A NAVAL(?) OCCASION:

The Committee of the Agricultural Society at Albion Park announced that the 1923 Annual Show would be opened by Admiral Sir Dudley de Chair, Governor of New South Wales, who would arrive by car after first picking up his son from Tudor House School at Moss Vale, descending to the Coast via Macquarie Pass.

It also requested of Lt. Colonel Theo Grey, commanding the local troop of the 21st Aust. Light Horse, that he provide a mounted escort to meet the Governor and accompany him to the Showground.

The day arrived and, in accordance with an operational order which could well have served as a pattern for Monty’s set-up for the battle of El Alamein, a half-troop moved out to a position towards the foot of Macquarie Pass with horses and accoutrements gleaming and emu-feather hat plumes waving in the breeze.

With a timing which would have done credit to a fleet manoeuvre the Admiral’s barge—a Rolls Royce—hove in sight on the dot and slowly cruised towards us as we waited in two inward-facing ranks on either side of the road.

On disembarking Sir Dudley was met by and exchanged courtesies with Colonel Grey, who then escorted him on an inspection of the cavalry sitting at attention with swords at the salute—we were classified as a sabre troop—while young de Chair raced about under the horses’ chins clicking a box camera.

With formalities completed the Governor re-embarked and set sail for the township at reduced speed, to allow the escort to keep pace at the trot. This caused the expected time of arrival to slip back, and nearing his destination he ordered an increase in speed to such an extent that the cavalcade hit the main street at full gallop in a cloud of dust.

A battle cruiser with a flanking escort of destroyers could not have made a more impressive high speed approach to an anchorage.

In retrospect the event was unique—a British Admiral and State Governor being greeted on a dusty country road by an escort of Australian cavalry which included two descendants of the former unofficial Colonial Governor, Major George Johnston, at the foot of a mountain pass named after another famous N.S.W. Governor, Major-General Lachlan Macquarie.

—B. E. WESTON.