

THE BATTLE OF MUAR

R.H.G. Jelley 4th Anti Tank Regt 8th Division. A.I.F

Your Lochinvars were dandies,
Your Galahads had good looks.
And you read of their adventures
In your pretty history books.

Though our Andy's not a dandy,
As a man he's surely right.
He proved himself a winner
In a thick and dirty fight
There was lead that flew like cock chaff
As thick as any Hell,
And Andy rose among it --
That's the tale I have to tell

The 29th were trapped., they said
And fighting hell for all.
The 29th were trapped they said
And Andy heard the call.
He gathered in his men and said --
The 19th will be there
If they hold a little longer
We'll be up to do our share

The 19th rallied quickly
And set to make the grade.
Andy looked them over
Confident and unafraid.

It was just 2 miles from Muar
That we met the Nippon force,
And ten miles to the bridgeway
Where the river made its course.
And Andy sent the 19th up
And gave them all his trust.
They were good men, he knew it.
The good now raised the dust.

The enemy were ten to one
At under estimate.
No quarter asked or given
In 18 hours of hate.

When the dawn came flashing quickly
We were fighting our way back
And a lot of heroes stayed behind
To beat back the attack.

The Colonel gave the order
"We must fight to get out
The 19th boys can do it!"
And the 19th gave a shout!
A marching song came ringing
In a high falsetto pitch.
And the boys marched into lead storms
From jungle and from ditch.

"Good lads' Andy shouted
And an overwhelming pride

Surged strong and proud within me
As I saw the Colonel stride
Where the bullets floated thickest.
He called for a barrage
Of mortars...then those deadly nests
Fell to a bayonet charge.

Oh! You can have your heroes
Of imaginative birth.
For I have seen the greatest men
Who trod this sorry earth.
The wounded never whimpered,
The dying never cried.
I know, because I tended
Many gallant men who died.

The Nipponese they pressed us
To wipe us out complete.
"Hats off" to the rearguard
Who covered our retreat.

As we swam across the rivers
They machine-gunned us from the air.
But a miracle had happened
And there were 50 paces where --
No guns were covering the way
And treading like stealthy thieves
We crept into the jungle
And were hidden by the leaves.

We made it back to safety
And the friendly faces smiled
As they looked upon our party.
We were dirty and looked wild
They gave us food and clothing
And razors for a shave.
A tear or two rose in me --
But then I'm not so brave

It's good to sit by shady trees
And listen to the birds
Which twitter in the leaves
And branches, as they stir.

And feel the wind, which fans the brow,
In contrast to the sun,
And good it is to recollect
Our heroes -- particularly one.
Our Andy -- that's him over there
With the calculating face,
A man, a soldier and a mate
And none can take his place.

The boys who know are proud to own,
A leader such as he,
Walk up and meet, "Our Andy"

COLONEL ANDERSON, V.C

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Malaya, January 1942:

An Australian soldier, who had made his way back to British lines after being cut off, reads about the battle of Muar. Between 18 and 22 January 1942 Australian and other

British Empire units fought a series of fierce engagements against Japanese forces advancing from Muar, south west Malaya.

On one occasion during this period soldiers of the 2/19th Battalion advanced singing *Waltzing Matilda*.



“Tich” Jelley 4th Anti Tank Regt 8th Division. A.I.F



COLONEL ANDERSON VC – *extract from records*

Lieutenant Colonel, 2/19th Bn., (N.S.W.),
Australian Military Forces

During the period **18/22 January 1942**, near the **Muar River, Malaya**, Lieutenant Colonel Anderson was in command of a small force which destroyed 10 enemy tanks and, when later they were cut off, he led his force through enemy lines to a depth of 15 miles, being attacked by air and ground forces all the way. He was again surrounded and suffered heavy casualties, and although he attempted to fight his way back through eight miles of enemy-occupied territory this proved impossible, and he had to destroy his equipment and work his way around the enemy. Throughout the fighting he protected his wounded and refused to leave them.