

# More Majorum

May — June 2019



This Issue:

- Guild Business
- Up Coming Events
- Universal Carrier
- British Martini Henry
- Surveillance Units
- Fucile Armaguerra Mod. 39
- Members Items



## UP COMING EVENTS

**MAY**

- 10th Guild Meeting
- 19th POW Camp Tour

**JUNE**

- 14th Guild Meeting

**JULY**

- 6th & 7th Melbourne Arms show
- 12th Guild Meeting
- 13th&14th Ballarat Arms Show

**AUGUST**

- 9th Guild AGM Meeting
- 24th&25th Bendigo Arms Show



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

### N.V.A.C.G. Committee 2018/19

#### 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

Geoff Wilson

Terry Warnock

Alex McKinnon

Carl Webster

Some of you may not know but the NVACG has its 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/>

We are also on Facebook



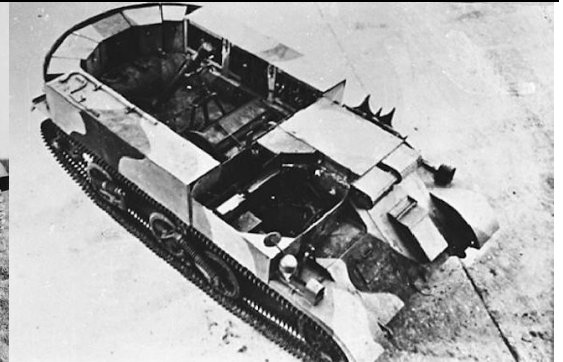
@ShepartonArmsExpo

**Editor's report;** Hi all just got a few items to report in this editor's report.

The first item is to say thank our Shepparton gun show committee and the other members who help to make yet another great show for 2019 with all their hard work. It's just disappointing that we don't see more members at the show, as it's free entry for members. So please help support your guild by coming to the show and giving a hand.

Second is thanks to the members who organised and drove the bus to the Melbourne Arms fair which was free to members, sadly only 10 members took up the opportunity, because it was a great day out for those who did.

So that brings us to the last item. we can only have a good newsletter with your help. You can do this by contributing articles. As we are planning for 6+ newsletter a year with 8 to 12 pages long. Now we have two new sections in the newsletter. These are "Something from my Collection" where we will feature a member's item of interest from their collection. Please note if you don't wish your name printed with your item for security reasons tell use and we will not print it with your item. The other is a "Trading Post" section which is free to guild member who wish to sell or even wish to fine an items for your collection, but there is a small fee for business ads. To submit articles etc. to me at [bnmaag@gmail.com](mailto:bnmaag@gmail.com) or the Secretary at [graham@gvit.com.au](mailto:graham@gvit.com.au)



## Universal Carrier

### Origins: The Carden-Lloyd Mk.VI tankette

The early Carden-Lloyd tankettes from 1933 were the very basis for the Universal Carrier. Originally, these machines were invented by Major Giffard LeQuesne Martel, who developed a prototype privately, for potential requests from the Royal Army Corp. He was a military engineer and a daring tank strategist.

After his demonstration to the War Office, the Carden Lloyd Tractors Ltd. company was requested to study practical production. They introduced a slightly enlarged vehicle for two men. Success with the prototype guaranteed their first order, with Vickers-Armstrong's business network as a backup for exports. The last production version was the Mk.VI, of which up to 450 were built in all, from 1927 to 1935. The Mk.VI was the blueprint for the Universal Carrier. A hundred or more of Mk.VI tankettes were sold abroad.

### Production: The Mk.I of 1934

The Mk.VIs in service with the British army were scouts, transports, machine-gun carriers, artillery carriers, mortar carriers and smoke projector carriers. Later on, experience showed that a single model was preferable to six or more, and a larger one was conceived by Vickers and approved in 1935 for mass production as the "Medium Machine Gun Carrier", "Bren Gun Carrier", "Scout Carrier", and "Cavalry Carrier".

Compared to the previous Carden-Lloyd Mk.VI tankettes, they were enlarged, with the crew now at the front, driver and machine-gunner, and a large open gallery with a rounded end for all kind of loads. Up to five infantrymen or a gun crew could be deployed quickly. The suspension was a mix of the standard Vickers type and Hortsman springs.

