaped hinged locking piece underneath the breech. When the pistol is fired, the barrel and slide recoil together, until the hinged locking piece drives down, disengaging the slide and arresting further rearward movement of the barrel. The slide continues its rearward movement on the frame, ejecting the spent case and cocking the hammer before reaching the end of travel. Unlike most



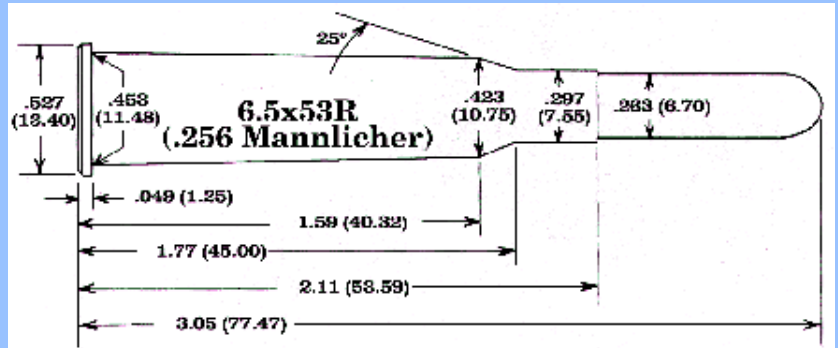


During WWII, the P.38 was produced by three separate manufacturers: Walther, Mauser, and Spreewerk. To conceal manufacturer identities, each wartime manufacturer used a letter code: ac (Walther); byf (Mauser), and cyq (Spreewerk), followed by the date (e.g.: ac44: Walther 1944 production). Spreewerk did not mark production dates. Pistols were produced in blocks of 10,000 consecutively numbered pistols, with each block having a consecutive letter suffix, to conceal production volume. 1,277,680 P.38s were produced during WWII: 617,585 by Walther in Zella-Mehlis; 372,875 by Mauser in Oberndorf; 287,220 by Spreewerk Grottau. Late in the war, the Spreewerk cyq die broke. Subsequent pistols appear to be marked "cvq" due to the broken die. About 31,400 pistols are so marked. Spreewerk production ended April 1945.

After the war from 1945-1946, several thousands of pistols were assembled for the French armed forces (frequently dubbed "grey ghosts" because of parkerized finish and grey sheet metal grips). Only after 1957 was the P38 again produced for the German military. Slowly over time, West Germany desired to rebuild its military so that it could shoulder some of the burden for its own defense. Walther retooled for new P38 production since no military firearms production had occurred in West Germany since the end of the war, knowing that the military would again seek Walther firearms. When the *Bundeswehr* announced it wanted the P38 for its official service pistol, Walther readily resumed P38 production within just two years, using wartime pistols as models and new engineering drawings and machine tools. The first of the new P38s were delivered to the West German military in June 1957, some 17 years and two months after the pistol had initially seen action in World War II, and from 1957 to 1963 the P38 was again the standard sidearm. In late 1963 the postwar military model P1 was adopted for use by the German military, identifiable by the P1 stamping on the slide. The postwar pistols, whether marked as P38 or P1, have an aluminum frame rather than the steel frame of the original design. Starting in June 1975, the aluminum frame was reinforced with a hex bolt above the trigger guard, and a slightly modified, stronger slide design was introduced. An improved version of the P38, the Walther P4, was developed in the late 1970s and was adopted by the police forces of South Africa, Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg



## 6.5x53Rmm Mannlicher (Dutch & Romanian)



This is an earlier rimmed version of the 6.5x54mm Greek cartridge. It was designed by Mannlicher and used in the bolt-action Dutch Models 1892 and 1895 and Romanian Models 1892 and 1893. The cartridge was dropped by both countries after World War II. General Comments: This cartridge delivers ballistics practically identical to the regular 6.5x54mm Mannlicher-Schoenauer known for many years in the United States and, at one time, loaded by most cartridge companies. The rimmed version is used in a few single-shot and combination European sporting rifles. Commercial hunting ammunition for rifles so chambered was once loaded in both England and Europe. This cartridge was introduced in the United States after World War II, when quantities of the Dutch and Romanian military rifles and carbines were sold in surplus stores. Only imported sporting ammunition is available, but some dealers have furnished hunting loads based on the military round with the bullet replaced. Rifles in this chambering are suitable for deer, antelope, black bear, and the like. The British listed this cartridge as the .256 Mannlicher, and many bolt-action rifles were turned out for it by Jeffery and others. It has been popular in parts of Africa. No commercial manufacturer currently offers this ammunition. Brass can be made from .303 British cases.

