

# More Majorum

**3rd Lockdown Special 2020**

**Blast from the past** A black powder Muzzle Loading shot gun shoot was held at Young's Pit Benalla Rd. Pine Lodge in 1963, the competitors were from the Shepparton Sub Branch of the Antique and Historical Arms Collectors Guild Shepparton and the members of the Antique and Historical Arms Collectors Guild that had travelled up from Melbourne for the day. Photo shows two Shepparton members, John Harrington and Peter ?????



**Very young looking Harrington on the left**

**Besal Mk2 with Bren 30 round mag left and on the right with a 100 round Anti-Aircraft mag**



**8th Light Horse Regiment**

**.25-20 Winchester Cartridge**

**Footnote in History**

**Humber Light Reconnaissance Car**

**Besal Mk2**

**Blast from the past**

**Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Henry White**

**The Yokasuka MXY-7 Ohka (Cherry Blossom)**

## UP COMING EVENTS

All up coming events and club meeting have been cancel for the time being due to the **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS**

**Humber LRC Mk III**



## N.V.A.C.G. Committee 2019/20

### EXECUTIVE

**President/Treasurer:** John McLean

**Vice Pres/M/ship Sec:** John Miller

**Secretary:** Graham Rogers

**Newsletter:** Brett Maag

**Safety Officer:** Alan Nichols

**Sgt. at Arms:** Simon Baxter

### GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Harrington

Scott Jackson

Carl Webster

Peter Roberts

Rob Keen

Sol Sutherland



## Achtung !!

From the secretaries desk



With the Covid19 lock down dragging on there is not much to report this month.

Still getting a few people interested in joining with about 50% following through and sending in their application. On the other side we have had a big drop off, with 11 people having not paid their annual renewal, though I think about half of those might rethink the situation once the guild becomes active again. At this stage it looks like we have 142 confirmed members.

For those that have not rejoined this newsletter is your last notification. The membership secretary, John Miller and I have made every effort to contact you by mail, email, phone, and SMS, with no replies. If you still wish to be a guild member, we are happy to have you, but it is up to you to contact us now.

We are still hoping to have a meeting in October, and this will be the AGM and election of office bearers. The current officers and their position are listed at the top of this page. If you feel you could contribute to the running of the guild, please nominate for a position. I cannot speak for the other office bearers but if anyone would like to have a go at being secretary, I'm happy to nominate for some other position and also will assist any new secretary. Other wise I am happy to continue for another year.

Reminder. The guild has a public Facebook page @nvacgorg and also a private discussion page on Facebook, this page is only available to guild members and invited friends, you are a Facebook member and would like to join the group just use the Facebook search facility to find "Northern Victorian Arms Collectors Guild Inc. private group" and request membership. Someone will approve you within a couple of hours.



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

## WANTING TO BUY

One of our members is 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 on [jobah450.577@bigpond.com](mailto:jobah450.577@bigpond.com)



8th Light Horse Regiment hat badge

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Active</b>            | 1914–1919<br>1921–1944  |
| <b>Country</b>           | Australia   |
| <b>Branch</b>            | Australian Army   |
| <b>Type</b>              | Mounted Infantry  |
| <b>Size</b>              | Regiment  |
| <b>Part of</b>           | 3rd Light Horse Brigade   |
| <b>Engagements</b>       | First World War<br>North African Campaign<br>Gallipoli campaign<br>Sinai and Palestine Campaign |
| <b>Insignia</b>          |   |
| <b>Unit Colour Patch</b> |              |

**8th Light Horse Regiment** was a mounted rifles regiment of the Australian Army during the First World War. The regiment was raised in September 1914, and assigned to the 3rd Light Horse Brigade. The regiment fought against the forces of the Ottoman Empire, in Egypt, at Gallipoli, on the Sinai Peninsula, and in Palestine and Jordan. After the armistice the regiment eventually returned to Australia in March 1919. For its role in the war the regiment was awarded fifteen battle honours. During the inter-war years, the 8th Light Horse was re-raised as a part-time unit based in the Indi region of northern Victoria. It was later converted to a divisional cavalry regiment during the Second World War but was disbanded in 1944 without having been deployed overseas.