Continue

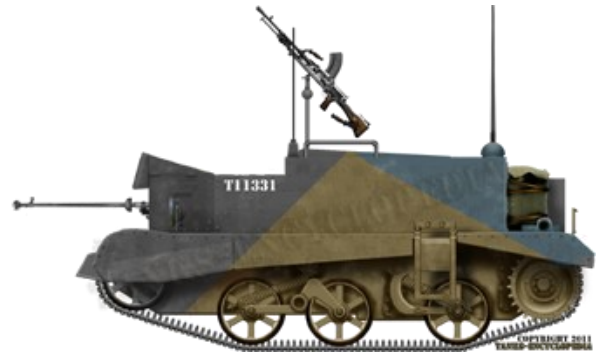
Production was assumed by Aveling and Porter, Bedford Vehicles (British Ford), Morris, the Sentinel Wagon Works, and Thornycroft. But the real production of the definitive standard "Universal Carrier" and first deliveries (Mk.II) came in 1940, just in time for the campaign of France.

## Evolution: The Mk.II

The Mk.II tankettes were the production version of the many "Carriers" which were built from 1935 to 1940. This standard version had a square gallery and was versatile enough to accommodate all kind of military payloads easily.

They were always equipped with a towing device. The Mk.II was the most heavily produced, from 1940 to 1945, in Great Britain, in the Commonwealth and Canada under various licenses. Their speed and agility, but most of all, tremendous versatility, became legendary, despite their lack of armor and weaponry.

Infantry battalions were given 10 to 33 of these from 1940 to 1943 and motorized artillery battalions were entirely equipped with these vehicles, each carrying an ordinance antitank QF 6pdr (2.24 in/57 mm) gun.



## The American T16



This was an American-built version, derived from those manufactured by Ford-motor Canada. They were sent to Great Britain and the Commonwealth under Lend-Lease. Up to 16,000 units were built with local modifications and improvements, starting in 1943. Many were rearmed with a heavy Browning cal.50 (12.7 mm) machine-guns.

Most of them were used by the Canadians as artillery tractors in Europe. After the war, surviving units were sold to Switzerland and the Low Countries.

## Other variants

The main variants were a tank-hunter equipped with a Boys 13.9 mm (0.55 in) rifle, replacing the original Bren gun, which was often relocated to an anti-air mount

There was a heavy machine gun version equipped with the .303 (7.7 mm) Vickers machine-gun, also replacing the forward Bren gun. There was also a flame-thrower version, where a pipe exhaust replaced the Bren, called the Wasp, and carrying the "Ronson Flamethrower, Transportable, No 2". The Canadian-built ones were named Wasp Mk.IIC. A gun version was developed especially for the Homeguards, armed with a Smith 8pdr mounted in a large sponson at the front.

## The Commonwealth variants

Australia built, under license, no less than 5600 LP1 and LP2 versions, essentially some slightly modified Mk.I and Mk.II. The LP2 was also produced in limited numbers (520 units) by New Zealand. An antitank version, the Carrier, Tank Attack 2-pdr (40 mm/1.58 in) was produced (200 units), and a mortar-version, with the 3-in (76.2 mm) mortar.

The QF 2 pdr (40 mm/1.58 in) was fast and efficient, but its mounting required the displacement of the engine to the front. Most of them were used for training. The 400 mortar versions were sent as military aid to the Nationalist Chinese.

## In Wehrmacht service



A few of them were captured in Norway, but most of the Mk.IIs, later used by the Wehrmacht, were captured at Dunkirk in June 1940. Other various models were captured in Crete and during Rommel's offensives in North Africa. German versions were dubbed "Fahrgestell Bren".

There were many derivatives, but most were rearmed with an MG 34 or 42 instead of the Bren gun, in a standardization effort. Some antitank Boys rifle versions, called Fahrgestell Bren 731 (e), saw extensive service in the Afrikakorps, but later received, in Sicily and Italy, more efficient antitank armaments, like the 3.7 cm (1.47 in) Pak (sometimes the hull was covered with spare wooden protections), or Panzerschreck and Panzerfaust (mostly

in 1944).

