Suggestion 26

James Bowen

7 pages

RE: A proposal to rename the Federal electorate of Melbourne Ports the Federal electorate of Monash

General Sir John Monash, GCMG, KCB - arguably one of the ten greatest Australians

Of war, Sir John Monash wrote: "War is not a business in which one can take any pride or pleasure.
Its horror, its ghastly inefficiency, its unspeakable cruelty and misery has always appalled."

Ms Kate Ashmor, chairwoman of the Committee for Monash, has informed me that her committee is submitting to the Australian Electoral Commission that the name Melbourne Ports is anomalous in the 21st century because of redistributions that have substantially changed the character of the electorate that was created at the time of Federation. I understand that It will be submitted to the Australian Electoral Commission that there are compelling reasons for Melbourne Ports to be renamed to acknowledge one of the greatest Australians Sir John Monash who was born in West Melbourne.

It has been suggested to me that being a graduate historian, military historian, former Australian Army officer, former advisor to the RSL at national and state levels on public policy, and retired Prosecutor for the Queen for the State of Victorias, I have some qualification to offer my views on the proposal to rename Melbourne Ports the Federal Electorate of Monash. I have attached below a short CV.

I have no hesitation in supporting very strongly the proposal to replace the description Melbourne Ports with the description Federal Electorate of Monash.

The face of this very famous Australian Sir John Monash appears on our highest currency $100 banknote. His name appears on a major Melbourne freeway, the Monash City Council, the Monash University, the Monash Children's Hospital, the Monash Medical

Centre, the Sir John Monash Private Hospital, and the Sir John Monash Science School. Statues to honour this great Australian have been erected in Melbourne at Kings Domain and Monash University.

Monash was Australia's greatest soldier

Monash was born in West Melbourne on 27 June 1865 to German-born Jewish parents and died on 8 October 1931. His State Funeral was attended by an estimated 250,000 mourners.

Monash graduated Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Laws, Master of Engineering, and ultimately, Doctor of Engineering from the University of Melbourne where he also joined the Melbourne University Rifles before taking a commission in the Australian Citizen Military Force (CMF), also known as "the Militia".

After graduating from the University of Melbourne as an engineer, he worked as a civil engineer, and played a major role in introducing reinforced concrete to Australian engineering practice. He initially worked on bridge and railway construction. In 1905, he became involved as a principal in companies engaged in production of reinforced concrete and its use in building works.

Monash rose to the rank of colonel in the Militia in 1912, and when war broke out in 1914, he became a full-time army officer and was appointed commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade. His brigade landed at Anzac Cove on 26 April 1915 and Monash was promoted to brigadier general despite mutterings in Melbourne and Cairo from envious officers who thought his background was too Germanic to deserve promotion commensurate with his brilliance as a commander. The Battenberg members of the British royal family faced the same problem, and had to change their family name to Mountbatten.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, Monash's brigade was transferred to the Western Front which marked the extent of the German invasion of France and stretched from Belgium across France to the Swiss border. Monash was promoted to major general in 1916. His capacity for meticulous planning and organisation, combined with brilliant innovation in the areas of technology and tactics, were recognised by the British High Command and Monash was promoted to lieutenant general and command of the Australian Corps (5 infantry divisions) in May 1918.

Unlike many famous generals, Monash was not only a brilliant tactician who played an important role in ending World War I in 1918 but he was the very rare general who combined brilliance in tactics with a deep concern to protect the lives of the men he commanded by the use of modern technology. A very high number of the 170,000 Australians killed or wounded on the Western Front were fighting under senior British generals who believed that the correct way to attack the German defences was to throw thousands of troops at the German artillery and heavy machine-guns regardless of losses. Those appalling Australian casualty numbers can be better understood when we read of British Major General Hunter-Weston dismissing concerns about very heavy losses of men in the landings at Gallipoli with the words: "Casualties? What do I care for casualties?"