On the left is a 303 case and to its Right is 6.5x53R case made from a 303 case.

SHEPPARTON — ANNUAL

# MILTARIA & COLLECTABLES

## EXPO 2024



Sat. 9.00 am to 5.00 pm - Sun 9.00 am to 3.30 pm

**MCINTOSH CENTRE SHEPPARTON  
MARCH 2ND & 3RD**

**Something from your Collection** With each newsletter we would like to feature something special from a members collection, it doesn't have to be valuable or rare, just something you don't see every day. Members who would like to have an item featured can contact Brett Maag or Graham Rogers. If you can supply a digital photo and a short spiel it would be good if not, bring it along to a meeting and we will photograph it there and take notes.

### **RANDALL MADE KNIVES**

From member Graham R. collection a matched pair of Randall Made knives.

Consisting of:

A 6 inch blade Model 3 Hunter with Australian ringed gidgee handle and a 6 inch blade Model 4 Skinner with Australian mallee burl Handle.

Graham posted the wood to the USA and waited several years for the knives to be made.



**Ferguson rifle** was one of the first breech-loading rifles to be put into service by the British military. It fired a standard British carbine ball of .615" calibre and was used by the British Army in the American Revolutionary War at the Battle of Brandywine in 1777, and possibly at the Siege of Charleston in 1780.



<b>In service</b>	<b>British Army 1776</b>
<b>Wars</b>	<b>American Revolutionary War</b>
<b>Designer</b>	<b>Maj. Patrick Ferguson</b>
<b>No. built</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Mass</b>	<b>7.5 lbs (3.5 kg)</b>
<b>Length</b>	<b>various: 48 to 60 in</b>
<b>Barrel length</b>	<b>49 in</b>
<b>Cartridge</b>	<b>.615 in</b>
<b>Caliber</b>	<b>.650 in</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>See Text</b>
<b>Rate of fire</b>	<b>6-8 rounds per minute</b>
<b>Muzzle velocity</b>	<b>Variable</b>
<b>Effective firing range</b>	<b>200 and 300 yard sights on the Ordnance Rifle</b>
<b>Feed system</b>	<b>Breech-loaded</b>

Its superior firepower was unappreciated at the time because it was too expensive and took longer to produce – the four gunsmiths making Ferguson's Ordnance Rifle could not make 100 in 6 months at four times the cost per arm of a musket.

The breech of the weapon is closed by 11 starting threads on a tapered screw, and the trigger guard serves as the crank to rotate it. One complete turn dropped the screw low enough to drop a round ball into the exposed breech followed by a slight overcharge of powder, which was then sheared to the proper charge by the screw as it closed the breech. Since the weapon was loaded from the breech, rather than from the muzzle, it had an amazingly high rate of fire for its day, and in capable hands, it fired six to ten rounds per minute. To prove the potency of his invention, Patrick Ferguson conducted a series of tests in which he, with a high degree of accuracy, fired 6 shots per minute at a target 200 yards distant from a stationary position, and 4 shots per minute while advancing at a marching pace. He then wet the inside of the barrel, waited another minute, and then fired the weapon again, to prove its reliability regardless of weather conditions. The action was adapted from the earlier 1720 Isaac de la Chaumette design by Major Patrick Ferguson (1744–1780), who redesigned it around 1770. He received an English patent in December of 1776 (number 1139) on details of the design. Roughly one hundred of the Ordnance rifles were manufactured by four British gun firms, Durs Egg being the most notable, and issued to Ferguson's unit when its members were drawn from numerous light infantry units in General Howe's army. The largest battle in which the rifles were used was the Battle of Brandywine, in which Ferguson was wounded. While he recuperated, his Experimental Rifle Corps was subsequently disbanded. This was in no way due to "excessive losses" or any political machinations; the unit was an experiment, and the men were always slated to return to their original units.



Ferguson's men went back to the light infantry units they had originally come from, and his rifles were eventually replaced with the standard Long Land Pattern musket. Some historians report the surviving rifles were apparently put in storage in New York. But as most surviving Ferguson Ordnance Rifles known to exist in the U.S. today were war booty taken North during the American Civil War, the usage of these weapons remain in dispute as to any possible deployment of Ferguson rifles in the Southern theater of the American Revolutionary War.

