



TOWN OF GAWLER

Gawler's Walk of Honour



LEST WE FORGET
THE GAWLER MEN
WHO ANSWERED THE CALL.

Gawler Public Library

Institute Building, 91 Murray Street
Gawler SA 5118

Phone (08) 8522 9213 Fax (08) 8522 9212

Email : library@gawler.sa.gov.au

Website : www.gawler.sa.gov.au



On Sunday 8 July, 2007 the Honour Boards which make up the 'Walk of Honour' were dedicated. Gawler proudly remembers those men and women who served their country in the Boer War, The Great War, the Second World War, the Malayan Emergency, the Vietnam War and the Korean War. This brochure provides background information to the events that each board commemorates. Continuing research may result in subsequent publications. The following extracts have been compiled from a number of sources including the Australian War Memorial website.



The **Boer War, 1899-1902** (or Transvaal War) was fought between troops of the British Empire and the Boers (Dutch-Afrikaaner settlers) over who should control South Africa, an area rich in the natural resources of gold and diamonds. A previous war fought in 1880 was inconclusive and friction provoked the Boers to attack, in order to forestall what they

saw as an impending British conquest. As part of the British Empire, the Australian colonies offered troops and at least 12,000 Australians served in contingents raised by the six colonies (states after Federation in 1901) and many more joined British or South African colonial units in South Africa. At least 600 Australians died in the war, about half from disease and half in action. The plaque commemorates three of the men from Gawler (John Heinjus, Bruce May and Frederick Tothill) who died.

(Reference: *The Boer War 1899-1902*, Australian War Memorial website, www.awm.gov.au.)



Local men who fought in the **Great War, 1914-1918**, are honoured on this board, a fine sample of the work of Wunderlich Limited. It was first unveiled by Lady Butler, wife of Sir Richard Butler, Treasurer of South Australia and resident of Yattalunga, on



5 July 1917. The Roll of Honour was a gift from the President of the Gawler Institute, Mr Hermann Bischof, who was highly praised for his generosity at the unveiling ceremony. Mr A. H. Harris, Vice President of the Gawler Institute, expressed a hope that the memorial, would stand 'as a record for all time of those who when the call of duty had come had fearlessly and heroically gone forth in the interest of right' and 'stand as an inspiration to those who came after us'.

(Reference: *The Bunyip*, July 13, 1917).

The Second World War 1939-45

During the 1930s, Germany, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, was expanding its territory and on 1 September 1939 invaded Poland, causing Britain and France to declare war on Germany on 3 September 1939. At that time, Australia was a British nation and when the British Government declared war, Prime Minister Menzies announced that Australia was also at war.

Almost a million Australians, both men and women served in the Second World War. They fought in campaigns against Germany and Italy in Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa, as well as against Japan in south-east Asia and other parts of the Pacific. Almost 50,000 Australians died, 24,000 were wounded and 29,000 became prisoners of war (about one third of these died while prisoner).

(Reference: *Second World War 1939-45*, Australian War Memorial website, www.awm.org)



Gawler RSL Sub-Branch officially handed over its **Second World War** honour board during the 2007 Anniversary of 150 years of Local Government in Gawler. Many of the people named on the board were involved in major war-time incidents such as air warfare in Europe, the loss of the HMAS Sydney in 1941, and the Japanese attacks on Sydney. An ongoing project since the end of World War II, it stalled a number of times because of controversy over who should and should not be included and also because of difficulties in compiling a definitive list of names. The launch by the Federal Government of the nominal roll online was the catalyst to complete the project .



4.



The Gawler Corps, No. 30, of the Salvation Army was opened in August 1883. The first officers were Captain Emma Charlesworth and Lieutenant Hayes (who was known as Happy Dinah'). Services were held in the Institute Hall before the Salvation Army Hall (which stood on part of the site now occupied by the Big W complex) was built in 1885.

During World War II, the Salvation Army built Red Shield huts at the Willaston air force camp and the Sandy Creek military base. Salvation Army bands have always been prominent in Gawler Anzac Day processions.

(Reference: Coombe, E. H. *History of Gawler 1837-1908*)

Loyal Gawler Lodge Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity was founded on 16 May, 1846 and the opening ceremony took place in a room at the back of the Old Spot Hotel. Meetings were held at various times in the Globe Hotel (now the Kingsford) and the Old Bushman Hotel until, in 1859, the Oddfellows Hall (now Gawler Cycles) was built by the lodge. By 1908, the Lodge had a large membership (450) and funds of over £7,000.



(Reference: Coombe, E. H. *History of Gawler 1837-1908*)



5.

May Bros. & Co., a partnership of brothers Alfred and Fred May, operated a foundry and engineering business from premises in Gawler South, adjacent to the Gawler Railway Station. What began in October 1885 as a small company employing five men, had grown by 1893 into works incorporating long, low sheds that ran the full length of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Streets; by 1895 the foundry had been



erected on the opposite side of Eighteenth Street. A network of railway lines which connected with the main line enabled receipt of materials and the removal of completed machinery. The company's early emphasis was on the production of strippers and seed sowers for agriculture but over time it also produced jigs and boilers and finally smelting, crushing, pumping and winding plants for the mining industry. By 1910, May Bros. & Co. employed 300 people but during the 1920s uncertainty surrounding the company about its future and an Unsuccessful partnership with J. H. Jones resulted in a Supreme Court writ being issued to dissolve the company. All that remains today of May Bros. & Co.'s operations is their agricultural showroom (now converted into apartments) which was originally Dawson's wheat store. (Reference: Phillips, Susan and Pilkington, Michael *Gawler's Industrial Buildings, 1839-1939*)

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Gawler was home to a number of bands including Riggs' Gawler Brass Band, the Gawler Phoenix Band, Riggs' String Band, The Salvation Army Band and May's Mechanics' Band (which may have also been known as Gawler Mechanics' Orchestra).