Another version, seen around airfields and gun positions was largely used by the end of 1944, the Fahrgestell Bren 731(e) Flak 38, with a 20 mm (0.79 in) QF anti aircraft mount.

## Exports

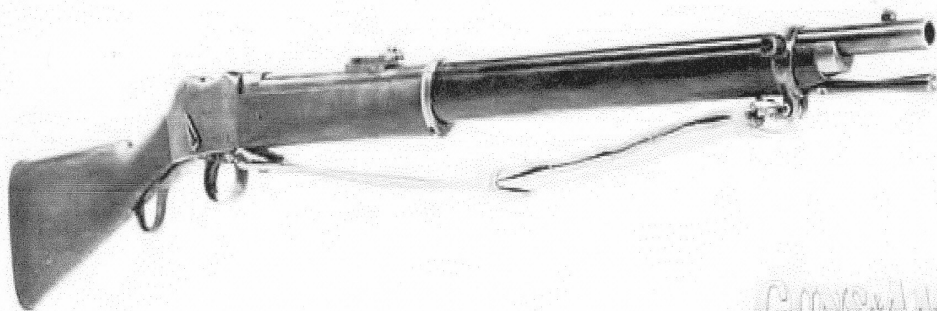
The versatile and cheap Bren Carrier benefited from such a large production that many Allied countries were equipped with it. Exiled country armies were often equipped with it, like the Belgian, Dutch, Danish, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Norwegian, Greek and the French free forces. They received large amounts of Bren Carriers for various duties.

Before the USA provided enough vehicle to make a surplus (1943), the Bren Carrier was seen everywhere, under all flags. This dependable machine had another advantage. Being so light and relatively small, it could be carried like a Jeep in gliders. Many were used by commandos and paratroopers.

## After the war

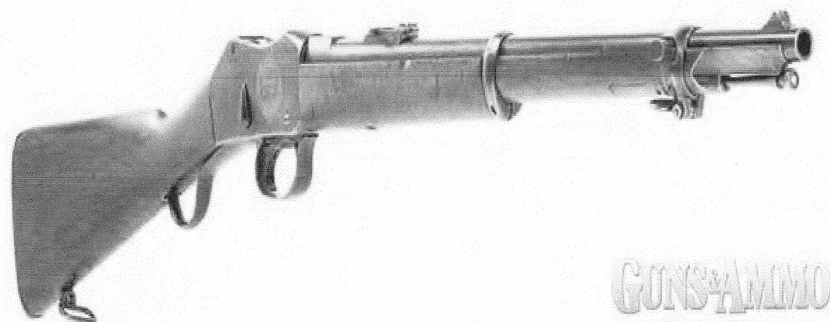
Around 81,700 vehicles were built during the war in all. 31,300 were produced after the armistice. The concept was very successful, in Great Britain, but also in many other countries like the Swiss Confederation, Netherlands (mostly modernized T16s), but also Belgium. The Belgians produced a specific model, the CATI 90, for "Canon antitank d'infanterie automoteur 90mm", serving in infantry units paired with a 90 mm (3.54 in) autocannon. The last of these left the Liege factory in 1964. Some were still in service for training as far as 1984.

# British Martini-Henry Rifle



24th Regiment of Foot; soldiers of the Natal Native Contingent; 36 hospital patients; and men of the Army Hospital Corps. Britain's legendary single-shot Martini-Henry rifle achieved its greatest fame during the hard-fought Zulu Wars of the late 1870s. On January 22, 1879, while working on the bank of the Drift, Lieutenant John Chard, Royal Engineers, officer commanding at Rorke's Drift, received news of the slaughter at Isandhlwana. He rushed back to the mission to discover Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead, Commander of the men of the 2/24th, had also heard the intelligence and was preparing to move the invalids to safety in heavy ox-carts.