The two main reasons that Ferguson rifles were not used by the rest of the army:

- The gun was difficult and expensive to produce using the small, decentralized gunsmith and subcontractor system in use to supply the Ordnance in early Industrial Revolution Britain.
- The guns broke down easily in combat, especially in the wood of the stock around the lock mortise. The lock mechanism and breech were larger than the stock could withstand with rough use. All surviving military Fergusons feature a horseshoe-shaped iron repair under the lock to hold the stock together where it repeatedly broke around the weak, over-drilled out mortise.

However, despite an unsubstantiated claim that one of the actions was found at the battle site of Kings Mountain, North Carolina, where Ferguson was killed in action, the only piece of a Ferguson ever found in America from a gun used in action is a trigger guard found in excavations of a British army camp in New York City. The only association the Ferguson rifle has with the Battle of Kings Mountain is that Patrick Ferguson was there.





**double cylinder, Nos. 8 and No. 9** hand grenades, also known as the "jam tins", are a type of improvised explosive device used by the British and Commonwealth forces, notably the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) in World War I. The jam tin, or bully beef tin, was one of many grenades designed by ANZACs in the early part of the First World War in response to a lack of equipment suited to trench warfare.

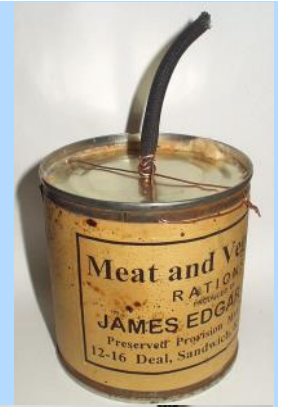
The grenade was an inner can of explosive with an outer can of metal fragments or ball bearings. The heavier pattern No. 9 grenade contained more high explosive and more metal fragments.

The fuse was ignited by a friction device or a cigarette.

Initially when demand for grenades was at its greatest, engineers were encouraged to improvise their own grenades from the tins containing the soldier's ration of jam, hence the name. Incidents with the improvised form and the supply of superior grenades led to official withdrawal of the design.

Jam tin grenades were used as booby traps by ANZACs, by rigging it to a pressure trigger and leaving it under a body or other heavy object to keep it unarmed until it was disturbed.

During the Siege of Kut in Mesopotamia (Dec.1915– Apr.1916), the Royal Engineers in General Townshend's force improvised jam pot mortar shells to be used with equally creative mortars devised from the cylinders of a Gnome 80 hp (60 kW) rotary engine (credit to Capt. R.E. Stace, RE). (The engine came from a Martinsyde S1 scout plane, likely damaged or otherwise unable to evacuate.)



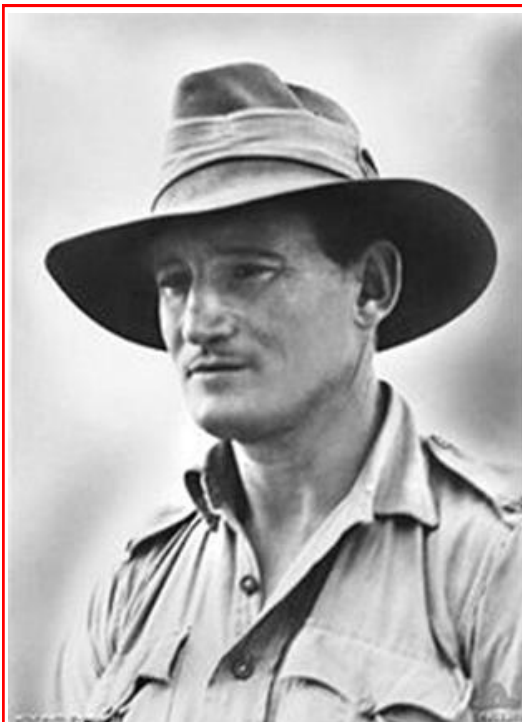
**Men of the 2/31st Digging in during the Syria-Lebanon campaign**

Brigade attacked Sidon between 13 and 15 June, as part of the drive on Damour. The day after Sidon fell, the Australians cut the road between Sidon and Jezzine.

**Footnote in History ; Battle of Jezzine** ( 13 June 1941) was part of the Australian 7th Division's advance on Beirut during the five-week-long Syria-Lebanon campaign by the Allies against Vichy French forces in Syria and Lebanon. Jezzine, Lebanon, is about halfway between the Lebanese border with Palestine and Beirut.