### Formation

The 8th Light Horse Regiment was raised at Victoria in September 1914, originally as the 6th Light Horse Regiment, but following a reorganisation in October was renumbered the 8th Regiment, and comprised twenty-five officers and 497 other ranks serving in three squadrons, each of six troops. Each troop was divided into eight sections, of four men each. In action one man of each section, was nominated as a horse holder reducing the regiments rifle strength by a quarter. Once formed the regiment was assigned to the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, serving alongside the 9th and 10th Light Horse Regiments. All Australian Light Horse regiments used cavalry unit designations, but were mounted rifles armed with rifles, not swords or lances, and mounted exclusively on the Australian Waler horse.

### Operational history

#### Gallipoli

In December 1914, the 8th Light Horse Regiment left Sydney for Egypt, arriving on the 1 February 1915. When the Australian infantry units were dispatched to Gallipoli, it was thought the terrain was unsuitable for mounted troops,



Lieutenant Carthew 8th Light Horse Regiment, Egypt

and the light horse regiments remained in Egypt. However, heavy casualties amongst the Australian infantry battalions resulted in the deployment of the 3rd Light Horse Brigade as reinforcements in May 1915. On arrival, the regiment was attached to the New Zealand and Australian Division. The regiment was heavily involved in the Battle of the Nek, suffering severe casualties including its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander White, who was killed leading the first wave. The regiment were mostly used in a defensive role, until being withdrawn back to Egypt in December 1915.



8th Light Horse at Romani

#### Sinai and Palestine Campaign

On their arrival back in Egypt, the 3rd Light Horse Brigade was assigned to the newly raised ANZAC Mounted Division, and at first given responsibility for the defence of the Suez Canal. Following their minor role in The Jifjafa Raid, the regiment did not take part in any of the early battles in the Sinai, but were instead used to patrol the large open area of the region, until the British advance into Palestine. In December 1916, they took part in the Battle of Maghdaba. The regiment and brigade were then transferred to the Imperial Mounted Division, later renamed the Australian Mounted Division. Their next battles were the unsuccessful First and Second Battles of Gaza, then the successful Battle of Beersheba in October 1917.

With the Ottoman Empire forces in retreat, the regiment was part of the pursuit into Palestine, resulting in the capture of Jerusalem in 1917, and raid across the River Jordan in 1918, at Amman and Es Salt. The regiment then took part in the capture of Tiberius and Sa'sa' in September, and entered Damascus on 1 October.

The war in the Middle East ended shortly afterwards when the armistice of Mudros was signed in October 1918.

Afterwards, the regiment returned to Egypt to assist in putting down a revolt, before sailing for Australia in July 1919. The war cost the regiment almost 200 per cent casualties, 302 killed and 675 wounded.

## Perpetuation

In 1921, the decision was made to perpetuate the honours and traditions of the AIF by reorganising the units of the Citizens Force to replicate the numerical designations of their related AIF units. As a result, the 8th Light Horse was re-raised as a part-time unit based in the Indi region of northern Victoria within the 3rd Military District; in doing so, it assumed a complicated lineage. This included the 8th (Indi) Light Horse that had been formed in 1918 by the re-designation of the 16th (Indi) Light Horse. The 16th traced its existence back to the 8th Australian Light Horse Regiment (Victorian Mounted Rifles), which had been formed in 1903 as part of the amalgamation of Australia's colonial forces into the Australian Army after Federation.

The unit remained on the order of battle throughout the inter-war years, and upon the outbreak of the Second World War, the regiment formed part of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, within the 2nd Cavalry Division. On 1 December 1941, the regiment was re-designated the 8th Reconnaissance Battalion (Indi Light Horse). It was again re-designated in July 1942, assuming the title of the 8th Divisional Cavalry Regiment. A unit had previously been raised with this designation when the 8th Division had been formed; however, the decision to deploy the 8th to Malaya and the islands to Australia's north in early to mid-1941 had resulted in that unit being deemed unnecessary for the 8th Division's establishment and it had subsequently been re-designated the 9th Divisional Cavalry Regiment and reassigned to the 9th Division. The regiment was mobilised for war service and deployed to the Northern Territory to bolster the garrison there. It was eventually gazetted as an AIF unit in 1943, meaning that it could serve in an operational capacity outside of Australian territory if required, but was eventually deemed surplus to requirements as the Australian Army was partially demobilised in the later war years, and was disbanded in March 1944 at Watsonia, Victoria. In the post war period, the regiment was re-raised as an amalgamated unit, designated the 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles, which remained in existence until 1991–92.

