

From Lt R.N.Morrison

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Major M.Parker  
Producer/Director  
Royal Tournament Committee  
Horse Guards  
LONDON SW1 A2AX  
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Major Parker,

The Victorian Mounted Rifles celebrates the centenary of its formation during the year 1885-86, and it is in connection with the celebration of that centenary that I write to you.

The Victorian Mounted Rifles was raised from existing colonial volunteer units, and country rifle clubs, by the Victorian Colonial Government in May 1885, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Tom Price, however the first mounted parade did not take place until September of that year, The approval for the formation of 9 Companies of Mounted Rifles was Gazetted by the Government on the 2nd November 1885.

Federation of the Colonial States in 1901 saw the Victorian Mounted Rifles absorbed into the Commonwealth of Australia Defence Force. The Regiment subsequently saw action in South Africa in 1902. Further battle honors were gained at Gallipoli, France and Flanders and the Middle East during World War 1. The Victorian Mounted Rifles was one of the last Light Horse Regiments to be motorised, and it was in that role that a further battle honor, the South West Pacific was added during World War 2.

In 1948, as part of the restructuring of Australia's Defence Force, three Victorian Mounted Rifle Regiments were amalgamated to form the present 8/13 VMR. Defence cuts in 1976 caused the further reduction of the Unit to an independent Cavalry Squadron.

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A Ceremonial Light Horse Troop was formed in 1980 to maintain the traditions set by our forebears, and to promote the Unit in recruiting activities. The Light Horse Troop provides training in Military equitation, and performs a Musical Ride, and Tent Pegging display at Agricultural Shows, and the annual Army Display and Fair in Melbourne. The Troop also provides escorts for Vice-Regal and Military dignitaries.

From our records we have established that members of the Victorian Mounted Rifles performed, and competed at the Royal Tournament in 1891. They were in fact the first Australians to do so.

We believe that it would be a fitting climax to our centenary year for a team from the Victorian Mounted Rifles to once again be part of a Royal Tournament, possibly in 1986.

The 8/13 VMR has maintained its affiliations with the 14/20th Kings Hussars (the 14th Hussars provided the horses for the team in 1891), and the Queens Royal Irish Hussars. These Regiments may be able to assist with some of the logistical problems that would arise from such a visit.

I enclose a newspaper article about the Troop which you may find interesting, and look forward to your advice on the possibility of a Victorian Mounted Rifles Team participating in the 1986 Royal Tournament, and any other activities you may consider suitable, should such a visit occur.

Yours Faithfully

R.N.Morrison  
Lieutenant  
Chairman VMR Centenary Committee