This battle was one of several hard-fought actions during the Australian advance on Beirut from Palestine. Australian troops from the 25th Brigade (less the 2/33rd Battalion) attacked Jezzine on 13 June 1941, following the capture of Merdjayoun, which the Allies temporarily captured on 11 June 1941, allowing the commander of the Australian 7th Division, Major General John Lavarack to switch the 25th Brigade's focus north towards Jezzine, leaving a small force to hold Merdjayoun, which was later subjected to a heavy counter-attack.

During the fighting for Jezzine, when his company suffered casualties from intense machine gun fire, Private Jim Gordon, 2/31st Battalion, took it upon himself to crawl forward and neutralise the Vichy position with rifle and bayonet. Gordon, originally from Rockingham, Western Australia, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions near Jezzine. Jezzine Barracks in Townsville, Queensland, is named after this battle. Further west, on the coast, the Australian 21st



**James Hannah Gordon**, VC (7 March 1909 – 24 July 1986) was an Australian recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. Gordon was one of 20 Australians to receive the award for their actions during World War II, receiving it for deeds he performed while fighting against the Vichy French during the Syria-Lebanon campaign. He later served against the Japanese in the New Guinea campaign and after the war became a soldier in the Australian Regular Army, serving until 1968. He died in 1986, at the age of 77.

**Military career**

On 26 April 1940, during the early stages of the Second World War, Gordon volunteered for overseas service, lying about his age to join the Australian Imperial Force; falsely giving his middle name as Heather. Shortly afterwards, he married Myrtle Troy at St Edmund's Church of England, Wembley Park, Perth, on 14 June 1940. After a period of training, Gordon was sent to the Middle East in September 1940. He was later assigned to the 2/31st Battalion, an infantry unit formed in Queensland and Victoria, which was part of the 7th Australian Division, in February 1941. In June–July 1941, the unit was engaged in the Syria-Lebanon campaign against the Vichy French. During the Battle of Jezzine, on 10 July 1941, Gordon's company was "...held up by intense machine-gun and grenade fire from Vichy French forces, but on his own initiative, he crept forward alone and succeeded in getting close to the machine-gun post.

He then charged it and killed the four machine-gunners with his bayonet. His action demoralised the enemy in this sector and the company advanced and took the position." He was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross for this action.

On 12 July 1942, a plaque in his honour was unveiled in front of the Gingin Post Office; it was later moved to the town's war memorial. Later that year a portrait of Jim Gordon painted in 1941 by artist William Dargie won the 1942 Archibald Prize, Australia's most famous portrait prize.

Gordon returned to Australia in March 1942 with the rank of corporal. Due to malaria he did not rejoin the 2/31st Battalion in Papua until November 1942. In July 1943, he was promoted to the rank of sergeant. After seeing further action during the capture of Lae and the subsequent advance through the Markham and Ramu Valleys in New Guinea, he returned to Australia in January 1944. He was hospitalised due to malaria again, and was later reassigned to administrative duties. He remained in the Army until 17 February 1947. After discharge, Gordon briefly worked for the state electricity commission, before rejoining the army as a regular soldier on 2 December 1947, achieving the rank of Warrant Officer Class II in 1950. He continued service until 1 August 1968 when he retired; after this, he was employed at Campbell Barracks (Western Australia), Swanbourne, as a groundsman until 1975.



**USCGC Cobb (WPG-181)** was a United States Coast Guard cutter commissioned during World War II. A conversion of the 1906 coastal steamboat SS Governor Cobb, USCGC Cobb in the hands of the Coast Guard became the first US helicopter carrier.

**Background;** The U.S. government became interested in the potential of the helicopter during the 1930s. In 1938, the government allocated two million dollars toward development of the machine, and an inter-agency board—which included a representative from the U.S. Coast Guard, Commander William J. Kossler—was established to oversee the program. Kossler had difficulty persuading the U.S. Navy of the utility of the helicopter and eventually enlisted the aid of Executive Officer Lieutenant Commander Frank Erickson of Coast Guard Air Station Brooklyn.