Chard realized that the slow-moving vehicles would never get the men clear of the Zulus, and he ordered that perimeters of biscuit boxes and mealie (maize) bags be set up to act as defensive barricades. Men of the Natal Kaffirs, retreating from Isandhlwana, arrived during these preparations and were pressed into service.



The Martini-Henry was also available in shorter cavalry and artillery (shown) carbines. As these guns were not as heavy as their infantry cousin, special lighter loads were concocted. Their paper patches were color-coded to differentiate them from the standard round. Several members of the 2/24th were sent into the hospital to guard the patients, and the rest of the forces were positioned to await the Zulu onslaught.

The defense of the mission station at Rorke's Drift has become one of history's most famous "last stand" type of engagements. But the battle's notoriety with the public at large was rather late in coming.

With the exception of die-hard military history buffs, it was largely unknown until the release, in 1964, of Cy Endfield's epic cinematic depiction of the event, "Zulu." Starring Stanly Baker, Jack Hawkins and a then-unknown Michael Caine, the movie, while wildly inaccurate in places, was still a stirring retelling of the event and for the most part kept pretty much to the spirit of the engagement.

Some 15 years later a prequel, "Zulu Dawn," featuring Peter O' Toole, Burt Lancaster and John Mills, about Isandhlwana, also by Endfield, came out, and while more accurate and authentic than its predecessor, it had little of "Zulu's" élan. As well as illuminating the actual Battle of Rorke's Drift, Zulu made a rather obscure military rifle famous—the Martini-Henry. Over the years, prices on Martini-Henry rifles rose steadily and quantities diminished, until recently when International Military Antiques, in association with Atlanta Cutlery, brought a large number of them (along with accessories) out of Nepal—a boon for shooters and collectors.

The .577-450-caliber Martini-Henry was the standard infantry rifle issued to the men of the 24th and other regular troops in the British army. Shorter carbine versions were available for cavalry and artillery.

The Martini-Henry started out life as the contrivance of American designer Henry O. Peabody. Peabody's design was modified by Friederich von Martini in Switzerland and redesignated the "Peabody-Martini." The British adopted the action, adding a barrel rifled with the system of Scottish gunmaker Alexander Henry and christened the rifle "Martini-Henry."

To operate the action, a lever located beneath the wrist of the stock was lowered sharply, causing the breechblock to drop and expose the chamber. This movement also operated an ejector, which pulled loose the fired cartridge case. No safety was incorporated into the system, although a cocking indicator on the right side of the receiver showed when the arm was ready to fire.

The Martini-Henry rifle was 54 inches long with a barrel length of 33.2 inches. Weight of the Martini-Henry was a hefty nine pounds. The rear sight was graduated to 1,400 yards. The cartridge adopted was a necked-down version of the earlier .577 Snider round. (Actually, Snider rifles, carbines and ammunition were still being used by some native and auxiliary troops during the Zulu War.) The .450-caliber paper-patched lead bullet weighed 480 grains and was pushed along at 1,350 fps by 85 grains of black powder. Of the Boxer variety, the round was made from coiled sheet brass with a japanned iron base. Recoil was substantial, and this, coupled with the Martini-Henry rifle's rather straight wrist, caused many an inexperienced recruit to give himself a nosebleed when his thumb smacked into his face if he was gripping the stock incorrectly. Ordnance authorities thoughtfully provided a thumbrest on the top of the action to avoid such a happenstance.

Enlisted men were issued a triangular bayonet with a 21½-inch blade. This fastened to the barrel by means of a socket, which slipped over the muzzle and was secured by a ring that was rotated over the front barleycorn sight. Sergeants were required to carry the Pattern 1873 Sword bayonet, which had a 22½-inch wavy yataghan-style blade. although the long-range shooting ability of the Martini-Henry was found to be somewhat lacking.

Some 1,450 men of Lord Chelmsford's command lay dead on the South African plain at Isandhlwana. A force of 20,000 Zulu warriors under their king Cetshwayo had all but destroyed the British force comprising six companies of the 24th Regiment of Foot (2nd Warwickshire), wagon drivers, volunteers, staff and camp followers.