Horrified by the massive slaughter of Australians in battles such as Passchendaele, Pozieres, and Bullecourt, Monash applied his engineering and military backgrounds to develop the co-ordinated use in attacks of infantry, artillery, tanks, and aircraft. He wrote:

" the true role of infantry was not to expend itself upon heroic physical effort, not to wither away under merciless machine-gun fire, not to impale itself on hostile bayonets, nor to tear itself to pieces in hostile

entanglements—(I am thinking of Pozieres and Stormy Trench and Bullecourt, and other bloody fields)—but on the contrary, to advance under the maximum possible protection of the maximum possible array of mechanical resources, in the form of guns, machine-guns, tanks, mortars and aeroplanes; to advance with as little impediment as possible; to be relieved as far as possible of the obligation to fight their way forward; to march, resolutely, regardless of the din and tumult of battle, to the appointed goal; and there to hold and defend the territory gained; and to gather in the form of prisoners, guns and stores, the fruits of victory."

Using aeroplanes to initiate a surprise attack on the enemy, using a massive line of tanks to protect his infantry, dropping munitions to his advancing troops from aircraft, and using creeping artillery fire to protect his tanks as they advanced, Monash broke through the German fixed defences at the village of Hamel (4 July 1918) in the astonishing time of 93 minutes.

Having established this pattern, Monash used it again when leading 200,000 men to break through the fixed German defensive line at Amiens on 8 August 1918. The disaster for Germany at Amiens was so decisive that it made the defeat of Germany inevitable to the German high command which had no answer to Monash's new tactics. Monash's victory was acknowledged by defeated German commander General Erich Ludendorff as "The black day of the German army in the history of war."

Monash was not just a brilliant commander, he was also a humanitarian concerned for the welfare of his troops in battle. During advances, he employed aircraft to drop meals to his troops.

King George V crossed the English Channel to knight General Monash at the Australian general's headquarters in France. This was the first time in 200 years that a British monarch had knighted a general "in the field". The brilliance of Monash as a commander in battle was acknowledged by Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery who described Monash as the best commander in World War I. Nazi Germany's top Panzer (armour) general Heinz Guderian also acknowledged the brilliance of Monash in initiating the defeat of Germany in World War I at Amiens by massive use of tanks in "Achtung Panzer" (trans. "Beware the tank!") and employed the Monash tactics at Amiens to develop what the Germans called "blitzkrieg" in World War II.

Looking at the practical circumstances of the German defeat in World War I accelerated by Monash's great victory at Amiens, we can reasonably estimate that his victory saved thousands of Australian casualties, and the very real possibility of hundreds of thousands of Allied and German casualties if the war had continued into 1919.

Australia's great historian Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Blainey, AC has written of Sir John Monash in his work "A shorter History of Australia":

"In 1918, in command of some 200,000 soldiers, including American, he was foremost in the advance that broke through the German lines and helped force Germany to the point of surrender".

In the history of Australia as a nation, there can be no doubt that Sir John Monash was its greatest soldier. It is true that Sir Thomas Blamey achieved the higher rank of Field Marshal when an invalid and shortly before his death, but Blamey was a staff officer not a field commander. He was deputy to General Douglas MacArthur in World War II, and Blamey's name is not attached to any great military victory in the way that Monash's name is attached to remarkable victories such as Hamel and Amiens.

Monash a builder of Victoria

Before his war service Monash designed and helped to build many bridges in Melbourne and country Victoria. Immediately after the war, Monash was appointed Director-General of Repatriation and Demobilisation. Upon the establishment of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria in 1921, Monash was appointed its first chairman and general manager. He was appointed vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne in 1923, and held that appointment until his death. He was a founding member of the Rotary Club of Melbourne which was Australia's first Rotary Club. He was called upon by the Victorian government to organise special constables to restore public order during the 1923 police strike. He played an important role in the planning of Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance.

Monash's biographer Geoffrey Serle attributes to Monash's towering historical status the difficulty for ugly anti-semitism to maintain a significant presence in Australia.

In conclusion

In assessing the place of Sir John Monash in Australian history, one must be careful to distinguish between great Australians and famous Australians. Famous Australians include pop divas, sporting stars, rock musicians, poets, painters, and authors. They may entertain us, but it is significant contributions to the well-being of Australians that mark the great Australians. I can list a hundred famous Australians, including Kylie Minogue, but less than twenty great Australians. Speaking as an historian, and allowing for distinguished medical researchers like Howard Florey and our greatest political leaders, I still place Monash in the top 10 greatest Australians and very deserving of recognition by attaching his name to the Federal electorate now known only as Melbourne Ports.