Erickson, who had helplessly watched sailors burn to death in oil slicks with no hope of rescue during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, immediately saw the utility of the helicopter in a search-and-rescue role. However, as the Navy showed little interest at this time in development of improved search-and-rescue methods, Erickson promoted the helicopter's usefulness as an anti-submarine warfare (ASW) weapon instead. This proposal met with the approval of the Navy, and on 19 February 1943, the Coast Guard was formally assigned the task of developing the helicopter for the ASW role.

**Acquisition and refit;** As part of its ASW program, the Coast Guard began experimenting with ship-based helicopter operations. Initially, a series of flights was conducted from the deck of a ship at anchor, *Bunker Hill*. When these trials proved successful, the Coast Guard moved to open sea trials.

For the sea trials, the Coast Guard acquired an ageing passenger steamer, *SS Governor Cobb*, from the War Shipping Administration. The Coast Guard carried out major modifications to the ship, including removal of much of the ship's superstructure for the installation of a 38 × 63 foot flight deck for the use of helicopters, plus the addition of armor and weaponry. Following these modifications, the ship was commissioned on 20 July 1943 as **USCGC Cobb (WPG-181)**—the first US helicopter carrier.

**Service history;** In January 1944, the ship was ordered to Groton, Connecticut for sound and radar training. In April, the ship was assigned to New York City to train for helicopter landings on board its flight deck. The first such landing occurred on 15 June. On 29 July 1944, the first take-off took place in Long Island Sound from *Cobb*' flight deck.

With the threat from submarines greatly diminished by early 1945, the Coast Guard turned its attention to development of the helicopter in the search-and-rescue role. USCGC *Cobb* also played a role in this program when helicopters from its flight deck performed some of the earliest air-sea rescues.

In spite of her historic achievements, USCGC *Cobb* proved an unsatisfactory acquisition. Originally America's first turbine-powered steamship, the aging 37-year-old vessel proved a liability to the Coast Guard with her excessive maintenance costs. During the first 115 days of the ship's service, *Cobb* was absent from the repair yard for a total of only nine days. Thereafter she managed operational duties an average of only one week out of four.

USCGC *Cobb* was decommissioned by the Coast Guard on 31 January 1946. She was sold on 6 March 1947, and scrapped a short time later.



**2/30th Battalion** was an infantry battalion of the Australian Army that served during World War II. Raised in late 1940 as part of the all volunteer Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF), the battalion formed part of the 27th Brigade, which was assigned to the 8th Division. In mid-1941, the battalion was deployed to Malaya, as the garrison there was increased amidst rising tensions in the Pacific. In early 1942, it fought against the Japanese during the Malayan Campaign and the Battle of Singapore, where it was captured in February 1942. Many of the 2/30th's personnel died in captivity before the war ended in August 1945.

**Formation and training;** Formed on 22 November 1940 at Tamworth, New South Wales, the battalion was part of the 27th Brigade, which was initially raised as part of the 9th Division, before being transferred to the 8th Division. A unit of the all-volunteer Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF), the battalion drew its personnel from training and Militia battalions manned by volunteers from the state of New South Wales, recruiting mainly from Sydney and several regional areas including Wagga Wagga, Goulburn and Dubbo. Most of the battalion's initial intake of officers were drawn from local Militia infantry battalions, although some were commissioned from the ranks. The colours chosen for the battalion's unit colour patch (UCP) were the same as those of the 30th Battalion, a unit which had served during World War I before being raised as a Militia formation in 1921. These colours were purple and yellow, in an upright rectangle shape, although a border of gray in an oval shape was added to the UCP to distinguish the battalion from its Militia counterpart; the oval border denoted that the battalion was an 8th Division unit.

With an authorised strength of around 900 men, like other Australian infantry battalions of the time, the battalion was formed around a nucleus of four rifle companies – designated 'A' through to 'D' – each consisting of three platoons.<sup>[6]</sup> There was also a battalion headquarters and a headquarters company that consisted of various specialist platoons and sections including signals, mortars, transport, pioneers, anti-aircraft and administration. The battalion was equipped with a variety of vehicles including Bren carriers, sedans and trucks. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Galleghan, a former Militia officer who had commanded the 17th Battalion, the battalion completed its training around Bathurst, New South Wales, after moving there in early 1941 after commencing training at Tamworth, which was focused upon preparing the battalion for warfare in the Middle East, as it was believed that the 8th Division would ultimately join the other 2nd AIF divisions in the desert.

