

SCHOOL OF ARMY HEALTH — HOME OF THE CORPS

A Brief History of the School of Army Health

**Lieutenant Colonel Barry Morgan
Deputy Head of Corps RAAMC (Army Reserve)**

Lieutenant Colonel B. Morgan
C/- Head of Corps Support Cell
Army Logistic Training Centre
Latchford Barracks,
BONGILLA VIC 3893

THE SCHOOL OF ARMY HEALTH – THE HOME OF THE CORPS

A BRIEF HISTORY

The School of Army Health was raised at Puckapunyal in 1949 when a group of selected Offices, Warrant Officers and Senior Non Commissioned Officers first conducted formal courses. Prior to this the responsibility for training was vested in the Militia Medical Units.

The School of Army Health moved to Fort Franklin, Portsea in 1950. Fort Franklin was part of the Port Phillip defences prior to and during both World Wars and is located on the northern side of the Portsea village. The historical buildings are now part of the Lord Mayor of Melbourne's holiday camp for children.

Regular operational commitments following WW2 created a need for continuous medical support. It was recognised that there was a need to establish a Corps School in a new location in order to provide coordinated Health Service Training for both the Regular and Reserve Components of the Army. Fort Franklin was a small site. The new location needed to be a suitable, healthy and attractive site, which could provide adequate training facilities and basic accommodation as well as access to suitable training areas.

After a study by BRIG W.D. (later MAJGEN Sir William) Refshauge and LTCOL W.W. (Wally) McLellan, the then Director General Medical Services (DGMS), MAJGEN Frank Kingsley Norris, negotiated the purchase of Summerleigh Lodge, Healesville as the new home for the Corps School. Healesville is situated 64km east of Melbourne in the foothills of the southern most fringe of the Great Dividing Range. Summerleigh Lodge was a large guesthouse built in the 1920s for travellers from Melbourne. It was chosen for its location, atmosphere and grounds to support varied training activities. Healesville provided access to suitable training areas in the nearby mountains. The property was purchased and officially handed over to the Army on the 1st December 1951. Additional buildings were moved from Puckapunyal and Melbourne, including the WW2 Recruiting Depot in Royal Park.

On 20 Jul 1983 the School of Army Health was officially named Norris Barracks in honour of MAJGEN Sir Frank Kingsley Norris, KBE, CB, DSO, ED, who was DGMS 1948-55.

In 1984, the Minister for Defence announced that the School of Army Health would vacate Norris Barracks at Healesville in 1986. The last Commanding Officer / Chief Instructor

(CO/CI) at Healesville was LTCOL P.A.R. (Phillip) Hills, who was charged with the responsibility for the planning of the move to the new location.

The School of Army Health started the move to Portsea in January 1986, this time into the barracks vacated by the Officer Cadet School (OCS). The site that OCS occupied was on the southern side of the Portsea village, in buildings previously used by the Quarantine Station on Port Nepean. The first CO was LTCOL (later BRIG) Brian Vale. The first RSM was WO1 Peter Short. The barracks at Portsea were officially named Norris Barracks on 5 Aug 1986.

On 1 Dec 1995, the School of Army Health became one of the seven Corps Schools that amalgamated to form the Army Logistic Training Centre (ALTC). The last person posted as CO/CI School of Army Health was LTCOL Barry Morgan. Coincidentally, as a CAPT, he was the Project Officer for the move of the School from Healesville to Portsea. The last Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) of the School was WO1 Wayne Brown.

The School site became an ALTC campus and was designated as the Army Logistic Training Centre, Norris Barracks. Trade Training Wing was redesignated as Health Services Wing and was transferred to an ALTC training division titled Personnel Support Division (PSD). Later, Advanced Training Wing was retitled as Health Operations Platoon and transferred to Integrated Logistic Division (ILD) along with similar wings from other logistic Corps Schools. ILD conducts logistic officer, WO and NCO promotion training.

In August 1997, the Minister of Defence announced that Army Health Training would move from Portsea to the Albury Wodonga area in northern Victoria. The Army was tasked to hand over the property to the Defence Estate Organisation (DEO) by February 1998.

In December 1997, ALTC Norris Barracks Portsea closed its gates as training location. A final parade was held on the grass parade ground at Portsea and a photograph of the occasion graced the cover of the 1997 edition of the Corps magazine PAULATIM. This photograph was later reproduced on page 597 of the Corps History 'Little by Little' by M.B. Tyquin.

