

## 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles

*Doug Hunter*

Following World War II, Australia reorganised its military forces. For the first time it had both a regular army and citizen military forces. The latter were part-time soldiers.

In Albury-Wodonga the CMF comprised a squadron of the 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles. They were based at the Albury Drill Hall in Victoria Street. The 8/13 VMR was an armoured regiment and was officially formed on May 1, 1948.



Soldiers with their vehicles at the drill hall ready to move out on a weekend exercise, 1964. Training also involved weeknight parades.

Many officers and men who had served in World War II volunteered for the CMF. Among them were Norman Whitehead, of Urana, Bev McGeoch and Reg McDermott, of Wodonga, and Albury's Jack Larkin, Ron Braddy and John Neale. Early recruits who had been too young for the war included Alan Cunningham, George Atkinson and Kevin Monte.

The regiment was initially equipped with World War II vintage General Grant tanks. These were replaced in 1956 with British Centurion tanks. As the tasks of the regiment changed, the tanks were replaced with Ferret and White scout cars and finally, in the 1970s, with M113 armoured personnel carriers.

The regiment started out with voluntary enlistment, but this changed with the introduction of National Service during the 1950s and 60s. Several thousand young men from Albury-Wodonga and surrounding districts, following their full-time training, served a further two years with 8/13 VMR. Training involved weeknight parades at the drill hall, weekend exercises in Chiltern Forest and annual camps at Puckapunyal. The cessation of National Service in 1972 meant enlistment reverted to voluntary.

In October 1990, following another army reorganisation, the two armoured regiments in Victoria were amalgamated into one regiment – the 4th/19th Prince of Wales's Light Horse. The regiment's North East Victoria presence is now 2 Troop, A Squadron 4/19 PWLH, at Latchford Barracks, Bonegilla. The regiment retains strong links with the region.

The 8/13 VMR Regimental Association maintains a collection of memorabilia at North Bandiana.