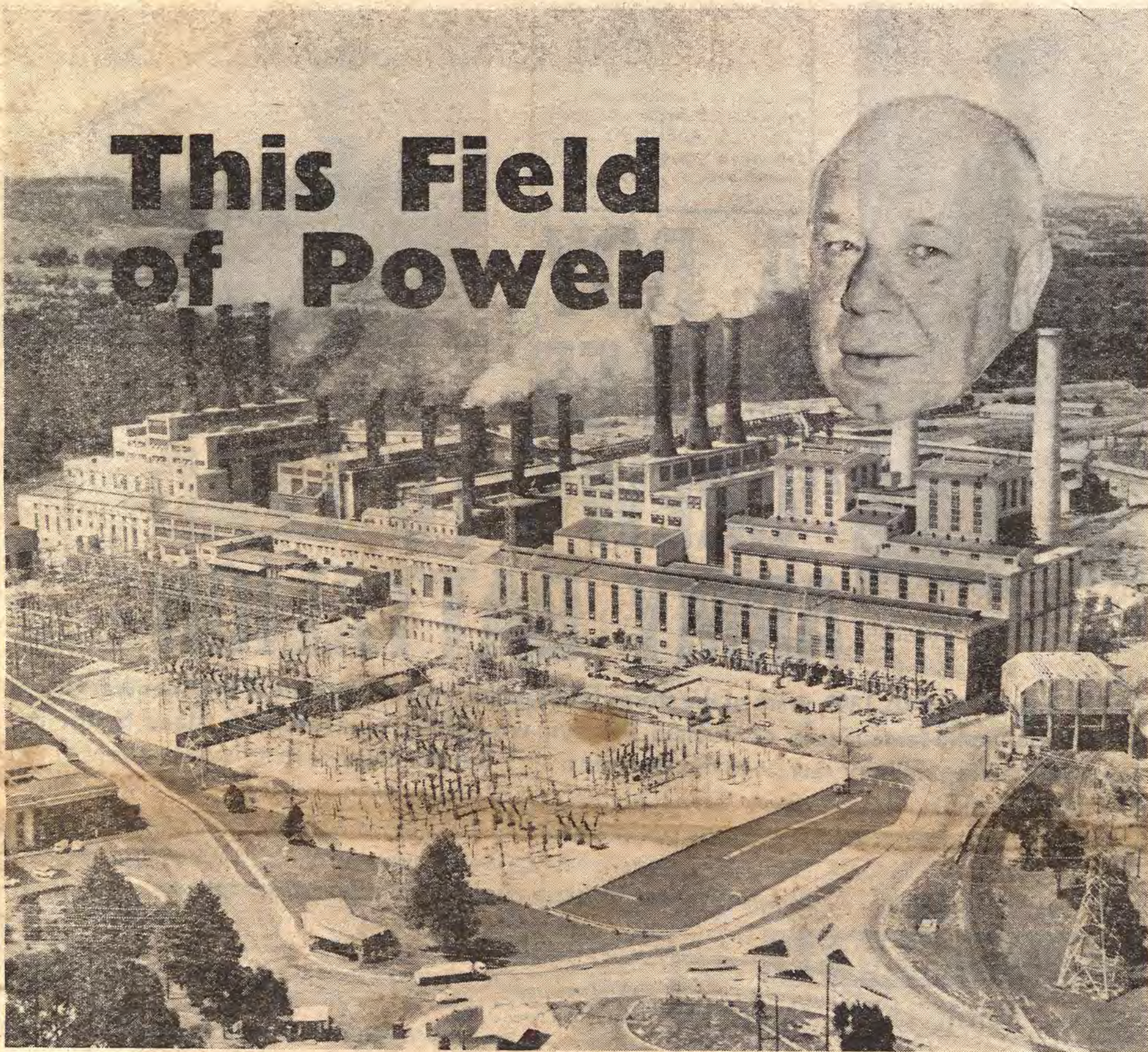


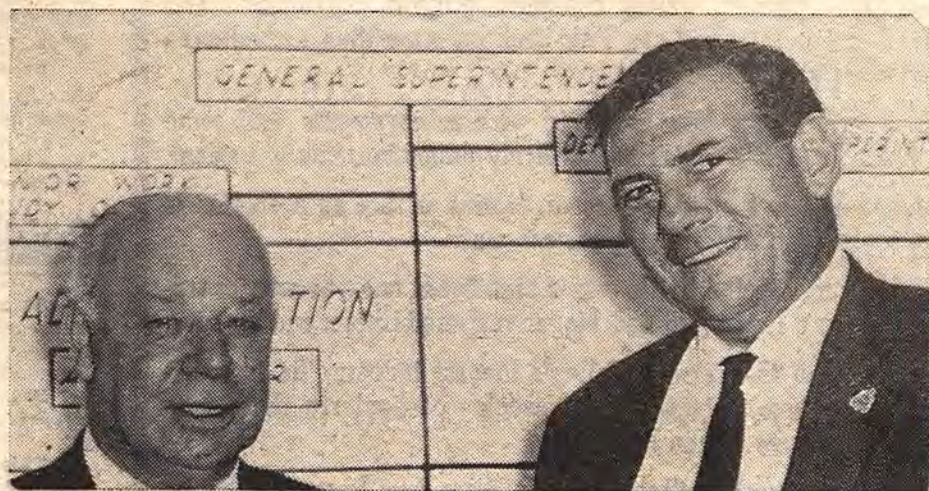
# This Field of Power



★ **YALLOURN POWERHOUSE**, where the might of the State Electricity Commission generates 64 per cent. of the power needed in Victoria. This has been Brigadier John Field's domain for 17½ years.



★ **GLIMPSES OF JOHN FIELD AT WORK**—Pensive mood (above) as Australia's Prime Minister, the then Right Honorable R. G. Menzies, signs the visitors book at Yallourn SEC Reception Centre, prior to a tour of the Yallourn undertakings. Planting a tree at Yallourn (above right) as one of the first steps to beautify the Yallourn Storage Dam. Handing over the guiding reins (at right) to the new General Superintendent of the Latrobe Valley SEC, Mr J. W. Schulz, of Morwell.







★ BUGLER BOY JOHN FIELD as he was at the age of 15 years at Castlemaine, his home-town.

## PART ONE

● Life in Castlemaine . . . influence of Army and traditions . . . schooling . . . the formative years . . . World War II begins . . . troops leave for action . . .

# A BOY BUGLER

# "GREW" TO LEAD ARMY BATTALION



★ FATHER AND SON—Colonel John Woodhouse Barnett Field poses with his son, the then Captain John Field. This picture was taken in Castlemaine in July of 1926. Colonel Field, who died in 1954, had dropped rank to fight in the First World War, and was

badly wounded on Gallipoli. John Field led his own brigade in the Second World War and was one of Australia's most distinguished soldiers in campaigns in Egypt and New Guinea. At one stage he was posted as dead.

The headlines of April 10, 1899, were of the stormclouds gathering for the start of the Boer War . . . Of the later internationally-famous case of Captain Dreyfus, wrongfully sent to Devil's Island by the French for supposedly selling military secrets to the Germans . . . But the main news in a quiet street of Castlemaine (Victoria) that day was that Emily Field had been safely delivered of a boy.

The story of John Field, of Yallourn—the boy bugler who became a distinguished soldier in World War II, and later head of the State Electricity Commission in the thriving Latrobe Valley of Victoria's powerfields—could not be said truly to have begun on that day in Castlemaine . . . the beginning was far away, thousands of miles across many seas.

## EDITORIAL

### MAN AMONG MEN

**JOHN FIELD has been a leader in war and peace; a dedicated man on and off the battlefields; a man among men.**

Literally born a soldier—his father was as much a soldier as a soldier could be—John Field's record as an engineer, soldier and citizen has carved a permanent niche in the annals of Australian Army records and the thriving industrial Latrobe Valley.