### The following officers commanded the 8th Light Horse during the First World War:

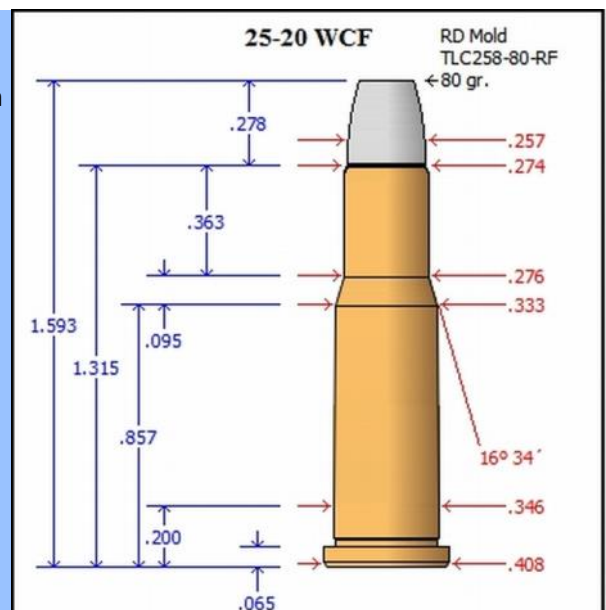
Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Henry White (KIA)  
Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Vivian Deeble  
Lieutenant Colonel Leslie Cecil Maygar VC, DSO, VD  
Lieutenant Colonel Archibald McGibbon McLaurin  
Lieutenant Colonel Herbert James Shannon DSO

### For its involvement in the First World War, the 8th Light Horse was awarded the following battle honours:

Defence at ANZAC · Suvla · Sari Bair  
· Gallipoli 1915–1916 · Egypt 1915–1917  
· Romani · Magdhaba-Rafah · Gaza-Beersheba  
· El Mughar · Nebi Samwill · Jerusalem  
· Jordan (Es Salt) · Megiddo · Sharon  
· Palestine 1917–1918.



**.25-20 Winchester (.25-20 WCF);** Centre Fire was developed for the short action of the Winchester Model 1892 lever-action rifle. The case is based on the .32-20 necked down. Opinions differ as to when it was actually introduced. Some authorities say 1893, others 1895. In any event, it was quickly adopted by a majority of the gun manufacturers and achieved considerable popularity. The Winchester lever-action 1892 and modernized Model 65, Remington pump-action Model 25, Marlin pump-action 27 and lever-action Model 94, and the Savage bolt-action repeater Model 23 were all available in .25-20 WCF. Marlin reintroduced the .25-20 WCF in its Model 1894CL lever-action. Winchester also loaded this chambering with a slightly different bullet shape and head stamped it .25-20 Marlin. Prior to the .22 Hornet and the .218 Bee, the .25-20 WCF was one of the most popular small-game and varmint cartridges around. On smaller animals, the 60-grain bullet is quite effective for 100- to 150-yard varmint shooting. The 86-grain soft-point or lead bullet does a fine job on rabbit or turkey to 125 yards. Under certain conditions, the .25-20 repeater is still a useful small-game number. With the growing popularity of cowboy action shooting, the .25-20 is destined for renewed popularity.



# "FOR SALE"

**COLLECTABLES,  
MEMORABILIA,  
BAYONETS, HELMETS,  
UNIFORMS,  
REFERENCE BOOKS,  
AND  
COLLECTABLE FIREARMS**

E.g.

