

**PHOTO STUDY
(PART 3)
AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS
BATHING, SUNBAKING,
SPINEBASHING**

**("Sunbaking" is Australian for Sunbathing)
("Spinebashing" is Australian for loafing and
resting)**



The grave of Lieutenant Cecil Healy, the **Australian Champion swimmer**; 6523 Private (Pte) C. F. Bentin; 3732 Pte C. Cravino, and 1669 Pte W. Vaughan, all members of the 19th Battalion, who fell in the fighting near Peronne on 29 August 1918. Mont St Quentin can be seen at top left corner.



1010 Sergeant George Edgar Watkins stands with a group of soldiers in their towels. The group had just finished going for a swim. Identified left to right: 609 Private (Pte) James Sydney Thewlis; Brown; 617 Pte Edward Victor; Sergeant Watkins; 1899 Pte Albert Rialland; 1950 Pte Thomas William Martin; 246 Pte John Arkless Watson; White; Williams.

An image from the collection of 1010 Sergeant (Sgt) George Edgar Watkins DCM. Sgt Watkins, a painter from Blackburn, Victoria, enlisted on 10 February 1916. He served with the 39th Battalion throughout the war, as a Battalion scout in France and Belgium.

IN THE NEXT PHOTO:



THE NEXT PHOTO SHOWS Visually impaired servicemen rowing in Hyde Park near St Dunstan's Hospital, London. A charitable organisation established in 1914 by newspaper proprietor Arthur Pearson (later Sir Arthur Pearson G.B.E), St Dunstan's sought to assist blind ex-servicemen and women in attaining as normal a life as was possible and earn a living. During the First World War, the newly founded rehabilitation and training centre was based at St Dunstan's Lodge, a large residence in Regent's Park that was loaned by the American banker Otto H. Kahn. "St Dunstaners" could train in physiotherapy, shorthand typing, telephone operating, poultry farming, carpentry, basket and mat making and shoe repair. Braille was also taught. Sport was key part of rehabilitation and they enjoyed rowing, swimming, walking races and tandem cycling. Retaining its name, the charity moved to a new location following the war. St Dunstan's continues to support blind and visually impaired ex-Service men and women today.



THE NEXT PHOTO SHOWS Informal outdoor group portrait of unidentified blind Australian servicemen, two nursing staff and a boy in the grounds of St Dunstan's Hospital, London. A charitable organisation established in 1914 by newspaper proprietor Arthur Pearson (later Sir Arthur Pearson G.B.E), St Dunstan's sought to assist blind ex-servicemen and women in attaining as normal a life as was possible and earn a living. During the First World War, the newly founded rehabilitation and training centre was based at St Dunstan's Lodge, a large residence in Regent's Park that was loaned by the American banker Otto H. Kahn. "St Dunstaners" could train in physiotherapy, shorthand typing, telephone operating, poultry farming, carpentry, basket and mat making and shoe repair. Braille was also taught. Sport was key part of rehabilitation and they enjoyed rowing, swimming, walking races and tandem cycling. Retaining its name, the charity moved to a new location following the war. St Dunstan's continues to support blind and visually impaired ex-Service men and women today.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P06305.004



Visually impaired servicemen rowing in Hyde Park near St Dunstan's Hospital, London.

THE NEXT PHOTO TELLS AN INTERESTING STORY. Informal outdoor portrait of 722 Trooper Ernest Charles Matheson and an unidentified VAD at St Dunstan's Hospital. Born in Cairns, Queensland, Ernest Charles Matheson was working in South Australia as a labourer when he enlisted in the AIF on 25 November 1914, at the age of 22. He was assigned to the 1st Reinforcements, 9th Light Horse Regiment, and after initial training, embarked for overseas service from Melbourne, aboard the troopship HMAT Surada (A52), on 6 February 1915. Trooper Matheson joined his regiment in Egypt on 8 April and was posted to A Squadron. The regiment arrived on Gallipoli in May. Matheson was wounded in the face at Lone Pine on 7 August 1915 and was immediately evacuated to Egypt and then on to England to the 3rd London General Hospital. He lost his left eye and also the sight in his right eye. Once his wounds had healed he was admitted to St Dunstan's Hospital for the blind in November 1915 where he underwent rehabilitation and training for work in civilian life for the next two years. He was discharged from St Dunstan's on 25 November 1917, described as being 'fully trained in mat making', and returned to Australia two days later. He was discharged from the army at the end of January 1918. Although blind, Matheson was able to find his way around parts of London with little assistance. In 1917 he was noticed by a British artist, Claire Sheridan, in Regent's Park, dressed in his uniform. She later recalled that Matheson had attracted her attention 'by the way he walked alone, with his head held high and an inspired expression on his face. He was beautiful and resigned and patient'. His appearance inspired her to create a small painted plaster statue of Matheson, now in the War Memorial collection as ART19568. She replaced the cane he normally carried with the figure of a woman to guide him. Ernest Matheson died in Adelaide in December 1965. St Dunstan's continues to support blind and visually impaired ex-Service men and women today.