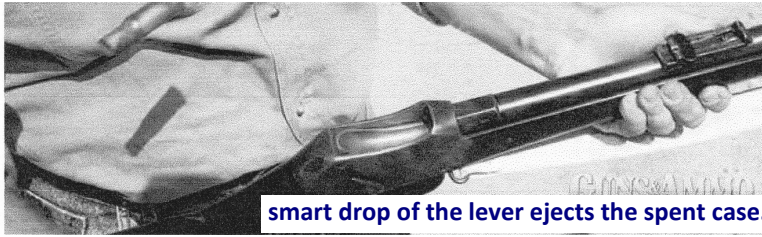
Another force of 4,000 Zulus was on its way to the small mission station-turned-hospital at Rorke's Drift. Awaiting the onslaught were 84 men of B Company, 2nd Battalion,



Load a round, and close the action

Enlisted men were issued a triangular bayonet with a 21½-inch blade. This fastened to the barrel by means of a socket, which slipped over the muzzle and was secured by a ring that was rotated over the front barleycorn sight. Sergeants were required to carry the Pattern 1873 Sword bayonet, which had a 22½-inch wavy yataghan-style blade. Unique bayonets were also available for the artillery carbine, and special cutlass-style blades were issued to the Royal Navy.

During tests in the late 1860s, a rate of fire of 20 rounds in 48 seconds was achieved.



smart drop of the lever ejects the spent case.

Interestingly enough, while Martini-Henry rifles were featured prominently (and correctly) in the movie "Zulu," the revolvers used were World War I-vintage Mark VI Webleys. As well, some bolt-action Long-LeeEnfields can also be seen in the rear ranks, as there were not enough Martini-Henry rifles available to arm all the extras.

The Zulus attacked Rorke's Drift's meager fortifications at sunset, forcing the British to abandon the outer perimeter and retire to the inner line of biscuit boxes and mealie bags. Throwing themselves with superhuman strength at the

defenses, the Zulus eventually breached the small hospital building. Privates Henry Hook and John Williams held off the attackers while chopping through a series of five inner walls to save the wounded.

The thatch roof of the hospital was set on fire by the Zulus—a tactical error because it allowed the British to see the attackers in the glare. Eleven invalids

were lifted free of the burning building through a small window, but two of the men were speared as they made a dash for the inner perimeter. The Zulus made repeated attacks during the night. The men loaded and fired their Martini-Henry rifles as fast as they could, causing the thin forestocks to become so

hot that they had to be wrapped with rags to keep the men from burning their hands. (Experienced British troops in South Africa actually made bullockhide covers for their guns' forends to prevent this.) Zulu snipers took potshots at the soldiers using old muzzleloaders and captured Martini-Henry rifles, but in the case of the latter arms, they believed that setting the slide on the rear sight as high as possible would increase the potency of the ammunition. As a result, they usually fired well over the heads of the British.

Soon even the sniping died down, and the men waited for dawn and expected new attacks. They never came. As the sun rose, the defenders of Rorke's Drift looked out on 500 Zulu dead. The impi (Zulu regiment) had left the field.

Of the 90 men who took part in the defense of the mission station, 70 survived the battle. Eleven men, including Lieutenants Chard and Bromhead, were given the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award for valor, more than for any single action in the history of the award.



The rear ladder sight was graduated to 1,400 yards, though authorities found long-range accuracy with the Martini-Henry to be disappointing.



**Original .577-450 Martini-Henry loads were made of coiled brass bodies with japped steel bases. It was found that the bases would sometimes be ripped off upon ejection (especially in Gatling guns), so eventually drawn-brass cases became standard issue.**

## Surveillance Units WW2

A now mostly forgotten force in World War 2 History was The Northern Australia Observer Unit (NAOU). To help handle the possible threat by small-scale Japanese landings in the northern Australia and full scale Japanese invasion, an unconventional mobile surveillance force was needed and set up by the Army mid-1942. The special unit known as North Australia Observer Unit (NAOU) was established to carry out dispersed surveillance across northern Australia, from the Kimberley's in Western Australia to the Gulf Country of northern Queensland.

