

Ted Standfield's Army Life

Like many war veterans Ted spoke very little of his war experience with the family. His Service Records provide the bones of the story and showed that he committed to service before war broke out.

Ted Standfield enlisted in the Militia Forces on 13/12/1938 at Kooweerup. He joined the 14th Battalion, the "Pahran Regiment". The period of enlistment was three years. By the end of 1939 Ted had risen to the rank of Corporal. This would have been a part time commitment. His papers show the commitment was further formalised when on 2/7/1940 at Seymour was mobilised, enlisted for war service. In early January 1941 he was transferred to the 52 Battalion.

The Militia became the C.M.F., the Citizens Military Forces. The Militia was organized to maintain the structure of the First AIF (the World War 1 army) and kept the same numerical designations. The Militia units were distributed in the same areas the original AIF units were raised.

Consequently, Militia units were also known by the name of their shire. Thus, the Victorian 14th Infantry Battalion was the "Pahran Regiment", while the 52nd Infantry Battalion was the "Gippsland Regiment".

Ted was called up for full time defence on 3/10/41 had changed from being a part-time soldier to fulltime. He was stationed at Seymour for training. In January 1942 he



Ted Standfield in Militia uniform, c1938

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had advanced to the rank of sergeant and selected for further training at the Infantry, Officer Training School, Bonegilla, near Albury. Selected soldiers were given Officer training for ten weeks then sent back to their units with recommendations that they might be considered for a commission.

Ted didn't qualify for an officer's commission, but he was recommended as a NCO, Non Commissioned Officer known as a Warrant Officer.

The confidential report of this course, a very brief document, includes these two items

- **Instructional Ability:** Fair needs to develop more aggression and drive.
- **Personal Note:** A Quiet type who may develop with experience.

His instructor was a Lt Col Huxtable, he could have been a relative, Ted's grandmother was Victoria Huxtable.

On 12/9/42 he was transferred to 24 Battalion, he did some training at Woodside in South Australia and from there he was sent for more training at Bonegilla. He eventually was moved into the AIF, the regular army in November 1943. He was, in June 1944, sent to New Guinea to join the 24th Battalion. Presumably he had been in training and was in reserve in Australia. He was in New Guinea for two months then in August 1944 the Battalion was returned back to Australia. The men were given 7 weeks leave, then training on Atherton Tableland for two months before returning to New Guinea, this time to Bougainville. The Dutch Motor Vessel "Van Heutz" transported the unit from Cairns, Qld., to Torokina, Bougainville



Sgt. Ted Standfield



W.O. Ted Standfield

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A booklet that Ted had, a 'Pictorial Battle History' has a picture of Ted in the jungle on Bougainville. There is no mistaking him, even if he is facing away from the camera.



Another Job by "B" Coy was that undertaken by a patrol under W.O. Standfield to relieve a tractor train which had been ambushed by the Japanese. The picture above shows the patrol advancing along Buin Road. W.O. Standfield was wounded shortly after the picture was taken.

From 24th A.I.F., Pictorial Battle History.

We don't know how bad the wound was. Ted was to spend the rest of the war here on Bougainville. He was on Bougainville from 29/12/44 to the 7/12/45 when the battalion returned to Townsville on the transport "Canberra". Ted was demobilised and discharged on 21/12/45.

In total Ted served 1503 days in the army, 408 of those days in New Guinea.

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Ted with mates during the war. The chap on the right is Alan Colvin who he went into business with and together they started the Kooweerup Motor Garage.



In between all of this, in February 1943, Joy was born. Ted was lucky enough to be home for her birth. This photo was taken within weeks of Joy's arrival.