HQ PSD and Health Services Wing moved to the ALTC campus at Latchford Barracks, Bonegilla. Health Operations Platoon moved to Gaza Ridge Barracks South Bandiana. Army Dental training was moved to HMAS CERBERUS. The Training Development Staff moved to North Bandiana and later to Bonegilla. The Corps Museum collection was moved to the Army Museum at South Bandiana.

In February 1998, LTCOL Morgan signed the document that formally handed over the Portsea property to DEO. WO2 Gordon Prentice lowered the Australian flag for the final time at Norris Barracks.

Originally the staff that moved to Latchford Barracks, Bonegilla, were located in temporary accommodation. Training was conducted in various locations including an old Q store.

During the first six months of 1998 the former School of Military Survey was gutted and rebuilt. In July 1998, the newly refurbished building was renamed the Norris Building. At the opening, COL Ian Lillie, Commandant ALTC, spoke about the continuing link with health training at the previous Schools of Army Health at both Healesville and Portsea. COL Lillie also spoke about the naming of the building where Army health training was conducted as perpetuating the link with MAJGEN Sir Frank Kingsley Norris, KBE, CB, DSO, ED, the driving force behind the establishment of Army health training in a suitable environment.

Today most Corps members will visit AWMA on more than one occasion to undertake a course or whilst on posting. Many significant Corps items are held in the area.

Significant Corps items that were held by the School of Army Health were moved to the Albury Wodonga Military Area (AWMA). The Queen Mother's Banner (the RAAMC Banner), the Banner Belt and the Corps Centrepiece are located at the Army Logistic Officers Mess. The Queen Mother's Sword is located in the Army Logistic Sergeants Mess. Both messes are located in Gaza Ridge Barracks South Bandiana. The duplicate of the King's Banner is located in the Kinnimonth Building at South Bandiana, which is the site of Army Health Officer, Warrant Officer and NCO promotion training.

Another link with the School of Army Health was established at South Bandiana in 1999. The two iron gates, which stood at the front entrance to Summerleigh Lodge Healesville, had been the site of the Dedication ceremony at the naming of Norris Barracks on 20 July 1983. The gates, known as the Healesville Gates, were removed when the School of Army Health moved to Portsea. Later they formed the seaside entrance to the Army Health Services Sergeants' Mess at Norris Barracks. When Portsea closed, the Healesville Gates were taken to the 1st Field Hospital in Sydney for safekeeping.

On 4th September 1999, the Healesville Gates were erected in the Memorial Gardens across

the road from the Army Museum in Gaza Ridge Barracks South Bandiana. At the official dedication, BRIG P.T.R. (Paul) Buckley, Honorary Head of Corps RAAMC, and the last Director General Army Health Services, spoke about how the School of Army Health had been considered as the ‘home’ of the Corps. With the ‘Healesville Gates’ at the new home of Army health training, perhaps it is time to think of the Albury Wodonga Military Area as the Corps ‘new’ home.

Commanding Officers/Chief Instructors of the School of Army Health

The Commanding Officers of the School of Army Health are shown below:

Commanding Officers	Preferred Name	Location	Dates from <i>Honour Board</i>
LTCOL W.W.McLellan, OBE	Wally	Healesville	31.10.51 - 31.8.59
LTCOL W.J. Lawes, OBE		Healesville	1.9.59 - 17.11.64
LTCOL W.G. Hoffman		Healesville	18.11.64 - 9.4.67
LTCOL J.W. Coombe, MBE	Jack	Healesville	10.4.67 - 5.5.68
MAJ R.J. Ruck (Administered Command)	Ron	Healesville	6.5.68 - 30.9.68 12.5.72 - 22.7.73
LTCOL F. Bourke	Fred	Healesville	1.10.68 - 11.5.72 23.7.73 - 27.5.75
LTCOL J.R. Grant	Ray	Healesville	28.5.75 - 30.6.76
LTCOL R.J. Nolan	Ron	Healesville	1.7.76 - 30.6.80
MAJ B. Goodchild	Barney	Healesville	1.7.80 - 22.12.80
LTCOL K.A. Coote	Kevin	Healesville	23.12.80 - 9.11.83
LTCOL P.A.R. Hills	Phil	Healesville	4.12.83 - 8.12.85
LTCOL B.L. Vale	Brian	Portsea	9.12.85 - 11.12.88
LTCOL R.J. Allen	Bob	Portsea	12.12.88 - 14.12.90
LTCOL W.J.A. van Weerdenburg	Will	Portsea	Jan 91 to Dec 93
LTCOL J.A.F. Gilchrist	Jim	Portsea	Jan 94 to Dec 95
LTCOL B. Morgan	Barry	Portsea	Jan 96 to Jul 96

Personnel Support Division (PSD) Army Logistic Training Centre (ALTC)

On the 1st August 1996, the School of Army Health establishment positions were transferred to the ALTC. The CO/CI was posted as the Chief Instructor (later CO/CI) of the Personnel Support Division in the ALTC.