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| Date of enlistment | 25 November 1914 |
| Date of embarkation | 06 February 1915 |
| Date returned to Australia | 25 November 1917 |
| Date of death | 1965-12 |



A swimming party from HMS Psyche at Car Nicobar Island.



**Mena, Egypt. c. 1915.
Members of the 8th
Australian Light Horse
Regiment relaxing in a
swimming pool. (Donor
J.P. Campbell)**



**LAE AREA, NEW
GUINEA. 1945-08-
11. SERGEANT G.
ANDERSON HAVING
TREATMENT FOR
BURNS IN A BATH
USED FOR ALL BURN
CASES AT 2/7
GENERAL HOSPITAL.**



**LATAKIA, SYRIA, 1942-
04-02. 9TH
AUSTRALIAN DIVISION
MOBILE BATH UNIT, IN
OPERATION IN THE
LINES OF THE 2/17TH
AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY
BATTALION. CANOPY
OF TRAILER IS USED AS
A SHOWER RECESS. SIX
SHOWER ROSES ARE
INSTALLED IN THE
ROOF.**





**LATTAQUIE, SYRIA,
1942-04-02. THE
BOILER TRUCK WITH
THIMBLE BOILER AND
RUTHERFORD
BURNER, OF THE 9TH
AUSTRALIAN DIVISION
MOBILE BATH UNIT, IN
OPERATION.**



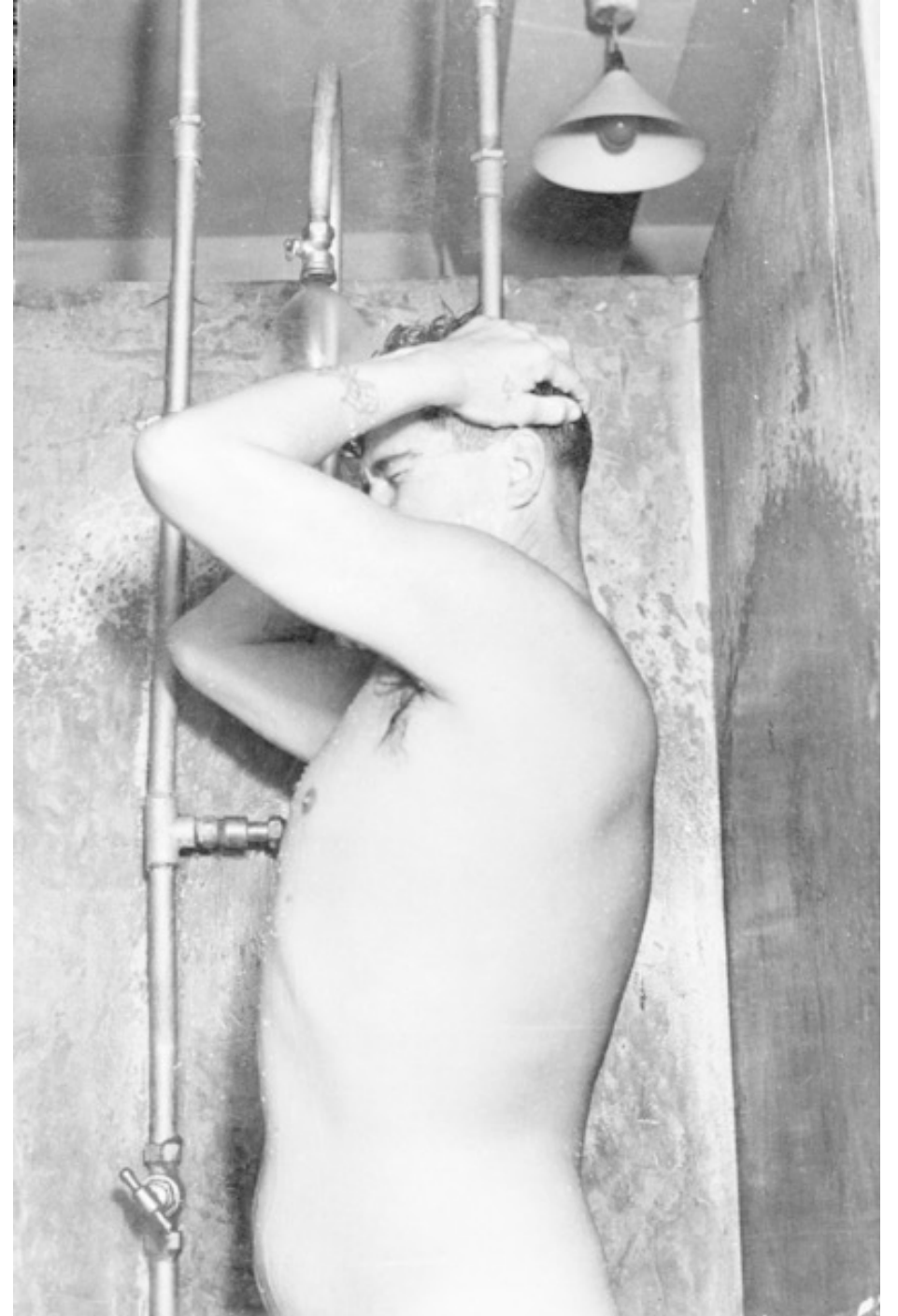
**MELKONG RIVER,
NEW BRITAIN. 1945-
02-20. TROOPS OF
THE 2/14TH FIELD
REGIMENT, ENJOYING
A BATH OR A WASH
IN THE SHALLOWS OF
THE RIVER NEAR
THEIR CAMP.**



