

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY UNIVERSITY REGIMENT.

30 years old today.

1979 is the 30th year of our unit's existence and as a special feature we have compiled this brief history of the Regiment.

Following the Second World War the Australian Army was reorganized for a peacetime role. The Citizen Military Forces (CMF) was re-established from wartime militia and populated by veterans from the militia and 2nd AIF. It was designed as a complement to the newly established Australian Regular Army (ARA) and its units were given the names of some of Australia's most battle honoured units.

In order to provide leadership for this force the government established several University Regiments on the campuses of universities around Australia. Among these was the Perth University Regiment, which was officially raised on April 22, 1949. Before the year was out, however, the University of Western Australia had protested to the army that the unit was incorrectly named. By August, therefore, the unit came to adopt the title Western Australian University Regiment (WAUR).

Compulsory military service for all young men was introduced in 1950 and the role of WAUR was seen as providing officers for the CMF, whilst at the same time giving military training to undergraduates. The first unit depot was a large flying boat shed located on the river within the university campus at Crawley. Flight Lieutenant A.H. Morton DFC, of the RAAF Reserve was the Regiment's first Adjutant. At the same time he was a lecturer in Physics at the University and so fulfilled two roles for many of the unit's members - that of teacher and commander. By January 1951 the Regiment had a total strength of one officer and seven OR's.

With national service in full swing the strength of WAUR increased to a stage where separate platoons were formed at Claremont Teacher's Training College. A further bonus was given to the unit in 1955 when IEM the Queen approved the affiliation of WAUR with the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Regiment, now known as the Royal Green Jackets (the first Rifle Regiment).

In 1957 the national service programme was scrapped and the CMF became a totally voluntary organization. During the following year WAUR was presented with its colours as part of an Australia wide conferral of honours to CMF units. On May, 25, 1958 the colours were presented by the Queen's representative, His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia, Lieutenant General Sir Charles Gairdner, KCMG, KCVO, CB, CBE. The ceremony took place on the University campus in front of Winthrop Hall. Judging by the photographs of the event, WAUR paraded with a

strength of approximately 130 to 160 personnel all ranks. Imagine today's WAUR attempting to do the same and at the original location !

By the end of the 1950's WAUR had become established as one of Western Australia's most active CMF units. With its depot now at the present location of Mounts Bay Road its members engaged in a number of intra and inter-unit competitions. One such activity was basketball and in 1959 WAUR fielded a well organized team consisting of Capt. B.J.Silbert, WO.2.J.R.J.Beckett, Sgt. D.L.Talbot (Capt), Pte. C.L.Jarvis, Pte. W.S.Brockway, Pte. P.Simper, Pte. McDonald-Taylor, and Pte. L.C.Ranford.

In 1960 the Indonesians under Sukarno began purchasing huge quantities of soviet arms and equipment. This build up, coupled with increasing instability in Vietnam caused the Australian government to reintroduce compulsory national service. Unlike the national service of the 1950's the new conscription was selective and offered conscripts a choice of two years full time service in the AAA or five years in the CMF. With this conscription came a major influx of personnel into WAUR. During the 1960's the Regiment's strength rose to a stage where the attendance at annual camps was in the region of 300 strong.

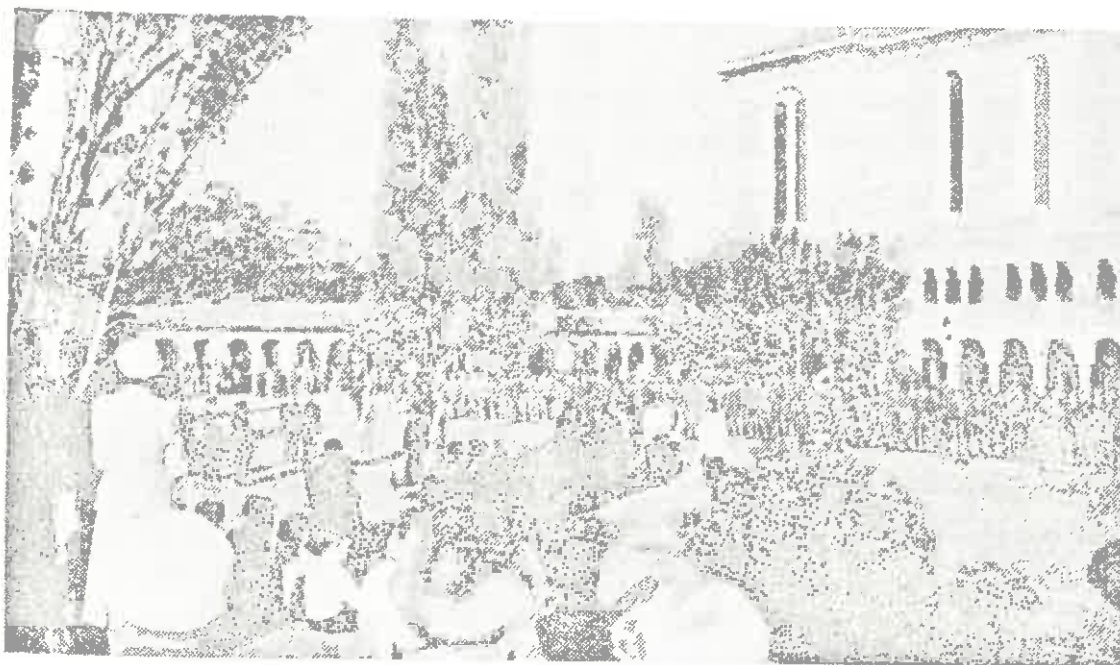
The increase in strength allowed WAUR to establish its own band, transport and medical platoons. In January 1965 the Regiment held its annual camp under canvas at Collie. A photograph of one of the morning parades shows some four platoons or companies with the band just visible behind a tree plus a motor pool of at least ten vehicles. During this same camp the Regiment was delighted by a visit from Miss Australia 1965, Carol Jackson. At the same time a few intrepid souls crossed the mighty Collie River by assault boat.