Born a leader—a quality he inherited from his father—Field was a strategist long before his first taste of war.

He became a full-blooded soldier without any cadet training. This was something of a rarity among World War II army leaders.

From bugler boy to Brigadier, John Field carried his sword high at all times, and won through.

As a soldier he led men with confidence and understanding.

As a servant of the State Electricity Commission he has carried on with the same approach. And again gained results.

Now, on the eve of his retirement as general superintendent of the S.E.C. Latrobe Valley combined projects of Yallourn and Morwell, Brigadier Field can look back on more than a chequered career as soldier and servant.

His road to this hour is paved with achievements, and some sacrifices. His S.E.C. career halted Army promotion, this is evident.

What he has had to bypass or decline in life as a soldier is forgotten in reflections of a senseless war.

Field's role in the battle was a significant one—as was everyone's. But, as a leader, he had bigger responsibilities, and worries.

As head of the Latrobe Valley's biggest industry he is something of an unseen giant to most people—particularly those who know him only as a man at a desk.

**But to the more fortunate others—those who know him as he really is, a friend—he is indeed a man among men.**

The pre-John Field times in the farming community of Beccles in Suffolk, England, offer the true beginning.

From this quaint place of green pastures in 1852 migrated another John Field, destined to become the grandfather of the man who makes the story This Power of Field.

England's John Field left the Motherland to try his luck in quest of fortune and fame on "the vast goldfields of Australia."

Like many of his countrymen, Field didn't have the results of the "lucky ones."

### Towering heights

So, he traded digging implements for the reins of a teamster, and freighted supplies to several goldfields, including the then boom town of Walhalla.

In the towering heights and slopes of Walhalla, 4000 people lived amid the scene of constant activity as men, women and children delved into the depths of mines and scoured the creeks and valleys.

John Woodhouse Barnett Field was born at Castlemaine in 1864, the eldest of a family of six. He had to go out and work soon after turning 14, when his teamster father was knocked down by a horse and killed.

This probably accounted for his determination and courage so evident in his later military life; qualities inherited by his only son, John.

Castlemaine was a busy, bustling town — big and expanding. It's main growth followed the gold-rush days on the Mount Alexander goldfields, with Castlemaine the centre of activities.

Even then Field was born and bred amid further "army" influence. Mount Alexander was a name honouring the famed Alexander the Great, one of history's earliest army tacticians. The name-place was given by Major Mitchell, one of Victoria's earliest explorers.

### Guiding parents

As a lad, John Field enjoyed the same way of life as hundreds of other youngsters in Castlemaine. He went to the local State School, and joined in the usual pranks of the rest of the boys.

But, he showed a gift for painting with water colours that few boys are fortunate to have in early life.

This gift blossomed as the years rolled by, and offered a sharp contrast in the stamp of John Field as a leader of men—in war and peace.

One aspect of home life, other than the constant contact with Army traditions and activities

that paved the way for a learned John Field was the supply of reading material, especially books, that came to the lad via his guiding parents.

(Even today he can vividly remember churning through the pages of 'Robinson Crusoe' and 'The Coral Island'—classics that have thrilled boys for so many years).

Sporting interests never took command of the young Field. He played football, cricket and other customary school sports "to be in the fun with the other boys," but he preferred to be an on-looker.

"I was like the great Australian public majority—content to watch on in sport," he retorts.

His secondary schooling was at Castlemaine High and Technical Schools.

### "... Quite a figure..."

Field's father had his own convictions about a soldier and the army, but he never ceased to let people know he was contemporary of brilliant leaders Sir James McCay and Sir John Monash.

"He cut quite a figure in uniform on horseback," exclaims John Field.

And the bugler boy of 'those early times' should know.

Son 'Jack' was "a sort of unofficial batman" to Field, snr.

He looked after the colonel's horse, polished the saddlery and then joined the admiring crowds to "watch that impressive-looking gentleman, on that lovely horse."

### Dropped rank

John Field was enlisted in the Army by his father in 1910, and almost immediately had the services in difficulty. He was so small—even for a boy bugler—they had to have a special uniform made for him.

At that time young Field's main ambition had been to enter Duntroon College—this appeared the logical start if he were to tread a similar path as his father.

An everyday clerk, J. W. B. Field was an army man every inch of the way. When World War I broke out he dropped rank from Lieutenant-Colonel to Major to make sure he would see action.

At 51 he still didn't think it was time to take on a desk job—not while there was fighting to do across the seas.

And when the time came for embarkment en-route to Gallipoli, John Field and his mother went to Broadmeadows, just out of Melbourne, where Major Field's 'boys' of the 8th Battalion Infantry (A.I.F.) were in camp.





★ **THE ACCESSION OF SIR ERNEST CLARK** as State Governor of Tasmania, on August 4, 1933. Captain John Field carried a ceremonial sword in the colourful pre-ceremony parade in Hobart. The Governor is seen inspecting the 40th Battalion's guard of honour. Field was three years later promoted to major in the 40th Battalion.

★ **CONTRAST IN MEN** as these Australians of the 2nd World War stand-to in Britain in 1940, under Major John Field. But these men were of similar breed to the men of Gallipoli who followed John Field's father into action.



## A SWORD FOR HIS SON

The 8th Battalion, with its official colour patch of red and white, was recruited mainly from Ballarat and the Western District, so there were many Castlemaine men at Broadmeadows waiting until the all-clear was given for the troopship to steam out of Melbourne.

But before he left for battlefields unknown, the doting father called "Jack" aside and gave him a ceremonial sword. J. W. B. Field had the sword as one of his proudest possessions since the opening of the First Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne in 1901, when the Duke and Duchess of York had come out from England to officiate.

Field sr. had been a commander of a guard for the opening. (John Field used the sword extensively for ceremonial parades and inspections in Army duties when he became an officer, and until the Second World War).

And how bugler boy "Jack" wanted to play an active role in the Army. But he was only 15. "I would've gone with my father had they let me," he recalls.

Instead, it was back to a working life at Castlemaine as a trainee draughtsman with Thompson's Engineering and Pipe Co. Ltd.

# BULLET IN HEAD DURING THE FIGHTING

Major Field landed at Gallipoli, and was one of the first men to be mentioned in despatches for the 8th Battalion. But later at Krithia (on **AT GALLIPOLI...**) he was badly wounded when shot in the head.

The bullet went into his cheek, through the roof of his mouth and into the jawbone.

The major was sent to England for about six months to recuperate.

He sent back many letters to Castlemaine, and "Jack" absorbed all his father wrote. "While there was the usual anxiety in the house—and remember, I had two sisters—the family took great pride in what father had done," recalls John Field.

Much of the letter content gave lengthy descriptions to the English scene, and gave incentive to the young Field to visit there if the chance arose.

## Numbing pain

Early in 1916 Field, snr., took charge of the 60th Battalion in Egypt. It was a newly-formed group, but comprised members of the 'old' 8th and new reinforcements. He was now Lt.-Colonel, again.

Numbing pain, the aftermath of the brush with death in the form of a bullet at Krithia, was a constant companion.

But Field continued on, temporarily, and led his men with the courage and strategy that would have done justice to the skill of Alexander, McCay or Monash.

In mid-July of 1916, Field, snr., was repatriated to Castlemaine to resume civilian life as a clerk. He brought home more than a painful injury and memories of battles on many fronts.

The 53-year-old fighting leader had been awarded a V.D. award—Volunteer Decoration, which later became known in Army ranks as an E.D.—Efficiency Decoration.

John Field had not been idle on the home front.

When he wasn't labouring in his work as a draughtsman he was engaged in his volunteer work with the citizens' army, continuing to serve through the ranks. Naturally, promotion came as a result of his efficiency and will to better himself.