(Reference: Coombe, E. H. *History of Gawler 1837-1908*)





This board honours the Gawler people who served and fell in the **Korean War (1950-53)**, the **Malayan Emergency (1950-1960)** and the **Vietnam War (1962-72)**.

The crisis in **Korea** originated in the closing phases of World War II when control of the Korean Peninsula, formerly occupied by Japan, was entrusted to the Allies and divided into North and South Korea at the 38th Parallel. A strong communist regime was fostered by the Soviets in the north, while in the south, the government was supported by the United States. Unable to find a solution to the problem of re-unification, the United Nations established two separate nations - the Republic of South Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea. Tension between the two nations escalated and by mid-1950, tension had reached the point where two hostile armies were building up along the border. On 25 June, the North Korean army finally crossed into the southern zone and advanced towards the capital, Seoul. The city fell in less than a week and North Korean forces continued their southward drive towards the strategically important port of Pusan. The United Nations Security Council decided to send a force composed of troops from 21 nations, including Australia, to defend South Korea. When the Australian forces arrived in Pusan on 28 September 1950, the North Korean advance had been halted. However, this was short-lived and the Chinese government moved 18 divisions into North Korea which struck with overwhelming force, sending the UN forces into retreat.

It had been hoped that the UN forces would bring the war to a rapid end but it dragged on and from 1951, both sides found themselves engaged in a war of attrition where men lived in tunnels, redoubts and sandbagged forts behind barbed-wire defences. As the war settled in to stalemate, a negotiated truce seemed to be the only solution. Military pressure was maintained on the communist forces but many of the UN nations were unwilling to contribute more ground forces to the conflict. On 27 July 1953, the leaders of the United Nations and North Korea signed an agreement which technically brought the war to an end even though a state of suspended hostilities continued to exist between North and South Korea for many years. During the three years of fighting, 1,263 men of the Commonwealth forces were killed and a further 4,817 were wounded. Australian casualties numbered more than 1,500, of whom 339 were killed. (Reference: *Korean War 1950-53*, Australian War Memorial website, www.awm.gov.au, accessed 29 June 2007)

The **Malayan Emergency** was declared on 18 June 1948 after the murder of three estate managers in Perak, Northern Malaya, by guerillas of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), an offshoot of the anti-Japanese guerilla movement which had emerged during World War II. Harsh post-war economic and social conditions and the failure by the British Government to create an easier path for disaffected Malayan Chinese people to gain full Malayan citizenship contributed to the rise of anti-government activity and support for the MCP. The Malayan government was slow to react to the MCP and before the economic, social and political problems facing the Chinese community could be addressed, the situation deteriorated further with the assassination of the British High Commissioner in October 1948. This action galvanized British resolve to destroy the threat posed by the MCP and prolonged military operations were mounted to drive the guerrillas into the jungle where it would be difficult for them to receive supplies from supporters. Australia's involvement in the Emergency began in 1950 with the arrival of RAAF aircraft and personnel in Singapore. Dakotas were deployed on cargo runs, troop movements and paratroop and leaflet drops while six Lincoln bombers provided the support for combined air-ground assaults. By 1955, the outcome of the Emergency was not in doubt and Australian troops were sent in for a lengthy 'mopping up' stage. The communists were driven into the jungle, separating them from food and other supplies and on 31 July, 1960, the Malayan Government declared that the Emergency was over. The Malayan Emergency, which lasted 13 years,

was the longest continuous military commitment in Australia's history. Thirty-nine Australian servicemen were killed in Malaya and 27 were wounded.

(Reference: *Malayan Emergency 1950-1960*, Australian War Memorial website, www.awm.gov.au, accessed 29 June 2007)

Australia's involvement in the **Vietnam War** began in July 1962, with the arrival of Australian troops in South Vietnam. Australian support for South Vietnam in the early 1960s was in keeping with the policies of other nations, particularly the United States, to stem the spread of communism in Europe and Asia. By early 1965, the United States commenced a major offensive as it became clear that South Vietnam could not stave off the communist insurgents for more than a few months. As part of this build-up, the US Government requested further support from friendly countries in the region. Australia responded by sending more troops and at the height of the War, 8,500 Australian troops were in Vietnam. By 1969 anti-war protests were gathering momentum in Australia; people believed that the war could not be won and there was major opposition to conscription. The United States implemented a policy of gradual withdrawal of its forces and Australia followed suit, winding down its military effort in Vietnam. The Governor-General formally declared Australian participation in the Vietnam was at an end on 11 January 1973. Throughout the ten year period, 50,000 Australians served in Vietnam; 520 died and almost 2,400 were wounded.

(Reference: *Vietnam War 1962-72*, Australian War Memorial, www.awm.gov.au, accessed 29 June 2007)

More information:

Gawler Nominal Roll, World War II - available from Gawler Public Library, \$3.00.

Australian War Memorial website, www.awm.gov.au

Commonwealth War Graves Commission website, www.cwgc.org

It's an Honour website, www.itsanhonour.gov.au

National Archives of Australia, www.naa.gov.au

Picture Australia website, www.pictureaustralia.org

South Australian War Memorials website, www.tributesofhonour.info

State Library of South Australia, North Terrace, Adelaide, 5000, website, www.slsa.sa.gov.au

World War 2 Nominal Roll website, www.ww2roll.gov.au

A Gift to the Nation: World War I service records online, www.naa.gov.au/The_Collection/gift-to-the-nation.html

Researched and written by Anne Richards, Librarian, Reference and Research Services