**Malaya and Singapore;** As concerns about Japanese intentions in the Pacific grew, it was dispatched to Malaya in late July 1941 to carry out garrison duties, along with the rest of the 27th Brigade, where it joined the 22nd Brigade, which had been dispatched earlier in the year. Embarking aboard the transport *Johann Van Olden-Barneveldt* from Woolloomooloo, the battalion sailed as part of a convoy of three transports that transited through Fremantle, Western Australia, before arriving in Singapore in August 1941. Upon arrival, they established camp at Changi, remaining there until September, when the battalion moved north to Johore, establishing themselves around Batu Pahat. Further training was undertaken in Johore, including a large scale exercise around Kluang.

Following Japan's entry into the war in December 1941 and the Malayan Campaign began, the 2/30th Battalion assumed battle stations around Kluang, before moving to Jemaluang. The battalion's involvement in the campaign saw it participate in the battles at the Gemencheh Bridge during the Battle of Gemas, around Ayer Hitam during the defence of Johore and on Singapore. The fighting around the Gemencheh Bridge was their most significant action. Taking place on 14 January 1942, it was the first major action undertaken by Australian forces during the fighting in Malaya. As the Japanese streamed south towards Johore, the battalion was tasked with carrying out an ambush around a cutting on the Gemas–Tampin Road, to inflict heavy casualties before withdrawing. The ambush proved a considerable success, resulting in between 600 and 1,000 casualties for the Japanese and the destruction of several tanks and armoured vehicles. Nevertheless, the British and Commonwealth forces were steadily forced back off the Malay Peninsula and withdrew across the Causeway to Singapore Island.

After the withdrawal to Singapore, the 2/30th Battalion took up a defensive position near the Causeway, as the Australian forces were assigned to the north-west sector of the island. Within this area, the 27th Brigade adopted a position east of the Kranji River, with the 22nd on its left. When the Japanese attack came on early in the morning on 8 February, the main thrust fell on the 22nd Brigade's position and they were steadily forced back. On 10 February, the Japanese launched a second wave against the 27th Brigade's sector, and after a brief, but futile fight the 2/30th was forced to withdraw from the Causeway back towards Bukit Mandai as its flanks became exposed.

The fighting continued for another week, during which the British and Commonwealth forces were pushed back south through Bukit Timah towards the urban area on the island's south-east coast. The Australians, under the command of Major General Gordon Bennett, formed a defensive perimeter about 8 kilometres (5.0 mi) from the centre of the city, in preparation to make a stand, with the 2/30th establishing itself near the French consulate. But, on 15 February 1942, the British and Commonwealth garrison was ordered to surrender by the garrison commander, Lieutenant General Arthur Percival, and as a result, the majority of the battalion was captured and subsequently became prisoners of war, although some were able to escape and return to Australia. They remained in Japanese captivity for the next three-and-a-half years, during which over 300 members of the battalion died from disease or brutality.<sup>[2]</sup> The battalion's final commanding officer was Lieutenant Colonel George Ramsay, who took over command of the 2/30th on 9 February after Galleghan was hospitalised. While the battalion was not officially disbanded until the end of the war, it was not reformed after the Malayan campaign.

During the course of the war the 2/30th Battalion lost 433 men killed in action or died in captivity, while a further 136 were wounded. The following decorations were bestowed upon 2/30th Battalion personnel: one Distinguished Service Order, four Officers of Order of the British Empire, two Military Crosses, two Distinguished Conduct Medals, one British Empire Medal and 16 Mentions in Despatches. As of 2008, the battalion's numerical designation was perpetuated by the 2/30 Training Group, an Australian Army unit stationed in Butterworth, Malaysia, which conducts training for forces deployed as part of Rifle Company Butterworth. This unit also uses the same Unit colour patch as the 2/30th Battalion.

#### **Battle honours**

Malaya 1941–1942, Johore, Singapore Island, and Gemas.