The NAOU started operations about September of 1942, and its activities as a force started to wind down late 1944, before being disbanded early 1945. During its peak, the unit had a headquarters and three operational companies and comprised near 550 AIF and militia volunteers. Each company had four platoons armed with small arms and equipped with long-range radios.

Organisation and mode of operation for the NAOU was a combination of horse and vehicle mounted infantry, combined with the unconventional organisation modes associated with Special Forces tasked to carry out surveillance operations. Surveillance of northern coastal areas and inland open country was carried out using a combinations of static observer posts and mobile patrols; the patrols employing horses, mules, vehicles and watercraft to provide their mobility. Patrols were encouraged to live off the land as much as possible in an effort to maintain their independence and reduce logistic resupply issues. Aboriginal civilians (many of them police trackers) were employed to provide local knowledge and assistance in living off the land. The existence of NAOU and its activities in World War II provided the inspiration for the formation of regional force surveillance units of today's Australian Army.



## 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.

**SELECT**

**SEED**

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- Canaries
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- Large Parrots
- Pigeons
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**Phone Ian - 0417 564 492**




**No. 1. FOR OFFICERS' USE, FITTED FOR BAYONET.**




LENGTH OVER ALL - - - 3ft. 2in.  
WEIGHT (average) - - - 7lb. 3oz.

**No. 2. FOR OFFICERS' USE, NOT FITTED FOR BAYONET.**





LENGTH OVER ALL - - - 3ft. 2in.  
WEIGHT (average) - - - 7lb. 3oz.

**No. 3. "TRADE" PATTERN.**




LENGTH OVER ALL - - - 3ft. 4in.  
WEIGHT (average) - - - 7lb. 14oz.

*For particulars and prices see page 14 opposite.*

Here we have a Member's BSA Trade Pattern Lee-Speed Carbine with 6 shoot mag, sling, Nose cap, bayonet & scabbard. This is a sporting variant of the well known Lee-Metford and Lee-Enfield rifles made for civilian shooters, though often purchased by Army Officers who wanted a rifle made to a higher standard of fitting and finish than the issued military rifle. The action is market on the right hand side BSA "Lee-speed"



## Fucile Armaguerra Mod. 39

is an Italian semi-automatic rifle designed by Gino Revelli, the son of Abiel Bethel Revelli, who is known for the Fiat-Revelli machine gun and Glisenti Model 1910 pistol. Two versions of the rifle exist; one in 6.52x52 and the other 7.35x51mm.

### Genesis and development

The weapon was designed by Francesco Nasturzio and Gino Revelli, the son of the brilliant Abiel Bethel Revelli. It was positively tested by the Royal Italian Army in 1939, who preferred it, in the contest for the supply of a semi-automatic rifle, to the Scotti Mod. X and the Breda Mod. 1935 PG and ordered 10,000 unit to the Società Anonima Revelli Armi-

Left 6.5X52 mm  
Right 7.35X51 mm

guerra of Genoa

The gun took its name from the Telegraphic Code of Company, Armaguerra. In 1938 the Italian army had established the transition from 6.5 mm x 52 mm to the more lethal 7.35 x 51 mm Carcano.

In this caliber were Armaguerra Mod.39. With the entry of Italy into World War II, being far from complete the conversion to the new caliber, the production probably interrupted to 2,000 pieces, two type of munitions would have created confusion in the supply. The conversion of Mod. 39 to the old caliber 6.5 x 52 mm required a partial redesign, because of the greater pressure produced by this ammunition (3.000 atm compared to 2.500 atm of 7.35 x 51 mm Carcano cartridge). It went into production close to 1943, when the capitation of Italy limited the production to a few hundred units.