By 1972 anti-war feeling against Australia's involvement in Vietnam was extremely high both in the media and on campuses around the country. In that year national service was ended and the obligations of conscripts waived. As a result of this and the strong anti-military feeling in the community the unit's strength dropped significantly. So low did the Regiment's numbers fall that in 1974 there was a serious consideration afoot to close it down and merge us with OCTU.

1974 was also the year of the Miller Committee Report on the CMF, which recommended that both the part-time and regular armies be brought closer together. Following this report the CMF came to be known as the Australian Army Reserve (A Res), and such things as pay, conditions of service and equipment were brought parallel with the AAA.

From 1975 the unit began showing signs of recovery. Recruiting, which had been almost non-existent in 1974 took an upward spiral. A target of 200 members was set that year and a recruiting bounty introduced. By the end of 1977 the unit actually reached this target. Also in 1975 the first edition of WAURIOR sprang forth from amongst the intake of the May '75 Recruit Camp.

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ABOVE: presentation of Regimental colours outside Winthrop Hall, May 25, 1958. In the days when LSD meant pounds, shillings and pence.

BELOW: Collie annual camp January, 1965. The band is just visible behind the tree in the centre of the photo. This scene could be the image of future things to come ???





With the increase in numbers several changes occurred in the structure and function of the Regiment. The first of these was the introduction of WRAAC personnel in 1977. A traditionally all-male unit the introduction of female members has been highly successful with no serious problems being encountered.

The second major change was the realization that not all members of WAUR wished to undergo officer promotion. In response to this the then CO. Lt. Col. H.G. Mawson approved the establishment of a Specialist Platoon in 1976. Their first camp was run in January and February of 1977 at Northam which concentrated upon anti-armoured warfare. The platoon commander was Lieutenant I.J. Tindale.

By the middle of 1977 the Regiment had acquired four 81mm mortars and a full Support Company had been established with an Assault Pioneer and Mortar Platoon. In 1978 Support Company had been eaten up by HQ Company because the unit was not entitled to its own Support Coy. However, in that year the Regiment gained a new CO. Lt. Col. R.M. Willox. He rationalized the situation concerning companies and postings, creating the current organization of A Company, HQ Company, and Training Company. A Company comprises two rifle platoons and a support platoon. HQ Company has all the admin, tech and logistics elements of the unit, whilst Training Company continues to train recruits through to officer promotion.

Today, WAUR has an approximate strength of 180 members with many backgrounds and occupations. Still primarily a regiment of university students its main role today is to give undergraduates a sound military training, with officer promotion as a secondary aim. An air of enthusiasm and confidence currently permeates the Regiment. This can be seen in the recent success of its members at winning the 12km endurance march from Perry Lakes to Karrinup last year - which they completed in one hour, 29 minutes and 46 seconds carrying full gear and weapon. This team consisted of the Adjutant Capt. N. Partridge, Lt. P. Hopkins, Sgt. B. Farrelly, Sgt. D. Hosking and Pte. M. Stewart.

30 years has passed and many young men, and now women, have passed through the unit's ranks. Our colours do not carry any battle honours and as a unit we have never actually gone to war, yet many of our ex-members are now community leaders who through their service - no matter how brief - gained an invaluable experience that will hopefully continue to be provided for many years to come.