**Special order  
Winchesters**

**73, 92, 95**

**And 66 Musket  
etc.**

**Contact Geoff  
on 5821 9015 Or  
email; wilsigns1@gmail. com**

## 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.



Hi all here we have a couple of different items, from a long standing member of the Guild.

Above we have two Francotte Pistols (one disassembled), both used to belong to our member.

On the Right is One of the NVACG Bronze plaques that we the Guild used to have made some twenty five years ago, as a prize for members.



### Besal Mk2

|                        |                                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Type</b>            | Light machine gun                  |
| <b>Place of origin</b> | United Kingdom                     |
| <b>Used by</b>         | standby design                     |
| <b>Wars</b>            | World War II                       |
| <b>Designer</b>        | H. Faulkner                        |
| <b>Designed</b>        | 1940                               |
| <b>Cartridge</b>       | .303 British                       |
| <b>Action</b>          | Gas                                |
| <b>Rate of fire</b>    | 600 rpm                            |
| <b>Feed system</b>     | 30-round Bren-compatible magazines |
| <b>Sights</b>          | Iron sights                        |

The Besal, properly named "Gun, Light, Machine, Faulkner, .303-inch", was a light machine gun of British origin. The weapon was intended as an alternative to the Bren gun as it was lighter, simpler, cheaper and easier to manufacture and therefore was not dependent on the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield which was within range of German bombers. As the threat to the supply of Brens receded, it was eventually deemed unnecessary and never went into mass production.

The design was by Henry Faulkner of the Birmingham Small Arms Company, which also manufactured the larger Besa machine gun which like the Bren was a product of the pre-war Czech arms manufacturer. That weapon's name was a nickname for Birmingham Small Arms (BSA) and the Besal was to be a lighter version; a Besa-light. This was however not an official designation.



## Humber Light Reconnaissance Car

, also known as **Humberette**

or **Ironside**, was a British armoured car produced during the Second World War. **Design;** Produced by the Rootes Group, the Humber Light Reconnaissance Car was an armoured car based on the Humber Super Snipe chassis (as was the Humber Heavy Utility car. It was equipped with a No. 19 radio set. From 1940 to 1943 over 3600 units were built.

**Operational history;** The vehicle was used by Infantry Reconnaissance Regiments and the RAF Regiment in Tunisia, Italy and Western Europe. After the war, some vehicles remained in service with the British units in India and in the Far East. The LRC was used widely by the Reconnaissance Corps and was also used by the Reconnaissance squadron of the 1st Czechoslovak Independent Armoured Brigade Group. Three Mk I vehicles were modified for use by the British Royal Family and the Cabinet ministers and were known as "Special Ironside Saloons".



### Variants

**Mk I** version with open-topped hull and 4x2 drive. Armoured to a maximum of 10 mm on the front and 7–9 mm on the sides. Armament was a Boys anti-tank rifle and a Bren light machine gun. Only a limited number were built before the Mk I was replaced by the Mk II.

**Mk II** had an enclosed roof with a turret for the machine gun and retained the 4x2 drive of the Mk I. The Boys faced

forward in the front of the hull. Otherwise armoured as the Mark I, the roof was 7 mm and the turret 6 mm.



**Mk III** (1941) was externally similar to the Mk II but had 4x4 drive. Production began in late 1941.

**Mk IIIA** (1943) only difference from the Mk III was additional vision ports at the front angles of the hull. Armour was 12 mm to the front, 8 mm to the sides, 7 on the roof and rear, and 6 mm on the turret.

**Ironside Special Saloon** Built for VIP use, the body by Thrupp & Maberly included a relatively luxurious interior which was split by a Perspex screen to separate driver and passengers. A passenger side door was provided to make entrance and exit easier, the two-part screen running in tracks fitted to the front seats: sliding both portions to the driver's (right) side allowed the front passenger (left) seat back to be folded for an easier exit. Two Ironside 'specials' of this kind were used by cabinet ministers and members of the royal family, while six minus the privacy screen were used as armoured staff cars.