#### **Commanding officers**

Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Gallagher 'Black Jack' Galleghan (1940–42);

#### [Unit colour patch](#)



Wars	Vietnam War Western Sahara War
No. built	325
Mass	7.1 tonnes (16,000 lb) 4.55 metres (14 ft 11 in) (excluding gun)
Length	5.84 metres (19 ft 2 in) (overall)
Width	2.57 metres (8 ft 5 in)
Height	2.05 metres (6 ft 9 in) over gun shield
Crew	4 (commander, gunner, loader and driver)
Armor	unarmored except for blast shield
Main armament	90 mm M54 Gun 29 rounds
Engine	Continental A01-403-5 gasoline engine 200 brake horsepower (150 kW)
Transmission	Allison CD-150-4, 2 ranges forward, 1 reverse
Suspension	Torsion tube over bar at wheels 1 and 4, torsion bar at wheels 2 and 3
Ground clearance	0.32 m (1 ft 1 in)
Fuel capacity	210 litres (46 imp gal; 55 US gal)
Operational range	230 kilometres (140 mi)
Maximum speed	45 kilometres per hour (28 mph)

**M56 Scorpion** is an American unarmored, airmobile self-propelled anti-tank gun, which was armed with a 90mm M54 gun with a simple blast shield, and an unprotected crew compartment.

**History;** The M56 was manufactured from 1953 to 1959 by the Cadillac Motor Car Division of General Motors for use by US airborne forces, though the vehicle was eventually used by the Spanish Navy Marines, Morocco and the Republic of Korea as well. With a crew of four (commander, gunner, loader and driver), the M56 weighed 6.4 tonnes (14,000 lb) empty and 7.7 tonnes (17,000 lb) combat-loaded. It had infrared driving lights but no Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) protection system and was not amphibious.

The M56 was a fully tracked vehicle with rubber-tired run-flat road wheels and front drive sprocket wheels. It was powered by a Continental A01-403-5 gasoline engine developing 200 brake horsepower (150 kW) at 3,000 rpm, allowing a maximum road speed of 28 miles per hour (45 km/h) and a maximum range of 140 miles (230 km). Twenty-nine rounds of main gun ammunition were carried, and only the small 5mm thick blast shield was armored.

**In service;** M-56 Scorpion of 16th Armor, US 173rd Airborne Brigade firing at Viet Cong during Operation Toledo 17 June 1966. The M56 saw combat service with U.S. forces in the Vietnam War. It was deployed with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which was the only Airborne Brigade deployed with the M56, where it was used mainly in a direct fire-support role. Its function as

an air-mobile, self-propelled, anti-tank vehicle was eventually replaced in Vietnam by the troubled but effective M551 Sheridan which had a fully armored turret. The USMC used the Ontos, which had an armored cabin and was armed with recoilless rifles, in a similar role (the running gear of the first Ontos prototype was the same as on the M56, but it was replaced for the production variant). As for foreign operators, Morocco was the only export customer which used M56 Scorpions in actual combat. M56 Scorpions were deployed against Polisario rebels during the Western Sahara War. A number were made available to South Korea but not used

#### Operators;

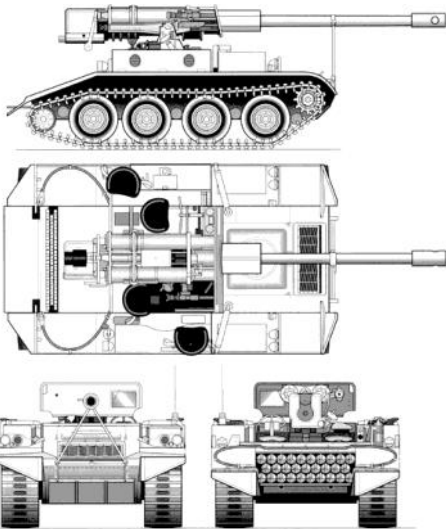
United States

Spain: 5 exported in 1965. Used by Tercio de Armada from 1966 to 1970

West Germany: 1 for evaluation in 1960

Morocco: 87 received in 1966-1967

South Korea: 60 ex-American M56 were left as surplus but never used



**Left and Right M-56 Scorpion in action with M113 with U.S. forces during the Vietnam War**



## PARTS WANTED

Westley Richards "Monkeytail" gun parts namely lock and hammer etc.

Also a complete firearm with good barrel and in good working order.

contact John Harrington on 03 58213192 or email [jobah450.577@bigpond.com](mailto:jobah450.577@bigpond.com)



## SOME OF YOU MAY NOT KNOW BUT THE N.V.A.C.G. HAS IT'S OWN WEBSITE

Here you will find all the news and details for coming guild events and information for prospective members.

<http://www.nvacg.org.au/>

You can find past & current newsletters here

<http://www.nvacg.org.au/news/>

We are also on Facebook

[@ShepartonArmsExpo](https://www.facebook.com/ShepartonArmsExpo)