The one-time boy bugler didn't require a miniature uniform as he passed through his teens. He became a corporal, and in turn, a sergeant.

In 1922, the year before he was commissioned as a lieutenant, 7th Battalion, in the Australian Army, John Field married Miss Kate Corlett, a former Lancashire (England) girl, who was a State School teacher at Castlemaine.

Her father, William Corlett, was a managing textile expert with the Castlemaine Woollen Company who had migrated to Australia a few years before, bringing his wife and two daughters.

Both "Jack" and Kate went to Castlemaine High—but "I didn't sight her . . . I don't think." They were married in Castlemaine's Church of Christ, four years before shifting house to Tasmania. John Field had gone from apprentice draughtsman to leading draughtsman and wanted to improve his technical qualifications.

After a year at the University of Tasmania, he was appointed lecturer in drawing and design in the engineering school.

But that wasn't all. He was a 'busy boy' lecturing, doing an engineering degree part-time, maintaining his military obligations and running a home.

Mrs Field wasn't the only "lady of the house." Three daughters were keeping her busy. Wilma and Betty had been born in Castlemaine, and Nancy in Tasmania.

While in Hobart, Field held two staff appointments with the Army headquarters of the 6th Military District Base.

Living in Sandy Bay—the Fields were close to the site of the New University of Tasmania—John Field transferred his Army alliance and skill to the 40th Battalion in Hobart. (On July 10, 1925, he had been promoted to captain, 7th Battalion).

"These were intensive years. I cannot remember having worked so hard," says Field as the memories of his years at the University come flooding back. It gave him his Bachelor of Engineering degree.

## Future warfare

In 1932 Field's skill as a leader and tactician became even more evident when he won the Commonwealth Military Forces' Gold Medal for an essay paper on "The New Warfare."

Field's essay was one of three commended before the first prize was decided. The contest was open to all permanent officers of the Army and all officers in the citizens' forces.

His brilliance as a student of engineering, and the fact that he had read a great deal about the 1914-18 War, lent a guiding influence to his writing.

He has always been a crisp and clever writer—a vocation he might well have adopted and surely been successful—and he wrote fluently on the part likely to be played by mechanical equipment in future warfare.

His writings in the essay also dealt with the close co-operation that would be necessary between mechanical power and other arms.

## Further laurels

In 1935, Field was made an Associate member of the Institute of Engineers (Australia).

At Sydney in March, 1936, he attended an Army intelligence course, and was even then a recognised strategist.

Another Army promotion came on November 30, 1936, when he was made a major, 40th Battalion.

Field earned further laurels in September, 1938, when he was one of 12 officers chosen from all over Australia to undergo an officers' air liaison course at Richmond Air Base in New South Wales.

The course involved special training duties, the most vivid of which took place in Hawker-Demon two-seater training aircraft.

Lectures and table discussions took up the morning's time, and in the afternoon it was up aloft in the bi-planes.

You have to know what a Hawker-Demon plane is like to appreciate fully what the officers went through.

They were sent into the skies and told to pinpoint some faraway place on the map. The officers were strapped into what would normally be the rear-gunner's position.

It was quite an art to wriggle into position and secure all straps.

The parachute, in case of a hasty and unwelcome exit, was on a rack at the rear of the gunnery position. It would have taken many anxious moments to secure the chute.

The bi-planes flew high, and most of the pin-pointing centred on railway trains—tallying up carriage and possible troop contents.

The Hawker-Demons could twist and turn fairly intricately, although the officer didn't have a comfortable ride during aerobatics. So, train drivers were spared the fright of low-flying planes checking on the train numbers.

Naturally, there were artillery shoot-ups, and that meant careful plotting of courses by the two officers. But it presented no problems to John Field.

But, it was his first experience of service flying—an experience that wouldn't run within a cooee of a drama later to unfold in the tropical jungle of New Guinea.

In 1938 he was admitted as a member of the American Society of Engineers.

## War exploded

From April 6 to October 12 of 1939 the then Major Field was engaged in full-time duty on preparation and execution of mobilisation plans at headquarters of the 6th District Base.

On September 4, 1939, the Germans invaded Poland and the Second World War exploded across the nations of the globe.

The Army "borrowed" the services of Field from the University of Tasmania, on October 12, 1939, ending his 13 years on the Apple Isle.

The Fields—John, Kate and daughters Wilma, Betty and Nancy—left for the mainland as Australia's part in the war's initial stages became imminent.

Field's Army association as a bugler boy was just before official cadet corps were launched, so he actually became a "full-blooded soldier" without cadet experience.

This is something of a rarity among Army leaders who directed operations for Australia's armed forces during World War II.

## The Queen Mary

There were 800 men in Field's 2/12th Battalion (A.I.F.), waiting at Sydney in 1940, ready to sail into action.

When and "in what" they would head into the oceans was on top secret lists—but John Field stood with an Army VIP on the roof of a multi-storied bank building in Sydney and watched his ship anchor in the harbour.

It was the 81,237-ton liner Queen Mary, pride of the Cunard Line in England.

But her drab-looking grey form was merely HMT-XI to the troops waiting within sight of the famed Harbour Bridge.

The world's largest passenger ship couldn't tie up at Sydney's wharves, but anchored in the deep water of the harbour, and the troops were ferried out, embarking through the shell doors in the side of the ship.

On May 5, 1940, the huge grey shape of the Queen Mary slipped out of Sydney Harbour and into the blue Pacific. For John Field, the war had begun.

## Look back

J. W. B. Field died in Castlemaine in 1954 at the age of 90½ — still a soldier with a warrior's heart.

The First World War veteran had been in indifferent health for many years as a result of the terrible wound received at Krithia during the Gallipoli campaign.

However, he was still active, and could remember with exceptional accuracy many of the stirring and history-making incidents of his battle days.

Colonel John Woodhouse Barnett Field was recognised as the district's authority on early local history.

A keen gardener in later years, he produced many plant and flower species for the beautiful Alexandra Gardens.

JWBF's wife, Emily, had died shortly after the Second World War, while son John was engaged in de-mobilisation service.

Brigadier John Field's three daughters married two fighter pilots and a scientist—and all now live in Melbourne.

Wilma is Mrs M. Kemp, whose husband was a fighter pilot but is now a service manager for a fire-fighting organisation.

Betty married another ex-fighter pilot to become Mrs P. M. Hooks, and her husband is now a practising architect.

Nancy is now Mrs I. D. Campbell, wife of a doctor of philosophy, and a scientist with the C.S.I.R.O.

With families of their own, this means Brigadier and Mrs Field have nine grandchildren.



## 'BULLDOG' INSPECTION

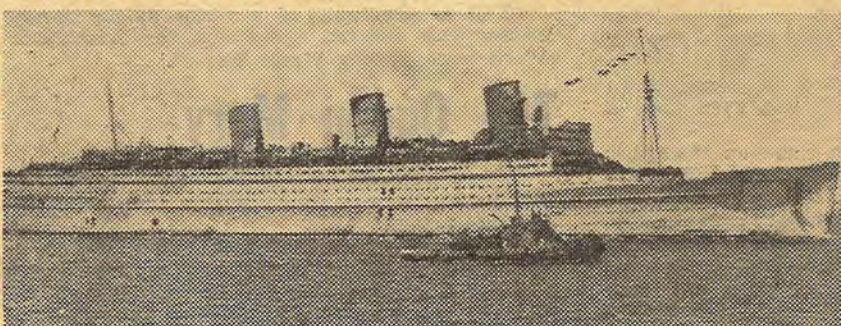


★ KING GEORGE VI PAYS A ROYAL VISIT to inspect the 9th, 10th and 12th Battalions of the 7th Brigade. Colonel John Field, in charge of the 12th, escorted His Majesty on the inspection, and King George spent several minutes asking Field questions of the men and Australia. "He was greatly impressed by the men," recalls Field.