In all 3,600 Humber Light Reconnaissance Cars were built (including the 200 Ironside Is) and the MkIII and MkIIIA were the cars most widely used by the Reconnaissance Corps in action, and many were also employed overseas by the RAF Regiment for airfield defence.

**Surviving vehicles** A number of vehicles are preserved in museums:

Dutch Cavalry Museum

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and of Military History, Brussels, Belgium

Royal Air Force Museum London has a Mk IIIA

National War and Resistance Museum, Overloon has a restored Mk III.

Military College of EME, Trimulgherry has an LRC as a gate guardian

43rd Reconnaissance Regiment Living History Group (UK) operate a replica vehicle based on an LRC MK IIIa chassis.

A reproduction also exists in private ownership in the Czech Republic

A replica built on a postal jeep chassis and with wooden armor exists in Florida, where it is primarily used for reenacting.

| Place of origin          | United Kingdom  |
|--------------------------|---|
| Manufacturer             | Humber ( <u>Rootes Group</u> )  |
| No. built                | more than 2,400   |
| Specifications (Mark II) |   |
| Mass                     | 3.17 tons   |
| Length                   | 14 ft 4 in (4.37 m)   |
| Width                    | 6 ft 2 in (1.88 m)  |
| Height                   | 6 ft 11 in (2.11 m)   |
| Crew                     | 3   |
| Armour                   | up to 12 mm   |
| Main armament            | Boys anti-tank rifle  |
| Secondary armament       | 0.303 in (7.7 mm) Bren light machine gun<br>Smoke discharger            |
| Engine                   | 4.1 L 6-cylinder inline side valve petrol engine<br>80–87 hp (60–65 kW) |
| Power/weight             | 29 hp/tonne   |
| Suspension               | 4 x 2 wheel   |
| Operational range        | 110 mi (180 km)   |
| Maximum speed            | 75 mph (121 km/h) on road   |



Side & Front views RAF Museum MkIIIA

Turret detail RAF Museum MkIIIA





## Footnote in History

**Battle of Chuam-ni** was a battle fought between 14–17 February 1951, at Chuam-ni, South Korea, as part of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA) Third Offensive towards Wonju during the Korean War. The battle was for control of the supply line Route 24.

### Background

Due to insufficient strength in troop numbers, a gap of about 12 miles (19 km) between the US 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment and the 23rd Regimental Combat Team. The PVA having become aware of the gap, prepared to exploit the gap in its offensive on Wongju. On 12 February 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment manning positions upon Hill 444 4 miles (6.4 km) east of Chip'yong-ni were attacked by two PVA battalions and was withdrawn to positions northwest of Wonju. During the morning of the 13 February, air observers noted PVA troop

movements towards the gap toward the US 2nd Infantry Division's 2nd Reconnaissance Company east of Chuam-ni.

The 2nd Reconnaissance Company having been sent out to patrol Route 24 in the gap in the defensive line around Wongju, were reinforced with L Company, 9th Infantry Regiment at 12:00 on 13 February. Almost immediately they were attacked by PVA from the northeast, which was repulsed. The PVA then tried to encircle the two companies bringing about the withdrawal of the companies to a blocking position on Route 24 at Chuam-ni.

### Battle

On 14 February at 05:00, the PVA, consisting of a regiment of the 116th Division of the 39th Army, launched an attack against the 2nd Reconnaissance Company and L Company, 9th Infantry at Chuam-ni. Suffering large casualties, the two companies withdrew south along Route 24. Having been surrounded, the companies fought a fighting withdrawal suffering further casualties. The total casualties suffered by the 2nd Reconnaissance Company and L Company, 9th Infantry were 114 killed and 98 wounded. PVA casualties were also heavy. The result of the withdrawal was that the 23rd Regiment was cut off and the isolated Regiment would then fight the Battle of



Chip'yong-ni.

The 27th British Commonwealth Brigade, consisting of the 1st Battalion, Middlesex Regiment, the 1st Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the 60th Indian Field Ambulance, and the 16th Field Regiment, Royal New Zealand Artillery, were ordered to open Route 24 to the 23rd Regimental Combat Team and cover the gap in the defenses. Meeting the remnants of the 2nd Reconnaissance Company and L Company, 9th Infantry 5 miles (8.0 km) south of Chuam-ni and while pushing north slowly through PVA blocking the route.