Monash has been described as a towering figure in Australia's history as a nation. I believe that this description is appropriate and worthy of acknowledgment by renaming Melbourne Ports as the Federal electorate of Monash.

James Bowen

James Bowen - an edited CV

A more detailed CV can be viewed at:
http://www.battleforaustralia.org/AboutAuthor.html

LEFT: James Bowen, after attending a 50th anniversary commemoration of the Vietnam War;
RIGHT: Major James Bowen, at Nui Dat, South Vietnam during the Communist Tet Offensive, January-February 1968.

James Bowen graduated in politics, history, German language, and law from the University of Queensland. Upon retirement from office as a Prosecutor for the Queen in Melbourne in 1993, he returned to full-time occupation with history with a special focus on the Pacific War 1941-45. He is convener of the Battle for Australia Historical Society and Pacific War Historical Society, and produced the websites of both historical societies.

He held the appointments of Crown Prosecutor, Senior Crown Prosecutor, and Assistant Secretary for Law in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea from 1961 to 1967. As a government Crown prosecutor, he travelled around and across most of the mainland of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, and visited many towns and government stations, including Kokoda. As Assistant Secretary for Law in TPNG in 1966-67, he administered the separate legal systems of Australia's sovereign Territory of Papua and the adjoining United Nations Trust Territory of New Guinea.

He was a major in the Australian Regular Army (ARA) and Active Citizen Military Force (ACMF) from 1967 to 1974, and served with the Australian Army in Vietnam in 1968. He was Crown Prosecutor in Canberra from 1969 to 1978. In 1978, he was appointed by Victoria's Governor in Council a Prosecutor for the Queen and retained that statutory office until retirement in 1993.

He has convened major symposia on crime, law, and justice in Canberra (1973 and 1977) and Melbourne (1987 and 1991). With the late Ray Watson QC (Later Mr Justice Watson), he initiated at the 1973 conference the proposal for a Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) in Australia. That DPP proposal was first adopted by Victoria in 1983, and later followed by all Australian States and Territories. Another very important paper at the 1973 conference challenged the views of Australian academic criminologists Norval Morris and Gordon Hawkins that belief in organised crime was equivalent to belief in Santa Claus. Having studied the history of organised Crime in the United States and Melbourne, James Bowen retained a Federal Police expert on organised crime, Inspector R. Dixon, to challenge the views of Morris and Hawkins, and publication of the Federal Police paper effectively silenced the academic deniers of organised crime.*

* It required permission from the Commissioner of the Federal Police for a police specialist on organised crime to destroy utterly the prevailing Australian academic denial of organised crime.

After experience in two murder trials of the use of dissociation as a complete psychiatric defence to the killing of women (i.e. the defence claimed that the accused man murdered a woman while watching the killing from outside his body, and consequently, lacking any ability to control his lethal actions), James Bowen retained the Senior Government Psychiatrist in Victorian, Dr Allen Bartholomew, to discredit at the 1977 conference the concept of dissociation as a defence to murder.

Being deeply concerned by the aggressive and unfair harassment of female victims in rape trials, James Bowen retained barrister Helen Coonan (later Senator Coonan) to argue for fairer treatment of victims of rape in court. Both papers from the 1977 conference led to very positive results for victims of crime.

James Bowen is co-author with the late John Harber Phillips, Chief Justice of Victoria, of "Forensic Science and the Expert Witness" (1985).

The author has been researching and writing "The Battle for Australia 1942" for 16 years. It is an online history of the Battle for Australia 1942 in the context of World War II, and includes a history of Japanese militarism from the Kamakura Shogunate in 1185 AD. This history is intended for everyone interested in the Japanese military attack on Australia in 1942, and especially, history students. This developing history can be viewed at:

http://www.battleforaustralia.org/index.html

As honorary consultant on public affairs to the Victorian RSL, and with the support of RSL National President Major General W. B Digger James, AC, MBE, MC, James Bowen initiated in 1997 the proposal to commemorate a Battle for Australia and wrote the foundation paper to justify the commemoration. He was a founding member of the Battle for Australia Commemoration National Council. Commemoration of a national Battle for Australia Day on the first Wednesday of every year was ultimately proclaimed by the Governor-General in 2008. That proclamation placed Battle for Australia Day on the same level as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day as days of national commemoration. In 2012, the author was appointed honorary historical consultant to the Battle for Australia Commemoration National Council.