## TRAGIC COLLISION — 338 DIED

The Queen Mary (pictured) was involved in one of Britain's worst naval disasters more than two years after John Field's battalion had stood on her decks en route to Scotland. It was a tragedy "kept silent" for nearly three years.



On October 2, 1912, the Queen Mary was carrying 10,000 American troops, making a rush voyage from Ireland to the Clyde. She was escorted by two destroyers—one of them being HMS Curacao.

Off the coast of Donegal—with the Queen Mary dwarfing her escorts—an alarm was raised. A suspected German U-boat had been sighted.

The Queen Mary immediately wheeled to starboard.

The Curacao raced towards the killer submarine. Then the liner's 81,237 tons smashed through Curacao at 30 knots.

The Curacao was sliced in two, and sank in five minutes.

Hardly damaged, the Queen Mary sped on to safety, away from the submarine's location, as 338 men from the stricken destroyer died.

The Admiralty kept the tragedy a fairly close secret until May, 1945.

Eventually, the House of Lords upheld an appeal judgment laying one-third of the blame on the Queen Mary.

The Cunard Line had been sued by the Admiralty for £1½ million damages. The line operated the Queen Mary.

Italian entry into  
to Gourock in Scotland

The gigantic Queen Mary couldn't tie up at the normal May of 1940, with 5000 Australian troops aboard. She had to call at Capetown (South Africa) and Freetown (Sierra Leone). But, she arrived at Gourock (North Ayrshire, Scotland), arriving there on June 16.

These Australian soldiers were of the 18th Brigade, and the 2/12th Battalion under Lt. Col. John Field was part of the brigade. The battalion had been partly raised in Tasmania, partly in Queensland, and trained mainly at Brighton (Tasmania) and Rutherford in New South Wales — as varied a lot of fighting men you could hope to find.

The Queenslanders were mainly from the Townsville, Cairns and Hinterland areas, coming from an unbelievable range of walks of life — sugar-cane cutters, cattlemen, farmers and industrial workers, and the odd white-collar worker, too. The Tasmanian men came from all parts of the Apple Isle . . . in all shapes and sizes — one chap even arrived at Brighton training camp in his dinner suit.

★ "BULLDOG'S HERE," went up the cry at Salisbury Plain in Britain on September 4, 1940. Winston Churchill and John Field inspect the troops of 2/12 Battalion.

The dinner-suit chap had been to an all-night party at Strahan the night before, then caught the train to the camp. All his mates at the party had autographed the once immaculate white dress-shirt, put a postage stamp on the pocket, and addressed the trainee soldier to the C.O. at Brighton.

INVASION OF ENGLAND  
APPEARED IMMINENT

After its arrival in Gourock, the 18th took part in strenuous anti-parachute training on the Salisbury Plain — the invasion of England by Hitler and the Germans seemed imminent. The brigade "on the plain" was also part of the reserve for the British Army Forces on the south-east coast.

The anti-parachute training also covered the protection of Middle Wallop Airfield, a key-point in the R.A.F. fighter system. The 'drome at Middle Wallop was among the most active during the Battle of Britain as a base for Hurricane and Blenheim fighters.

Transferred to Colchester in Eastern Command, the brigade was allocated the defence of the garrison town. Colchester was a picturesque town, despite the threat of invasion, and the presence of a poised army.

It was during these two programmes that John Field played host to two most important visiting dignitaries.

On Thursday, July 4, 1940, King George VI made an official inspection of the 9th, 10th and 12th Battalions at Salisbury Plain.

His Majesty chatted freely with many of the men, and asked questions of Field. Then the King approached one of the older soldiers of the brigade — he was obviously a veteran of World War I and should not (officially) have been serving with the brigade—and asked the soldier his age. Told the truth, the smiling king commented, "Good, pleased to see you are here again."

King George told Field he was most impressed with the fitness and general look of the battalions.

## "Nothing better than the best"

The second VIP visit was on September 4 the same year, when the then Hon. Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of England, made an inspection tour.

"Bulldog," as he was affectionately known, visited Salisbury Plain camp while enemy planes were active overhead. He wasn't the least perturbed.

"You men are a fine lot," he said over a public address system in front of the assembled brigade. "I will not say you can do better than those Australian soldiers I knew in the First World War, because nothing is better than the best. And they were the best."

This was typical of the Bulldog breed that was to become a characteristic of Churchill as he became England's voice in the ensuing crisis.

Shipped to Egypt, the 18th reached the Nile country on December 31, and had a special New Year re-uniting with the rest of the A.I.F. This was a big difference. Transition from green fields of England to the desert wastelands of Egypt had taken place, and the 2/12th went into camp 30 miles west of Alexandria.

## Rommel drives through Libya

It was originally intended that the battalion would go with the rest of the brigade to Greece—in fact, it was within two days of intended departure by ship from Alexandria that the immediate change of plans was necessary.

The Afrika Corps, under the German general, Rommel, were driving their way through Libya, and the 18th Brigade was ordered to Tobruk to help in the defence there.

Field led the 2/12th Battalion throughout the siege of Tobruk (April to September, 1941), and then played a key role in the garrisoning of Syria (September 1941 to January 1942).

At one stage, Field's battalion was occupying company posts at places along 160 miles of the Turkish front area in Syria at railway and road entrances to Syria. One company was stationed on the Euphrates River, where the river enters Syria from Turkey.

In February of 1942, Field took part in the movement of the A.I.F. back to Australia. Originally the A.I.F. were expected to be sent to Java, owing to the extent of the Japanese advance in the south west Pacific area, but a diversion was ordered to Australia.



# war diverted the 18th Brigade Scotland's Firth of Clyde

wharves as she headed towards the southern ports of England in late  
ad to drop anchor and lay off even the big ports of Freemantle (Aust.),  
with the entry of Italy into the war the ship was diverted to Gourock (Firth

● Training in Britain . . . then to Egypt . . . Siege of Tobruk  
PART TWO . . . in desert campaigns . . . Rommel drive . . . back home . .  
New Guinea and the Japanese . . .

Back in Australia in late March, the 2/12th spent a short time at Sandy Creek, near Gawler (South Australia) before being transferred in Tenterfield in Northern N.S.W.

Early in May Field was on a week's leave at home in Melbourne when he was advised of promotion to Brigadier. This was followed by an appointment to command the 7th Militia Brigade, at that time stationed at Rollingstone, 35 miles north of Townsville, Queensland. The 7th Militia was being employed in an outer defence role.

## Milne Bay build-up

Japanese landings on the north-east coast of Papua threatened the vital Milne Bay area, and in July of '42 the 7th Brigade was ordered to the Bay.

Although only a brigadier of a few weeks' standing, Field showed outstanding foresight and efficiency in the big build-up programme before Major-General C. A. Clowes formally assumed command.

During this build-up period until August 22, Milne Bay became a scene of tremendous activity. Atrocious conditions and limited equipment made the going almost impossible at times.

The major engineering tasks in the building-up called for the construction of bridges, roads, wharves and airfields. Accommodation to cater for newly arrived troops had to be developed at a constant rate.

And while all this was going on at a break-neck tempo, the troops had to be trained and conditioned to jungle warfare. Much of this training meant patrols into unmapped jungle. Field supervised all this up until the very moment Clowes took command.

In the meantime, the Milne Bay force had been strengthened by the arrival of the veteran 18th Brigade under Brigadier Wooten

## Bitter fighting

Then, on the night of August 25, the Japanese attacked.

Bitter fighting followed, and gradually the Australians gained the ascendancy, due in no mean way to the build-up preparations. The Japanese suffered their first defeat on land since the war had started in the east.

Brigadier Field was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his efforts as a leader before and during the Milne Bay operations.

It was evident after this great victory by the 7th Brigade that a militia properly trained and led was a force to be reckoned with.