Moving slowly north along Route 24, the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade heading towards Chip'yong-ni, were initially held up by a battalion sized force on 15 February, however on 16 February, the PVA had withdrawn and Chuam-ni was occupied on 17



February.

### Aftermath

With the PVA and North Korean forces withdrawing, a UN offensive was undertaken, known as Operation Killer. It was found that 68 soldiers of L Company had been killed by the PVA while sleeping and were found still in their sleeping bags.

All pic's are of the 3rd Aus Battalion form the AWM.



Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Henry White  
M.E.D  
8th light horse Australian  
White Col

No ENQUIRY  
Aug 10th Informant saw him fall. He was killed immediately by machine gun fire at Walker's Ridge. His body was never recovered although Informant and another man voluntarily left the trenches several times to try and recover it. They were afterwards ordered to give up the attempt as it was too dangerous. Two days later blackened bodies were found burned by the Turks and unrecognizable.

Reference Sergt H.H. Gaunt,  
C. Squad  
9th light horse Australian  
5th Southern General Hospital  
South sea

London  
Oct 5th 1915  
B.U. Townsend

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Service number</b> | 2402   |
| <b>Ranks Held</b>     | Lieutenant Colonel, Sergeant                                     |
| <b>Birth Date</b>     | 09 May 1882  |
| <b>Birth Place</b>    | Australia: Victoria, Ballarat                                    |
| <b>Death Date</b>     | 07 August 1915   |
| <b>Death Place</b>    | Ottoman Empire: Turkey, Marmara, Gallipoli Peninsula             |
| <b>Final Rank</b>     | Lieutenant Colonel   |
| <b>Service</b>        | Australian Imperial Force  |
| <b>Units</b>          | Australian Imperial Force<br>8th Australian Light Horse Regiment |

**Modellers Corner by " Old Nick " out of my Collection :**

\*\*\*\*\*

This issue the " Medium Grant Tank " , they adopted if one gun is nit big enough , just stick another one top and have the best of both hitting worlds ! Naturally this also means that the Tanks profile is lifted and makes a it a more visual target , so this added fire power is a trade off , for security and making sure you get the first killing shot in !

STATISTICS : Built by : American Locomotive Company ,  
Baldwin Locomotive Works .

Designed by : United States Tank Arsenal in 1941

Power Plant : Continental 9 Cylinder Radial Engine – 340 bhp

Speed : 26 mph

Armament : 75 mm Side Sponson Mounted Quick Firing Gun , 180 o FoF !

37 mm Top Cupola Mounted Gun 360 o FoF !

.30 cal MG Coaxial Mounted with Main Gun !

cal MG or .303 Cal Bren Gun for AA or Anti Personal on Cupola !

.30 cal Additional MG fired by Loader in Front Facial Plate .

Crew : 6 =Commander , Gunner , Loader / Operator , Driver & Hull Gunner Loader

Weight :268 tons

Armour : 63 mm light

Number Built : 5,000.00

Entered Service :1941 & 1942

Left Service : 1946 - extended for training purposes to 1950's

SAW SERVICE : With the British Forces WWII in the Western Desert in 1942 , at Gasama and El Alamein Against the Italians and the German Africa Corps, With the United States Army in North Africa area of Tunisia and Czarina Pass , Against the German Forces. With the British Army in Burma against the Japanese in 1944. Australia had the Grant Tank for home defence , in case of Japanese Invasion , joining our Northern Forces as a Last line of defence , backing up our other main Medium Tank the " Matilda " . This of course left our South East Coast extremely vulnerable , with only our Reserve Forces or in some cases our equivalent of the British " Dads Army " mainly to combat a probe by Jap Forces from Subs or Small Boats !