In 2002, James Bowen initiated the online Battle for Australia and Pacific War historical societies, and he has authored the extensive historical material on both websites, including a history of Japanese militarism from the Kamakura Shogunate in 1185 AD to the end of the Guadalcanal Campaign in 1943. He is presently revising the Kokoda chapters on the Battle for Australia website to ensure that the Kokoda Campaign is presented with historical accuracy for Australians, and especially, history students, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Kokoda Campaign in 2017.

Although lacking a PhD in history, the author graduated in politics, history, German language and law from the University of Queensland. He studied Japanese history for one year, travelled widely in Japan in 1960 to improve his spoken Japanese, and wrote the chapters on Japanese history to be found on the website of the Battle for Australia Historical Society at:

http://www.battleforaustralia.org/index2.html

James Bowen's formal history studies have included Roman history from the Punic or Carthaginian Wars (264-146 BC) to the reign of
Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD), the military campaigns of Julius Caesar (and translating from Latin his "Commentarii de Bello Gallico"), Medieval history (and in particular, the Hundred Years' War), the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815), and Japanese
history from the Kamakura Shogunate (1185-1336 AD) to 1945. His special focus as an historian over the last twenty years has been the dynamics of war, and in particular, the forces that shaped the course of the Pacific War during the crucial year 1942.

Although lacking any formal or informal connection with the Australian Labor Party, James Bowen was offered, and accepted, appointment in 2002
as honorary consultant on the Battle for Australia to then Federal Opposition Leader, the Honourable Simon Crean MP. The appointment followed a public attack* on the integrity of wartime Prime Minister John Curtin by historian Dr Peter Stanley at the Australian War Memorial's conference "Remembering 1942". At this conference, which included reference to the Japanese attack on Australia in 1942, Dr Stanley had accused John Curtin of exaggerating the gravity of the Japanese threat to Australia in 1942 for political advantage in a paper that included the words: "Curtin did not save Australia from any real threat" and "…the Curtin government exaggerated the (Japanese) threat".* In a published response in "The Australian" newspaper, the author pointed out that John Curtin's fears for Australia in 1942 were fully shared by the Commander in Chief US Navy Admiral Ernest J. King who had the responsibility for stopping the Japanese advance towards Australia. Admiral King sacrificed three of his six fleet carriers in the defence of Australia in 1942. * From Dr Stanley's essay: "He's (not) coming South - the invasion that

[wasn't" (2002)](#)

This honorary appointment in 2002 also acknowledged the role of James Bowen as a senior RSL officer in the initiation by the national RSL of commemoration of a Battle for Australia in 1998. In 2008, the Federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Honourable Alan Griffin MP, indicated to me in the context of the proclamation of Battle for Australia Day that the Federal Labor Party had accepted that the rationale for commemorating a Battle for Australia had been appropriately stated by me on the website of the Battle for Australia Historical Society as it appears below:

"As a graduate historian, with a special focus on Japanese history and the Pacific War, it fell to me to define the concept and scope of a
Battle for Australia, and to write a paper that justified commemoration of a Battle for Australia in 1942. At private meetings during 1997,
Major General James and I defined the concept of a Battle for Australia to describe the clash of Japanese and American strategic war aims
with Australia as their focus that produced a series of great battles in 1942 across the northern approaches to Australia, including the Battle
of the Coral Sea, the Kokoda Campaign, and Guadalcanal Campaign. In this context, the Battle for Australia was to be viewed as a lengthy
and bloody struggle to prevent the Japanese achieving their strategic Pacific War aims of controlling Australia, and preventing the United
States aiding Australia and using Australia as a base for launching a counter-offensive against the Japanese military advance. For their part,
the Americans were determined to protect their access to Australia and its New Guinea territories in 1942, even at the risk of their six
precious fleet carriers that had survived the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor."

See at: http://www.battleforaustralia.org/What_was_BattAust.html

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