## Slim's tribute

Recalling the victory at Milne Bay, Field is mindful that the success was due to a combined effort of the 18th (A.I.F.) and the 7th (Militia).

Field -Marshal Sir William Slim, in his story of the 14th Army in Burma, says of the historic feat: "We were helped, too, by a very cheering piece of news that now reached us, and of which, as a morale raiser, I made great use. In August and September of 1942, Australian troops had, at Milne Bay in New Guinea, inflicted on the Japanese their first undoubted defeat on land. If the Australians, in conditions very like ours, had done it, so could we. Some of us may forget that of all the Allies, it was Australian soldiers who first broke the spell of invincibility of the Japanese Army; those of us who were in Burma have cause to remember."

The 7th Brigade was transferred to Port Moresby in March of '43, and stayed there until December, when it was shipped to Australia for a period of leave, then rest, recuperation and training on the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland.

For a two-month period, Field administered command of the 3rd Division in Port Moresby, and again on the Atherton Tablelands, before the Brigade went back to New Guinea in July.

This time the Brigade was in the Madang area.

While there, Field figured in a dramatic episode after a plane crash. Missing in a party of five, he was nine days in the New Guinea jungle. All five were presumed dead. (Story on this drama, giving full details, next page).

November brought the Brigade back into active operations for the first time since Milne Bay. The 7th fought bitter battles with the Japanese in Bougainville. (This continued from November 13 until the end of the war).

Field led the brigade throughout this series of battles, with operations base at Torokina.

Fighting by the Australian troops in these times eventually paved the way for the important capture of Pearl Ridge, at the crest of the Emperor Range, astride the Numa Numa trail.

This gave the Allies clear observations of the east coast of Bougainville, and later in South Bougainville in the thrust along the coastal plain towards Buin.

Field was made a Commander of the British Empire as a result of his leadership during the operations from Torokina.

Field had long served under Lieutenant-General S. G. Savage, and he furthered this association in October 1945, even though the war had ended.

The Brigadier was seconded from the A.M.F. to the Department of Post-war Reconstruction as chief inspector of demobilisation on the staff of the Co-ordinator of Demobilisation and Dispersal, the position held by Savage.

In June of 1946, Field succeeded Savage as Co-ordinator. They had much in common, and fought together when Savage commanded the 3rd Division and II Australian Corps.

Later that year Brigadier Field joined the State Electricity Commission at Yallourn as assistant general superintendent to Mr. R. A. Hunt, who was to become chairman of the Commission.

## Outstanding events

Field's Army association did not end with his Yallourn appointment. He commanded the 4th Brigade, C.M.F., from February 1948 to October, 1949, and was group leader Central Gippsland Reserve of Officers Training Group from 1947-'53, before being placed on the retired list in 1954. (He had been appointed general superintendent at Yallourn in 1951).

Asked to look back on his chequered career as a soldier and leader, Field considers there were four outstanding vents in his military career.

First recollection is being appointed one of the first 12 battalion commanders in the Second A.I.F.; then the participation in the siege of Tobruk; the Battle of Milne Bay; and the success of the 7th Brigade's operations in Bougainville, particularly during Easter in 1945.



★ BRIGADIER JOHN FIELD at the height of New Guinea war operations against the Japanese.

## History was being made



★ HISTORY IS ABOUT TO BE MADE as the Japanese army and navy leaders arrive at Torokina, Bougainville, in the North Solomons, on September 8, 1945. Brig. John Field (hand on sword) awaits to escort Lieut. General Masatane Kanda, Commander of the 17th Japanese Army and Vice-Admiral Baron Samejima, Commander of the 8th Japanese Fleet, for the surrender ceremony. Commander A. E. Fowler, R.A.N., is at left of the picture.



# Jungle air smash... posted missing... presumed dead... ends...

On September 7, 1944, an Avro Anson of 9 Communication Squadron, R.A.A.F., took off from Lae airstrip in New Guinea and headed into the bumpy weather "up above." About 40 minutes later the 'plane crashed. Five men aboard were posted as "missing in an overdue aircraft; presumed dead." Widespread air-searches had been to no avail.

But the five were very much alive. It took a gruelling nine-day trek through dense jungle, and the return of a doubting Douglas aircraft to a disused airstrip to "bring the five back to life."

There was Brigadier John Field, experienced soldier, strategist and proven leader; Major John Summerton, Field's brigade major, also an experienced soldier; Private E. J. Hinch, Field's batman, not a fully-fledged part of the war, but keen and eager to do his job; Flying Officer H. L. Bennett, the pilot of the 'plane, cool, calm and collected; and Corporal A. H. Shepherd, a New Guinea Force signal courier, another "cool" character.

The Anson soared above Lae, high over the Huon Gulf at the Markham River, with destination Madang 180 miles to the northwest. Below, the turbid river flowed swiftly in a south-easterly direction through kunai-grassed plain, varying in width from one to 16 miles.

The grass gives way to dense rain-forest jungle, and some of the peaks in the Finis-terre Range—the central spine of New Guinea—reach upwards of 10,000 feet.

Yes, this was rough and mountainous country.

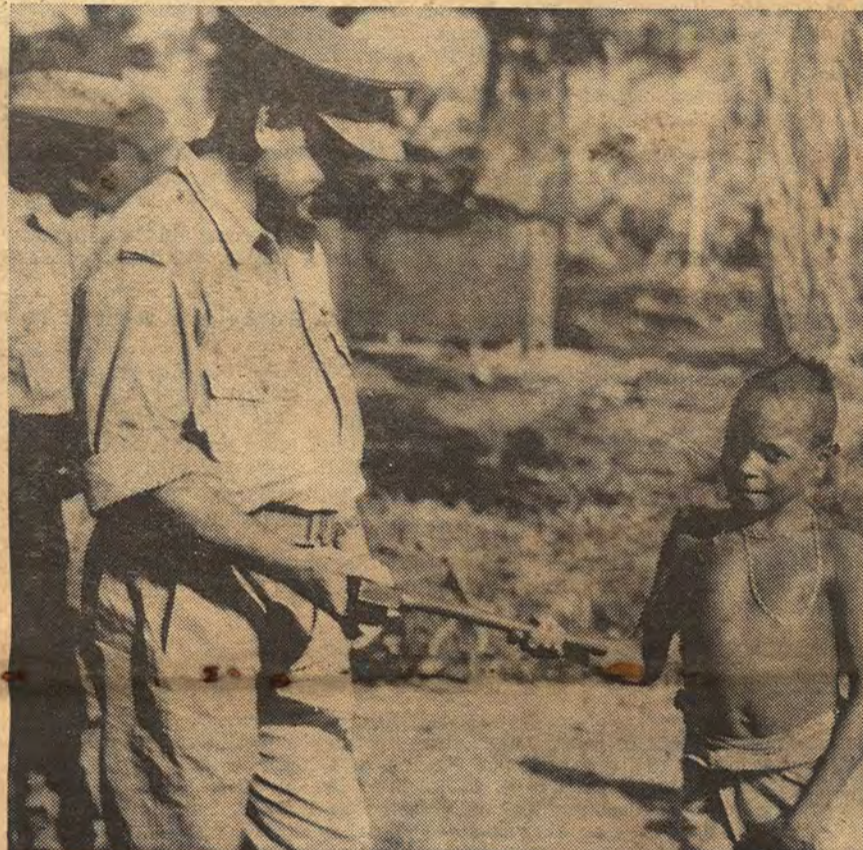
Visibility was poor—and within three-quarters of an hour the Anson was caught in a *cul-de-sac*—"a blind alley." Caught in the mountain range, it couldn't climb.

Bennett shouted to Hinch, "Tell them to do up their straps." But it was too late. "Everything happened in a flash, and the 'plane smashed through foliage," recalls Field.