**LIBYA. 1941-12.
LEADING-
AIRCRAFTMAN R.D.
ALLAN OF NO. 3
SQUADRON, RAAF,
HAVING A SPONGE
BATH IN THE
WESTERN DESERT.**



""Lofty' takes a bath." This image is from the collection of Claude Jabez Powter who served in the First World War and with the Australian Contingent for the Coronation of King George VI on 12 May 1937.



Malaya. c. 1960. Unidentified members of B Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), bathing naked in a dobie (improvised bath) after returning from a military exercise near the border with Thailand. The dobie in this case is a Landrover trailer lined with canvas. (Donor B. Betts)

IN THE NEXT PHOTO:



**MALAYA. MIXED BATHING
NOT ALLOWED, SO THE
CROCODILES HAVE IT ALL
TO THEMSELVES.** (NEGATIVE BY M.
NICHOLS).



**Soputa,
Papua.
December
1942.
Australian
troops bathing
in the River
Basari at
Soputa. Two
men are
standing on a
wooden
platform while
they dry
themselves
(right).**



**9TH
AUSTRALIAN
DIVISION
TROOPS
DOING
PHYSICAL
TRAINING
AND SUN
BATHING ON
AFTER DECK,
WHILE
ENROUTE TO
AUSTRALIA.**



**"A Study in Spinebashing"
(Australian slang for having a rest
or loafing). At sea off Macassar,
WX21543 [unable to be verified]
Trooper W. Lindsay and NX98667
[unable to be verified] Private R.
J. Ferguson sunbaking on the
upper deck of the United States
Victory ship SS Winchester
Victory. The men were returning
home to Australia after serving
with the Australian Forces of
Occupation in the Celebes.**



MEMORIAL

**AUSSIES ENJOY
THE SUN.
TROOPS OF THE
A.I.F.
RETURNING BY
TROOPSHIP
FROM THE
MIDDLE EAST
RELAX ON DECK.**



**BALIKPAPAN,
BORNEO. 1945-
09-07. CORPORAL
H. GROSS, LANCE
CORPORAL
(L/CPL) H.
THOMPSON AND
L/CPL L. J.
MOORE,
MEMBERS OF
2/14TH INFANTRY
BATTALION,
SUNBAKING ON
THE WRECKAGE
OF A JAPANESE
LAUNCH ON THE
BEACH NEAR THE
UNIT CAMP.**



**BRUNEI, NORTH
WEST BORNEO
1945-11-24. TWO
MEN OF THE
2/15TH
BATTALION
SUNNING
THEMSELVES
BESIDE A DEEP
POOL WHICH WAS
A POPULAR
SWIMMING SPOT
FOR AUSTRALIAN
TROOPS IN THE
AREA.** (PHOTOGRAPHER
SGT F. A. C. BURKE)

