A HISTORY OF THE
10TH AUSTRALIAN FIELD AMBULANCE (A.I.F) IN WW2
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FOREWORD

History in many cases can make for dull reading, but not this memorable and nostalgic history of the experiences of the unit during the war years and also a record of the development and progress of the 10th Field Ambulance (A.I.F.) Association during the post war period.

Les Williams has compiled a fascinating and extremely well researched volume of excellent and very readable material always with emphasis on the parts played by the individual.

Naturally, at times there is the understanding of the horrors and tragedies of warfare and the living conditions endured by all personnel, but such accounts are interspersed with humorous and often bizarre events that happened to many individuals during the performance of their various wartime duties.

It is with pleasure and not a little humility that I write this foreword, and I can thoroughly recommend this volume to all our members and their families.

Dr. D.J.M. Dunn

PREFACE

The history of the 10th Australian Field Ambulance (A.I.F.) in World War 2 is written as a tribute to the members who served in this fine unit. This history deserves to be recorded for several reasons.

Firstly, the unit had a high standard and unenviable record in caring for their wounded and sick comrades.

Secondly, their courage in times of danger, hardship and deprivation was never in question.

Thirdly, the experiences of those years formed a unique and close bond of friendship and comradeship that has endured to the present day. Out of that daily sharing have come many anecdotes, serious and funny.

Hence the title of this history: CARE, COURAGE AND CAMARADERIE.

Further compelling reasons are the need to consider our departed members. Widows, brothers, sisters, children, grandchildren and perhaps friends and more distant relatives deserve to know of the service and sacrifices of their loved ones during the war.

Lastly, this project was started by Kel White back in 1972. Had he lived I aim sure he would have completed it much sooner and more ably than I.

I am indebted to Kel and his friends who started the project off in the 1970’s and by making a precis of the unit’s war diaries and gathering other information set the ground work for the completed task.
Tenth Tit-Bits, instigated and edited until his death by Kel White and since most capably by Ron Woff, has had an enormous influence in keeping members of the unit together and informed. It has been a prolific source of material for this history. The annual address, proposing the toast to the unit at our Anzac Day reunion, reproduced in Tenth Tit-Bits, has also given me a lot of useful material.

For the tactical side of the campaigns in which the unit was involved I have relied mainly on Alan S. Walker's excellent book, “The Island Campaigns”.

There were of course lighter moments and as time goes by these seem to be remembered more than the serious side. I have been fortunate in having a plentiful supply of the lighter incidents recorded in Tenth Tit-Bits.

This book has been a co-operative effort. Many members have supplied suggestions, (the title is Ron Woff's suggestion). Others have written in letters giving their own experiences, supplied me with photographs, allowed me access to their personal diaries kept during the war, given me oral information of areas where I was not personally involved and so on. My task has merely been to collect all this material and hopefully put it into a coherent and readable form.

I have neither prior experience nor qualifications for authorship, but have enjoyed the task of compiling this history, (although it has been a larger task than I envisaged when I first set out.) In this regard my wife’s help has been invaluable. I trust now that readers will obtain similar enjoyment. My thanks go to all who have contributed.

Leslie Williams.