"Limbs, small trunks of trees; crashing, breaking and cracking sounds filled the air. I had the impression of something coming back inside the fuselage and striking me above the eyes."

## PART THREE

● Avro Anson down... trek through New Guinea jungle... nine days and 70 miles...



★ PRESENTATION OF AN AXE by Brig. Field to one of the native boys who helped the five men to survive their jungle ordeal. Notice the brass lavatory chain and safety pin.

## JAPANESE SURRENDER—

### "This piece of history"

Brigadier John Field's own writings on the surrender of the Imperial Japanese Army are worth recording — a day when he "took part in this piece of history."

Field, writing in the September - October, 1956, issue of *Stand-To*, the journal of the Australian Capital Territory Branch of the R.S.L., says of that historical day:—"Masatane Kanda came in today. Lieutenant General in the Imperial Japanese Army, commander of all Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands and of the 17th Army, one time leader of the notorious 6th Division, aristocratic, and distinguished in the service of his Emperor, it was now his turn to surrender his sword in token of defeat.

"The 8th of September, 1945. As I waited for him with an escort party of officers on the steel pontoon wharf at Torokina, thoughts turned back to September three years ago when, in the dank jungle and plantations of Milne Bay, a halt was called, for the first time, to the flooding southward tide of Japanese conquest.

"Thoughts of how long and hard the road ahead then seemed, of the happy associations of the young,

inexperienced, but determined lads of the 7th Brigade with my old 18th Brigade comrades of Tobruk and of the grand fighting pilots of 75 and 76 Squadrons, R.A.A.F.

"Memories of that battle fought in almost continual rain, the problems of jungle fighting in New Guinea and the Solomons, the mud, sweat and discomfort of the tropics and the good Australians who had fought and toiled and died to pave the way for victory.

"Hard thoughts, too, of Japanese ruthlessness and their exemplification of 'total war' in the treatment of some of our men unlucky enough to fall into their hands and suffer before they died.

"Of the thoughts of those days, that henceforth the prosecution of the war could never be total enough for our part, and of the just desserts of Japanese brutality, arrogance and treachery.

"Yes, it was good to be here today and to have some part to play in this piece of history."

# NATIVE GUIDES SHOWED THE WAY OUT

The wreckage of the Anson settled to rest as the smell of escaping petrol pervaded the fuselage. Blood ran freely from Field's nose; the back of his left hand was cut, but he wasn't seriously injured. Nor was any of the other four.

## Field's "No" to autograph

A rather amusing thing happened to John Field after the seriousness of the peace treaty signatures ceremony at Torikina, Bougainville, North Solomons, on September 8, 1945.

When the surrender ceremony had terminated, the Japanese party were escorted back to their hut for lunch.

Lieutenant-Commander Shinkawa, who acted as an interpreter — and rather unintelligibly in the early stages, according to Field's notes on that day—produced a pencil and paper and asked for Field's autograph.

Field, in charge of the escort, refused.

Apparently the refusal was interpreted to mean Field could not write, for Shinkawa then said: "If you will say your name I will write it." Field told him that he did not care to give the autograph.

Shinkawa thereupon apologised, with smiles and typical Japanese suavity, for having presumed to ask for the autograph.

"Kick off those b—— switches," called Bennett. He, like the others, knew the fire risk was extreme—petrol poured from the broken connections in steady streams.

It took Field and Shepherd an hour to free the trapped Bennett and Hinch. Bennett's boot had been cut on the upper and his foot was gashed. Hinch had a nasty cut in the forehead and was suffering a great deal of pain in the chest.

## No hope of contact

The men retrieved possessions, moved away from the wreckage, took a much-needed rest, and bathed cuts, wounds, and bruises.

The Anson had carried no wireless, so there was no hope of making contact with the authorities.

Nor was there any hope of attracting passing aircraft in the rugged mountain area. The grey-green camouflage paint of the crashed aircraft blended to perfection in a bed of green rain-forest, foliage and deep shadows.

After a council of war the party moved off on its march.

They estimated they had flown about 100 miles before ditching, and it would be two or three weeks before they could hope to reach areas occupied by troops.

Food in hand comprised three emergency rations, one tin of chocolate, a tin of toffee peanuts, and a tin of salted peanuts—to be shared among five.

Field, Summerton and Hinch had a supply of atabrin tablets, medical first-aid tin, water sterilising tablets, mosquito repellent and water bottle.

Three ground sheets, two gas capes, three mosquito nets, three blankets and one light, waterproof coat were carried in packs and haversacks, together with shaving tackle, and the load was distributed as evenly as possible between the members of the party.

The official mail bag, salvaged from the wreckage, was in the care of Shepherd.

Field and Summerton had pistols and compasses, and Hinch an Owen sub-machine gun.

After an hour of hard going they crossed a mountain stream and reached a native trail, where a wild-looking native—armed with bow and arrows, and naked except for a loin-cloth and girdle of bones—rushed away shouting and gesticulating.

A turn in the track brought the five men to a native village, and Summerton had a parley with the natives—"the start of a beautiful friendship."

There were warriors in evidence, mostly old men, women and children.

The villagers gave the party sugar cane, and allowed the men to rest before taking them on to a nearby village.

## Touches of humour

Field recalls, with touches of humour, anxiety and fear, "One old fellow at this village rushed forward, jabbering and clucking. He stroked me under the chin, put one arm around my shoulder and rubbed his hand over my stomach. I didn't know whether he was trying to win friends and influence people, was an old chum, or whether I was being assessed for the evening pot!"

But it wasn't really a joking affair. The party was told, in earnest, after their rescue that they'd been the guests of the Kukukukus—a race notorious for treachery and stealing, with whom the New Guinea administration had often experienced trouble and lack of success in policing.

These sturdy nomadic hillmen have often ambushed and killed patrol officers, and inter-tribal warfare is common.

They are not vegetarians and have practised cannibalism when it suited them.

But, unmolested, the crash survivors went on their way, reaching another village.

They camped the night 200 yards from the village huts, and were assisted to set-up camp by some of the old men and youngsters.

## Samson and Sambo

Next day the party was off again, with native guides and helpers. One guide was so helpful and stong at his work as leader, he was nicknamed Samson. His chief off-sider was Salamaua Boy, a name earned merely by one trip to Salamaua.

Samson guided the party until the fourth day, taking known tracks and avoiding several villages as a precaution.

On the fourth day a pot-bellied boy in a lap-lap entered the picture. He could speak English to a certain degree. He shouted at Field, "OK, Master! OK, Master!" saluting as he did. He definitely had been in contact with Australian or American soldiers.

This pot-bellied lad was Sambo. He became number one guide when Samson bid Field and company farewell at one of the villages they passed through.

On the night of September 11, it rained heavily, but the men were fairly comfortable—and certainly dry—beneath a lean-to near a village track.

Throughout the 12th, 13th and 14th they marched.

Natives gave valuable assistance as guides, and often provided nourishing jungle food—bananas, paw-paw, pineapple, sugar cane and sweet potatoes.

During this period the party occasionally saw Douglas aircraft very high overhead.

After eight days of marching—September 15—they emerged from the jungle into open Kunai

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)



## 'PLANE RESCUE

(FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

grass, and in the distance was the Finisterres Range.

Guided by native boys the party reached Efaan village, and runners went on to Nadzab—the nearest active air-base. The runners were told to advise the authorities that Field's party would wait at nearby Tsili Tsili, and for a Piper Cub aircraft to drop salt, tinned meat and instructions for clearing a strip for light aircraft.

(In 1943 an airstrip had been constructed at Tsili Tsili in connection with the Nadzab-Lae operations, but Field felt sure it would be unused when his party reached there).

After another tiring trek the five men rested for the night in a 'house kiap'—a government patrol officer's house—which was untenanted in the village of Marilinan. Tsili Tsili lay about two hours march ahead.