The CO/CI PSD incumbents are shown below:

CO/CI PSD ALTC	Name	Location	Dates
LTCOL B. Morgan	Barry	Portsea/Bonegilla	Aug 96 to Dec 98
LTCOL M.F. Brandy	Mary	Bonegilla	Jan 99 to Dec 00
LTCOL D. Gallasch	Dianne	Bonegilla	Jan 01 to Dec 02
LTCOL S.E. Fletcher	Shaun	Bonegilla	Jan 03

Regimental Sergeant Majors of the School of Army Health

The RSM of the School of Army Health were usually designated as the RAAMC RSM or Corps RSM and were members of the Corps Committee. The list of School of Army Health RSM are shown below:

RSM School of Army Health	Location	Dates
WO1 D.A. Collier	Healesville	Nov 51 - Apr 54
WO1 A.C. Duncan	Healesville	Apr 54 - Oct 57
WO2 J.J. Rawson	Healesville	Oct 57 - Jul 58
WO1 E.M. Nobbs	Healesville	Jul 58 - Jul 60
WO1 A.C. Duncan	Healesville	Jul 60 - Apr 61
WO2 C. Avery	Healesville	Apr 61 - Dec 61
WO1 A.C. Duncan	Healesville	Jan 62 - Dec 63
WO1 E.M. Nobbs	Healesville	Jan 64 - Mar 64
WO1 S.E. Nicholls	Healesville	Mar 64 - Sep 66
WO1 W.F. Woods	Healesville	Sep 66 - Dec 69
WO1 B.C. Chandler	Healesville	Feb 70 - Apr 71
WO1 M.R. Steiger	Healesville	Apr 71 - Dec 75

WO1 T.R. Thompson	Healesville	Dec 75 - Mar 76
WO1 N.E. Tinning, BEM	Healesville	Mar 76 - Feb 77
WO1 B.M. Harley	Healesville	Mar 77 - Dec 77
WO1 F.R. Itzstein	Healesville	Dec 77 - Dec 80
WO1 D.W. Chapman	Healesville	Jan 81 - Dec 82
WO1 R.C.S. Dubsky	Healesville	Dec 82 - Nov 84
WO1 P.J. Short, AM	Healesville	Nov 84 - Mar 86
	Portsea	Mar 86 - Feb 87
WO1 U. Wauer	Portsea	Feb 87 - Dec 88
WO1 R.K. Dean	Portsea	Dec 88 - Dec 89
WO1 S.R. Kay	Portsea	Jan 90 - Dec 91
WO1 G.J. Alterator	Portsea	Jan 92 - Dec 94
WO1 M.A. Bowen	Portsea	Jan 95 - May 96
WO1 W.R.W. Brown	Portsea	Jun 96 - Jul 96

RSM RAAMC

Traditionally, the RSM of the School was also the Corps RSM. After the transfer of the School to the ALTC, the RSM of the School of Army Health's position was used as a compensator for the RSM Personnel Support Division (PSD) position. In 1998 as part of reduction of WO1 positions in the Army, the RSM PSD position was converted to a CSM position. Head of Corps then appointed WO1 Marion Bowen, RSM 2 HSB, as Corps RSM.

With effect 1st July 2001, the Chief of the Army (CA) Directive 05/01, directed that a Corps Code 62 WO1 position in the ALTC would be designated as the RSM RAAMC position. If there was more than one RAAMC Corps Code 62 WO1 posted to the ALTC then the Commandant of the ALTC and the Head of Corps (HOC) would select one to be the Corps RSM. Since 1st July 2001, the RSM PSD has been 'double-hatted' as RSM RAAMC.

The RSM PSD are shown below:

RSM PSD ALTC	Location	Dates
WO1 W.R. Brown	Portsea	Aug 96 – Dec 97
WO1 J. Knight	Bonegilla	Jul 01 – Dec 01

WO1 J. Murphy	Bonegilla	Jan 02 -
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