1942 2/7th aust armoured regiment



1st\_Armoured\_Div

Below; 1942 2/7th aust armoured regiment



Above; Aust 4th Armoured Bde at Southport 1944

Below; Members of the 2/4th Armoured Regiment with a M3 Grant tank in 1942





## The Yokasuka MXY-7 Ohka (Cherry Blossom)

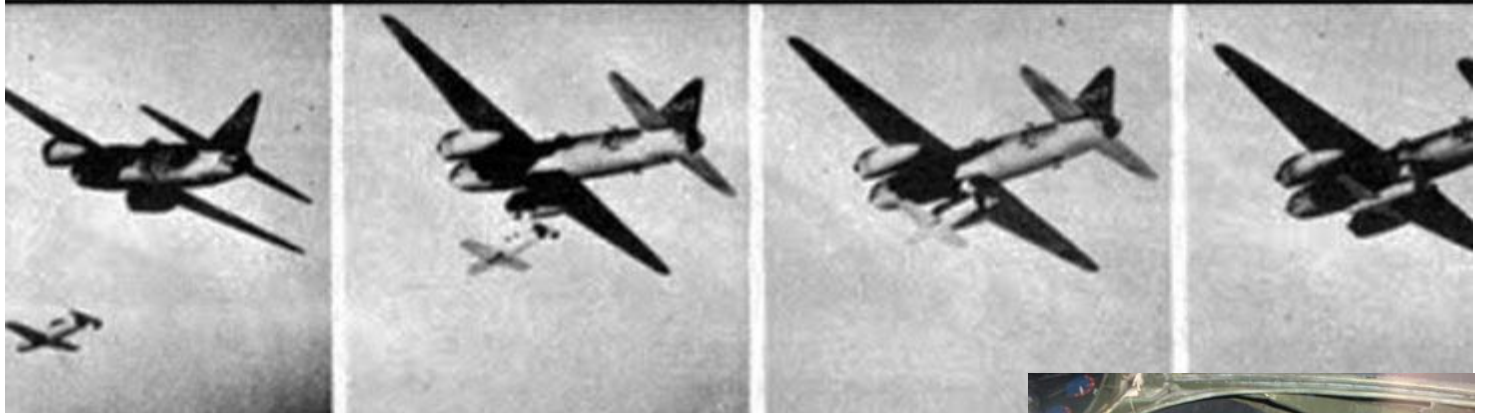
was a rocket powered single seat aircraft intended to be used as a suicide attacker in conjunction with kamikaze attacks on allied shipping. Curiously, the concept for the Ohka was approved and aircrew recruitment began in August 1944 - several months before the formation of the "official" Kamikaze squadrons. Amazingly, ten powered Ohka aircraft and several unpowered training versions were ready for use by September 1944 and training flights launched from modified Mitsubishi G4M "Betty" began the following month.



The Ohka itself was a simple but well finished aircraft. The pilot was provided with an armoured cockpit, a padded seat and a rather optimistic quick release catch for the canopy. The flight controls and instruments were simple, reflecting the rudimentary nature of pilot training in this period of the war. The nose of the Ohka contained a 2646lb (1200kg) impact fused warhead and behind this was a simple crosshair gunsight.

At the rear of the aircraft were 3 solid fuel rocket motors developing up to 1800 pounds of thrust, giving the Ohka a top speed in level flight of 403mph (649kmph) and a diving speed of up to 580 mph (933kmph). This is only about 40 miles per hour under the speed of sound and would prove to be the Ohka's decisive asset.

After being carried into the target area slung under the belly of a modified G4M Betty bomber, the Ohka pilot would climb into his cockpit and detach from the mother aircraft. The pilot would then keep his Ohka in a shallow unpowered glide from about 20-27,000 feet altitude until he reached approximately 11,500 feet around 5 miles from his target at a rough speed of 280 miles an hour. He would then ignite his rocket motors which gave him massive thrust for 8 – 10 seconds and pushing his speed up to about 403mph. With only seconds left to his target, the pilot would then push the nose of his aircraft down into a 50° dive, reaching a terminal speed of 580 mph, just 40 miles shy of the sound barrier. This made the tiny aircraft almost impossible to hit with AA fire from us naval ships.