The airstrip was just as Field predicted. Grass on the field was three feet high.

They settled down in an empty hut, expecting a wait of another three days. The runners would not reach Nadzab for another two days. It was then September 16.

The following morning, several aircraft passed high overhead as the five men squatted in the open, flashing the three shaving mirrors into the sky.

Later that morning—the ninth day of the drama—an American Douglas aircraft circled several times, keeping high, and finally flying off in the direction of Nadzab.

In the afternoon a Douglas circled the strip as the five excited men flashed mirrors and lit a smoke fire on the edge of the strip.

After a few low runs the 'plane made a good landing on the rough strip, and the nine-day ordeal was almost over.

The rescuers were Captain J. A. Terkeust, of 65 Troop Carrier Squadron, USA Air Corps; his Flight Engineer Sergeant; and Lieutenant P. M. Evatt, AIF, of Air Wireless Warning Group from Nadzab.

Terkeust told Field he had been doing some flights that morning to test the aircraft instruments and had noticed the flashes.

He thought he was being fired on and, after returning to base, reported the strange occurrence.

Lieutenant Evatt heard of this and, knowing Field's party were missing, persuaded Terkeust to take him over the area that afternoon. He believed there was something abnormal at Tsili Tsili—it was not an area on the route from Lae to Madang.

The Douglas had been brought in cautiously as the repeated mirror signals did look like weapon flashes.

## Arrival sensation

Terkeust offered to fly Field's party to Lae. They climbed aboard the Douglas accompanied by Salamaua Boy, Sambo and their three comrades.

Thirty minutes later the 'plane landed at Lae. The unannounced arrival of the presumably dead five men caused a sensation at Headquarters of New Guinea Force and 3rd Australian Division.

Field, even today, says the memory of that welcome at Lae lingers on.

The party had been given up for dead after an intensive search by aircraft of Northern Command, RAAF, over the Finisterres and Ramu Valley.

The native boys were handed over to the authorities with a request that they be well-rewarded and shown the sights.

They had particularly wanted to see the 'big water' (the ocean) and drink from it. They also asked to be shown a 'white Mary', so were taken along to the Australian General Hospital for a glimpse of the nurses.

Each boy was presented with a small axe, several lap-laps, salt, razor blades, fish hooks, two knives and a quantity of sea shells.

At a little ceremony a few days later, Field officially handed over the axes to the boys.

One lad was proudly adorned around the neck with a brass lavatory chain with a large safety pin attached.

Back home, in the Melbourne suburb of Brighton, Mrs Field had not given up hope. Although advised by telegram her husband was missing, presumed dead, she kept writing letters. She told the girls, "He'll want some mail when he gets back to base."

A few days after a signal message that the Brigadier had been found and returned safely to Lae, Mrs Field received a letter from General Sir Thomas Blamey, Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Military Forces, who wrote from New Guinea. It was dated September 17, 1944.

He told Mrs Field of the details surrounding the crash, subsequent jungle trek, and the final rescue flight.

## Two whiskies...

Quoting Gen. Savige's words, Blamey wrote: "From what I can gather, Brigadier Field displayed splendid leadership and great tenacity in getting the party out. I expect Brigadier Field will be with his Brigade tomorrow or the next day. I stuck him into a hot bath, shoved two whiskies into him, as well as hot food, and he has been making full use of a bed ever since."

A footnote pencilled by Field says: "In the Commander-in-Chief's bed, too in the hut reserved for him."

And a final humorous footnote to the crash episode.

Several months later, while engaged in operations against the 6th Japanese Division in South Bougainville, Field received a small package from Flying Officer Bennett.

It contained a rectangular piece of perspex on which had been carved and gilded the well-known form of the eagle which is embodied in the badge of the RAAF.

In his beak he carried an Army boot!

## PART FOUR

● Main office routine . . . first recollections of Yallourn . . . promotion to general superintendent . . . host to Royalty and VIPs . . . a few memories . . .

# DECISIONS AT THE DESK

In the main office of the State Electricity Commission headquarters at Yallourn — a spacious room in a two-storeyed stone building that is dwarfed by the nearby power station — John Field has a big desk in one corner.

It has to be a big desk. Usually neat and tidy. But often covered with papers, files and letters — part of a week-day routine for Field in his role as general superintendent of the SEC Latrobe Valley combined projects of Yallourn and Morwell.

In a smaller room adjacent this main office sits Field's private secretary. You don't get past her to Field without stating your name and business.

Not because the GS is "not at home" to some people. But because that's the way he runs the show. And because Commission directors like it that way. Brigadier Field was chosen for the Yallourn 'head' role because of his Army qualifications and his success as a leader.

Field doesn't sit at his desk waiting for his secretary to usher in a visitor. As GS of the combined project—this takes in 7551 employees at Yallourn and Morwell, and capital investment of £154 million—Field has a busy and demanding schedule with loads and loads of responsibilities.

Last year the Commission's operating costs in the Valley were around the £30 million mark.

Field has general control responsibility for the Valley operations, and while in a position to make practically all decisions required to effect smooth running of the projects, he is under a 'central brains trust' in Melbourne.

"I'm like a band conductor," explains the GS. "The Melbourne 'brains trust' calls the tune—I play it."

The GS has several assistant general superintendents, each assigned to a special department. They do much of the administration at third-top level. Then there is Field, and at top level, Melbourne headquarters.

Appointed assistant general superintendent of the Yallourn Territory of the SEC on December 2, 1946, Field was second to Mr R. A. Hunt. Field deputised for, and assisted, Hunt in general ad-



★ THE GS AT WORK in the main office of the Latrobe Valley SEC administrative building at Yallourn. Brigadier Field "has a lot more paperwork than you could imagine," say his colleagues. And

then there are the VIP visits, the most recent being that of the new Governor of Victoria, Sir Rohan Delacombe, accompanied by Lady Delacombe. Picture shows Sir Rohan with Brigadier Field during the public welcome to the Vice-Regal couple in Yallourn's Kernot Hall, due to unexpected rain outside in the Town Square.

## The blame

When someone has a grouse about the SEC or Yallourn, first blame is often attributed to Field. This is not an overstatement. Many think Brigadier John Field wields the reins for everything at the Yallourn and Morwell SEC establishments. But he doesn't. Assistant general superintendents and administrative staff handle the majority of enquiries, claims and requests.

So, John Field has had a number of "out of hours" calls and visits from people believing they can take a short-cut to the relief of their problems. Like the housewife who wanted a new hot-plate for her stove or the fellow seeking finalisation of his compensation claim when General Superintendent Field innocently walked into a chemist's shop.



★ BRIGADIER JOHN FIELD — At the end of the war.

## Three months' wait for house

After more than 13 years as general superintendent of the SEC in the Latrobe Valley Brigadier John Field is about to call it a day. On Friday night he will leave his office in an official capacity for the last time, and perhaps he will think back . . .

. . . To some of the most memorable moments of those 13 years; happenings on a lighter vein; and the vast change of Yallourn and its surroundings.

When John Field arrived in Yallourn in December of 1946, he couldn't acquire a house. There were houses, of course. But no vacancies. It was just after the war. So, Mrs Field and two of the girls had to wait patiently at Brighton. Three months later they moved into a house in Yallourn. While waiting for suitable accommodation in Yallourn, the SEC's assistant general superintendent had to board at a local hotel.

Throughout the years Brigadier Field has played host to VIP's from many parts of the world, and from every State of Australia. Possibly at the top of the list is the 1954 visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and the Duke of Edinburgh. Other dignitaries to have been shown over the Yallourn project by

Brigadier Field include the Prime Minister (the then Right Hon. Robert Menzies); State Governors—more recently Sir Rohan and Lady Delacombe, who succeeded Sir Dallas and Lady Brooks; delegates to the World Power Conference in Melbourne, 1962; Parliamentarians; trade delegations; eminent engineers from overseas; Town and Country Planning authorities; and a host of others.