6 Round Clips made in Brass or Blued Tin



Type	Semi-automatic rifle
Place of origin	Italy
Wars	Service history World War II
Designer	Production history Gino Rivelli
Designed	1939
Manufacturer	Società Anonima Revelli Manifattura Armaguerra
Produced	1944-1945
No. built	Less than 500
Weight	Specifications 8.16lb
Length	46.05"
Barrel length	23.6"
Cartridge	6.5x52mm Mannlicher-Carcano, 7.35x51mm Carcano
Action	Short recoil
Effective firing range	300 yards
Feed system	6 round integral magazine, loaded with a clip



# N.V.A.C.G. CALENDAR 2019

## Achtung !! Sunday 19th of May 2019 Guild Bus Tour

Visit WWII German War Cemetery

Visit Tatura Museum - view documentary and artefacts ( \$5 admission \$4 concession)

Pass the location of Dhurringile POW camp and Internment Camp 2

Visit Internment Camp 1 for a guided tour

Pass gates and guard posts and pill boxes of POW Camp 13, view cell block and Kormoran monument

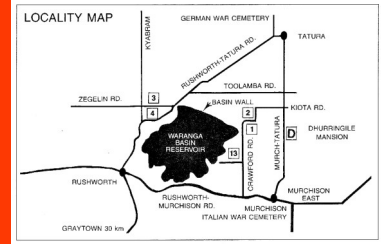
Visit Internment Camp 4 for a guided tour, while over looking Internment Camp 3

Visit Italian Ossario in Murchison cemetery

Lunch at either Murchison, Tatura or possibly Rushworth

You can bring your spouse/ partner /significant other or any close friends. This is not about Militaria it is local history and WW2 so it should appeal to most people, but you **must** book a seat.

These camps are now on private property and are not open to the general public, so don't miss this opportunity To Book: - Call Graham Rogers 0417 137 232 or email [secretary@nvacg.org.au](mailto:secretary@nvacg.org.au).



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12th NVACG Meeting 13th & 14th Melbourne Arms Show 19th to 22nd Easter 25th ANZAC Day						

MAY						
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4th & 5th Melbourne Knife Show 10th NVACG Meeting 19th POW/Internment Camp Tour						

JUNE						
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10th Queens Birthday 14th NVACG Meeting						

JULY						
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6th & 7th Melbourne Arms Fair 12th NVACG Meeting 13th & 14th Ballarat Arms Fair						

AUGUST						
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9th NVACG AGM & Elections 24th & 25th Bendigo Arms Show						

SEPTEMBER						
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13th NVACG Meeting						

OCTOBER						
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11th NVACG Meeting 12th & 13th Doonkie (unconfirmed) 19th & 20th Melbourne Arms Fair						

NOVEMBER						
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5th Melbourne Cup 8th NVACG Meeting 10th NVACG Xmas Rendezvous						

DECEMBER						
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13th NVACG Meeting 25th & 26th Christmas/Boxing Day						

NVACG Meetings

NVACG Events

Other Arms Events

Public Holidays

# About Us.....

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## Our Meetings

The Guild meets at the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (SSAA) Shepparton Branch Shotgun Club Rooms.

These are located at the SSAA Shooting Range 1170 Midland Hwy, Shepparton East.

Just drive for 20 minutes or so from Shepparton along what we call Benalla Road, and there you will find the Range on the right hand side in a former quarry.

The site is well signed and is the Guilds "returning home" to what was Paul Gribben's other favourite club.

**General Meetings** are held here on the second Friday evening of each month

**Meeting commence from 8.00 pm**

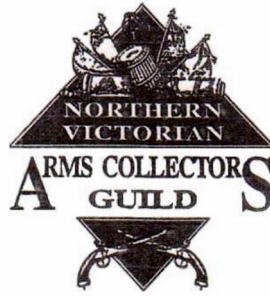
## Our Background

The Northern Victorian Arms Collectors Guild Inc. Had its origins in August 1967, under the guidance of the late Paul Gribben— still regarded as one of Australia's most advance firearms collectors.

His fondness for Manton shotguns (and lesser examples of gunsmith's and engravers art), was equalled only by his love of history and enthusiasm for sharing it with others.

Our Guild continues this tradition and caters for those interested in the preservation and restoration of all Antique and Historic Arms, Accessories, Militaria, Australiana and other Heritage items.

***New Members are Most Welcome!***



P.O. Box 985  
Shepparton 3632

AFFIX  
STAMP  
HERE

ADDRESS LABEL

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More Majorum  
(After the Manner of our Ancestors)  
**Newsletter**  
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Shepparton 3632