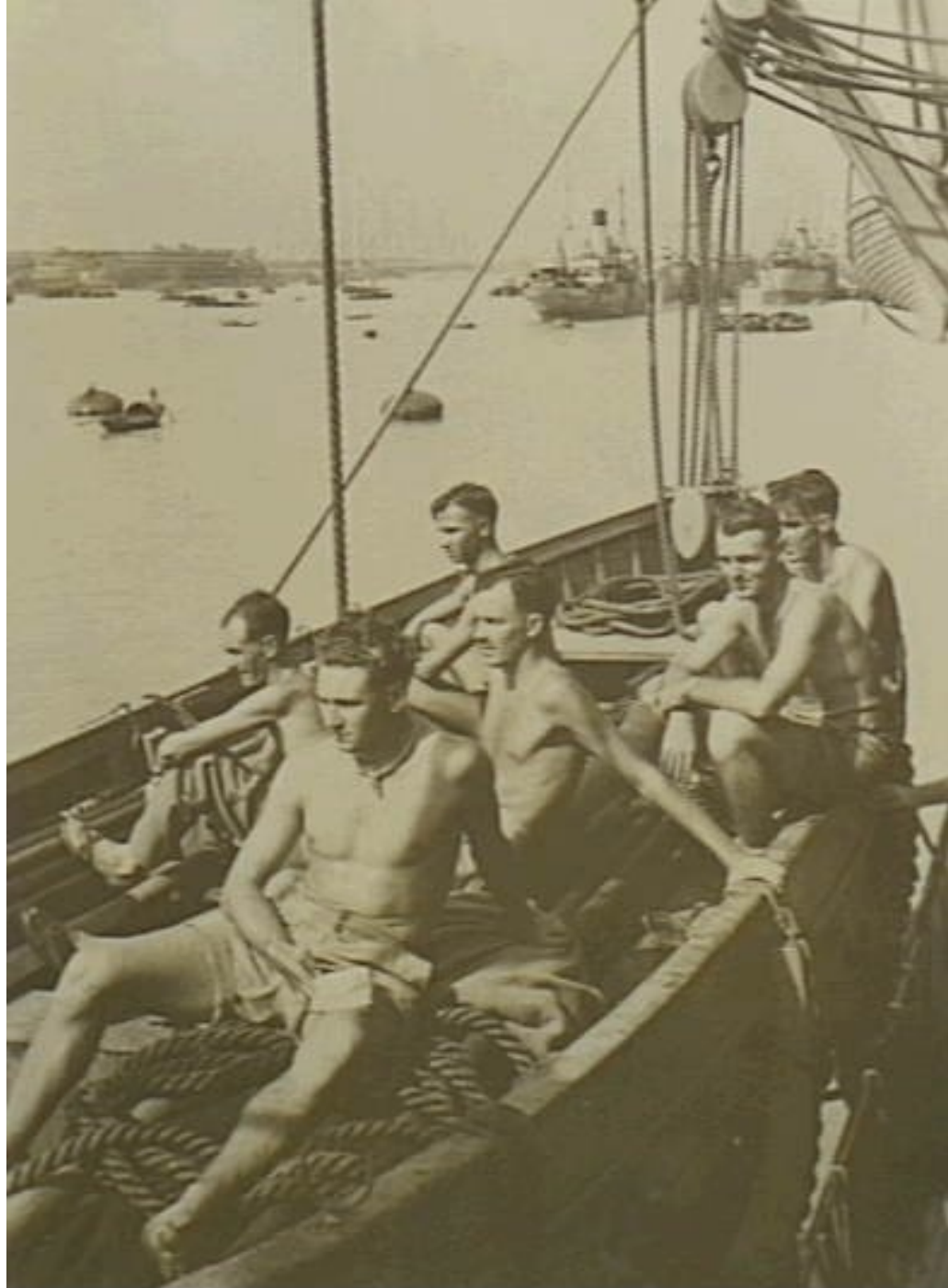


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Calcutta, India. c. October 1945. After being identified with all phases of the aerial war in Mountbatten's South East Asia Command, the first large draft of RAAF aircrew to leave since Japan's capitulation embarked on the SS Sontay. They are due to arrive at Fremantle, NSW, on 17 October 1945 and Sydney, NSW, on 27 October 1945. Sun-tanning in a lifeboat, the Australians take a last look at Calcutta with the recently built Howrah Bridge in the background. Before making open sea the SS Sontay had to steam downstream in Hooghly River for two days.





**DUGUMUR BAY, NEW
GUINEA. 1944-06-14.
MEMBERS OF 4TH
INFANTRY BATTALION
SUNBAKING ON THE
BEACH UNDER THE
GUARD OF A SENTRY, AT A
TWO POUNDER ANTI-
TANK GUN SITED FOR
BEACH DEFENCE AGAINST
BARGE ATTACK.**



**GERALDTON,
AUSTRALIA. 1942-
10. PHOTOGRAPH
TAKEN DURING
FIELD EXERCISES BY
2ND AND 4TH
AUSTRALIAN
DIVISIONS, OF A
MEMBER OF A
FLYING COLUMN
SUNBAKING AND
WRITING LETTERS
HOME WHILST
RESTING IN THE
"FORWARD" AREA.**



**Gibraltar. C.
1945-04. A
Lockheed
Ventura aircraft
of RAF Coastal
Command flies
off the end of
the runway
over some
sunbathers
resting on the
sand after a
swim.**