At an RSL function soon after he arrived in Yallourn, a chap asked the Brigadier what chance there was of getting a house in Yallourn. He didn't know the Brigadier was in as much difficulty, himself trying to get a house.

John Field has always displayed keen interest in the promotion of Newborough East and Yallourn North, where the SEC has built 1000 homes in two housing estate projects. Moe City Council has honoured this interest in Newborough by naming a partly-built recreation area John Field Reserve.



## PART FIVE

● High above the town . . .  
the changes . . . overseas  
trip . . . books and music  
. . . new home in Brighton.

★ BESIDE A PORTRAIT of Mrs Field—painted by the Brigadier—Yallourn's distinguished couple pose for the photographer.



★ AVID READERS, John and Mrs. Field have a big library of books and magazines.

# AT HOME WITH THE FIELDS

No. 23 Reservoir Road, Yallourn, is about the highest residential site in the "heights" of the power town. The home of Brigadier John and Mrs. Field, the setting provides an unequalled panoramic view of the Latrobe Valley's expanding industrial might.

The seven-roomed brick veneer home was one of four built high on Reservoir Road 16 years ago. It is 429 feet above sea-level—Yallourn township is about 220 feet above sea-level. The only other dwelling higher than the Field home is the reservoir caretaker's cottage directly behind 23 Reservoir Road.

The Field home is set amid well-kept lawns, dotted with specially-selected shrubs, and rockeries, some of which were built by the Brigadier himself. In the early years, the Brigadier did the mowing of the lawns, too, but an SEC man now attends to the garden and the cutting and trimming of the bowling-green-like lawns.

Mrs Field is known as 'green fingers'. She has a great love of flowers and gardening, and much of the credit for the beautiful setting of the Field home can be attributed to Mrs Field.

The first family of Yallourn are members of the Yallourn Horticultural Society, although Mrs Field does not exhibit competitively. The Brigadier, in his capacity as general superintendent of the SEC at Yallourn and in the Latrobe Valley, has officiated at the Yallourn flower show for many years. He says, "I've opened more shows than most people." Mrs Field has not been idle

when it comes to flower shows, either. She usually presents the winning sashes to the princess of flowers.

Her garden was an ideal setting for the popular Red Cross garden party in 1960. And Mrs Field has also had an active role to play in local Red Cross, Guiding, fetes and other activities. She has also been closely associated with the Country Women's Association, although in recent years she has not been able to devote as much time to the organisation as she would have liked.

The couple has also played leading roles in the church life of Yallourn—and not only as members of the Church of England congregation.

As a painter, John Field is a gifted man. His brilliance as a boy artist matured over the years, and his work in both water colors and oils has earned him widespread praise. But more, it has given him an avenue for relaxation and personal achievement away from the hue and cry of an industrial career.

About 15 of the Brigadier's own paintings hang in the Field home. He has given many others as gifts to his family and friends. Traralgon Council Chambers feature a sample of the Brigadier's artwork. The Council bought the painting—a scene depicting Blue Rock, near Willow Grove (north-west of Moe)—from the Traralgon Art Show.

## BIG MOVE WILL BE TO BRIGHTON

The Fields have bought a brick house in the Melbourne bayside suburb of Brighton to where they will retire after Saturday morning's public farewell by the Yallourn townsfolk.

However, the move may not be accomplished in full until the end of June—it's not just a case of packing up and leaving.

The 'shift' will entail much work by Brigadier and Mrs Field long before the removalists' van pulls into the drive of 23 Reservoir Road.

Perhaps the Brigadier's biggest worry—and longest job—will be the careful packing of his personal library of 600 books.

At the moment his study is lined on two sides by book shelves. There are books of

all shapes and sizes. From a 20-volume collection of the complete works of William Shakespeare, to the classic fiction of John Buchan. The majority of the books are war biographies, historical reviews and engineering editorials.

Then there is the comprehensive record collection; something that has given the Fields hours and hours of delightful relaxation.

Classical music is the forefront in the valuable collection, but there is a prominent sprinkling of stage

show and musical hits.

Brigadier and Mrs Field have been keen patrons of the Yallourn Little Theatre and Thespians' Dramatic Society. Their interest in the stage and theatre was highlighted by a visit to a London performance of 'My Fair Lady' during an overseas trip in 1959.

Also included in the move are more than 1000 colour slides—a complete pictorial souvenir of the 5½ months overseas trip.

Also among the shelves are day by day diaries kept by the Brigadier during the war, which take in operations in Egypt and New Guinea, and the journeys and training in between.

Brigadier Field is using the diaries as the basis of his war memoirs—a writing project half-finished. He hopes to finish the memoirs at an early date, and is looking forward to settling in at Brighton to get back to the diaries and pen.

Naturally, Brighton will mean more painting and more gardening—but plenty of time to relax.

The house at Brighton has a garden, although not as big as the present one at Yallourn. But, as Mrs Field says, "It's big enough to keep me busy!"

## TV and reading

While the Fields are among Yallourn's busiest couples at any time of the year, they find time to relax just like anyone else. Both read a great deal, and watch television.

The Brigadier has 'stacks and stacks' of magazines and newspapers to read, and he delves into anything from engineering news to editorials in 'Time' and 'Bulletin', or coming events in Great Britain.

(The Fields' interest in Great Britain isn't just a family heritage. They spent much of their 5½ months overseas trip in 1959 in England and Scotland. The Brigadier also took in the important industrial schemes in Canada, Germany and Switzerland).

In the Field household, favourite TV characters are policeman 'Maigret', lawyer 'Boyd, QC' and Australian Bobby Limb as host of 'The Sound of Music'. Both like documentaries, and travelogues.

Brigadier Field drives himself to and from work to Reservoir Road, but on the rushed one-day trips to headquarters in Melbourne has an SEC driver. Until recent years the Fields often went on motoring trips to many eastern Australia beauty spots. When they travel inter-State, they prefer air travel.

## "These people behind those vast changes"

Either reviewing progress and achievements from his SEC general superintendent's office or gazing across the Yallourn, Morwell and Hazelwood industrial panorama clearly seen from his Reservoir Road home, John Field tells of vast changes as power demands soared.

"Anyone who didn't know just what has been done here in the Latrobe Valley would be inclined to be over-awed by the immense plant and magnitudes of the industrial projects," he says.

"They are usually so over-awed by the machinery part of the business they don't fully realise or appreciate just what the people have done.

"The men on the job with the SEC in the Valley—and the womenfolk, too—take great pride in what they do and accomplish. There have been exceptions, no doubt; but the average person is aware of his or her part in a big and vital programme," adds the retiring general superintendent.

This belief of Field's has been the basis of his many recent addresses at farewell evenings and other public functions. He has praised the help and service of many, but barely touched on his part in the job.

"I will have countless vivid memories of the Yallourn area, and of the vast changes with the power station and open cut. There have been tremendous improvements . . . I think the reduction of fire hazards to the slimmest of existence is something great. The clearing of low-grade forest areas, and then opening them up for settlement has opened the gates to real progress and achievement," says the Brigadier.

"Anyone who has worked on the Latrobe Valley projects can be justly proud of the contributions made. It has taken a willing team with plenty of spirit to meet the challenge."

The obvious appreciation John Field has for his fellow workers with the SEC, and his many friends outside the Commission, is typical of his outlook on deeds and service.

A trained soldier and dedicated leader, he could well be called a symbol in This Field of Power—the Latrobe Valley, where he has done so much.

## ● THIS FIELD OF POWER ●

By Terry Bourke

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★ "GREEN FINGERS" is a name often bestowed on Mrs Field by her husband and friends. She is most fond of flowers and their arrangement.