However, despite its extreme high speed, the Ohka concept possessed a fatal tactical flaw. It had a short range, about 20 nautical miles. As a result, the Ohka piloted missile would have to be carried into the target area slung under the belly of modified Mitsubishi G4M "Betty" bombers. The "Betty" had an extremely long range which was attained at the expense of protection for its huge fuel tanks. As a result, only one or two hits would very likely set the bomber ablaze. Allied pilots nicknamed the "Betty" as the "one touch lighter".





The first 50 Ohkas to be deployed to the combat area were carried aboard the brand new "super carrier" *Shinano* on 24 November 1944. They were all lost only 17 hours later when the *Shinano* was sunk by the submarine *USS Archerfish*!

The Ohka would finally make its combat debut on 21 March 1945, when 18 "Bettys" carrying 16 Ohka missiles took off with fifty-five A6M5 Zero fighters as escort. Their target was three American aircraft carriers which had been spotted by earlier reconnaissance flights. This was Task

Force 58.1 which had four aircraft carriers, *Hornet*, *Bennington*, *Wasp* and *Belleau Wood*, accompanied by the battleships, *Massachusetts* and *Indiana*, escorted by a strong force of cruisers and destroyers.

Unfortunately for the attackers, they were picked up by American radar at a range of 70 nautical miles and within minutes they came under attack by US navy fighter aircraft. In a swirling dogfight lasting only a few minutes all the "Bettys" and most of the Zeros were destroyed for the loss of one F6F Hellcat. The mission never even got within range to launch their missiles.

Allied forces attacked Okinawa on 1 April 1945. On the same day, the Japanese launched their second Ohka mission. The force of three Ohka carrying "Bettys" and three kamikaze zeros attacked at dusk to avoid interception by US fighters. This mission was much more successful. One Ohka hit the main turret of battleship *USS West Virginia*, causing heavy damage. The other Ohkas and Zeros managed to hit attack transport *Alpine* (16 dead, 27 wounded), as well as cargo ships *Achernar* and *Tyrrell*.



In the next month, the Japanese Imperial Navy launched several Ohka missions, of which fewer than a dozen of the tiny Ohka flying bombs actually reached their targets. During the furious kamikaze attacks on the US fleet off Okinawa, Ohka pilots managed to land hits on two American battleships (*USS Tennessee* and *West Virginia*). They also managed to sink a Destroyer, *USS Mannert L. Aberle*, which had already been badly damaged by conventional kamikaze attack. In the same action, Destroyers *USS Jeffers* and *Stanly* were damaged by Ohka hits. The *Stanly* was hit twice, the first penetrating the hull of the destroyer at the bow and exiting the opposite side before exploding. The second Ohka managed to knock *Stanly's* ensign from its gaffe as it passed overhead.

In May, Ohka pilots landed two hits on the light minelayer *USS O'Shea*, causing massive damage and over 100 casualties. Despite this damage the *O'Shea* remained afloat, though she took no further part in the war.

A week later, on 11 May, the destroyers *Hadley* and *Evans* came under a concerted kamikaze attack. At one point the AA crews of *USS Hadley* engaged 10 enemy kamikazes simultaneously. She suffered one bomb and one kamikaze hit in the attacks with the two destroyers shooting down 46 Japanese aircraft. Unfortunately, her gunners failed to intercept an Ohka missile which holed the destroyer badly, killing 28 sailors and wounding another 67. She was ordered abandoned, though fire crews remained aboard and kept her afloat.



On 25 May, 1945 a single Betty from a force of eleven survived long enough to get in range before being shot down before launching her Ohka missile. This would be the final Ohka attack of the war.

In just a couple of months, the Ohka piloted missile gained a reputation among allied seamen that far outstripped its actual results. Its final (confirmed) tally being 1 destroyer sunk (*USS Abele*) and one damaged beyond repair (*USS Hadley*). Six other vessels ranging from a battleship to a cargo ship were damaged by Ohka hits. 150 Sailors lost their lives and 250 wounded by Ohka attacks.

Plans were laid to launch Ohka missiles from land based ramps which could be hidden in cave bases, but these never took place, despite several launch sites being captured by allied forces by the end of the war.