



Harim Tok Tok

PAPUA NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES EX-MEMBERS ASSOCIATION Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

I look forward to seeing our members and friends at this year's Anzac Day march and reunion in Brisbane. I trust those members unable to attend in Brisbane may make suitable arrangements in their locality.

NGVR/PNGVR 's March position is 37, behind 49th Battalion and before PIR/PIB Association, so our march off should be between 10:15 and 10:30am. We assemble no later than 10am near the George/ Mary Street corner, look for our banner and flags. Information available in Queen's Park. If you require buggy service please contact Colin Gould asp. You will find the details in the attachment .

Our post-march reunion will be held at the usual place, the Stock Exchange Hotel on the corner of Edward and Charlotte Street immediately after the march. Admission is \$15 pp for finger food with a cash bar.

The PIR/PIB Association has invited our members to attend a 15 minute wreath laying service at the S-W Pacific Statue in Anzac Square prior to the Anzac Day March. If you think you are able to get to our assembly point by 10am, I will see you in Anzac Park at 8.45pm.

On Saturday 1st July , the Association will hold its 81st Anniversary Service at the Brisbane Cenotaph commemorating the loss of 1053 Australians when the Japanese Prison ship was sunk by friendly fire off the west coast of Luzon Island, Philippines. At least 36 NGVR men were lost on the ship. Morning tea will be available after the service. Full details will be available in the next Harim Tok Tok.

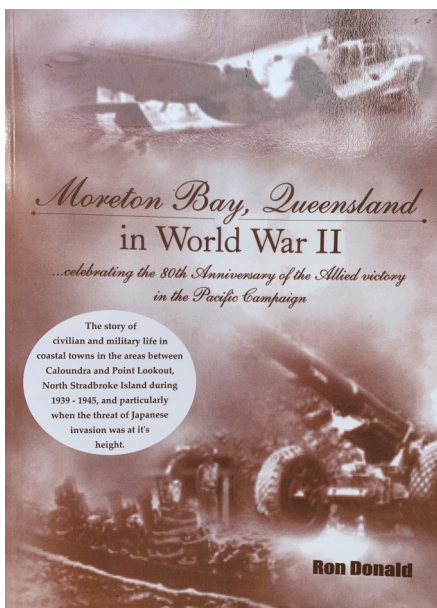
An advanced diary note you need is for our 50th Anniversary luncheon commemorating the disbandment of PNGVR. The luncheon will follow our Association's AGM on Saturday 21st October 2023 in nearby Everymans' Hut at Wacol. The sit-down luncheon will comprise two courses with a cash bar. Dress will be Anzac Day dress with medals. Knowledgeable speakers will talk about the achievements of PNGVR. Details will be advertised in future issues of Harim Tok Tok.

Sadly I report the recent death of Michael Raasch after a long illness. His vale will be in the next Harim Tok Tok.

I recently read an interesting book titled **Moreton Bay, Queensland in WW2** by

Ron Donald. It is a little known story about the protection of the Port of Brisbane from when Queensland separated from NSW in 1859 to the end of WW2. It also tells of military and civilian life in the coastal towns between Caloundra and Point Lookout on North Stradbroke Island, particularly during the threat of the Japanese invasion.

Little or no protection was provided to the Port until 1884 when Fort Lytton was established. During WW1 Fort Cowan on Moreton Island became the prominent defence point. In WW2 Fort Bribie assumed the primary role with fire command HQ at Caloundra. Other local names include Fort Skirmish, Toorbul, Redcliffe, Sandgate, Tangalooma and Woorim.

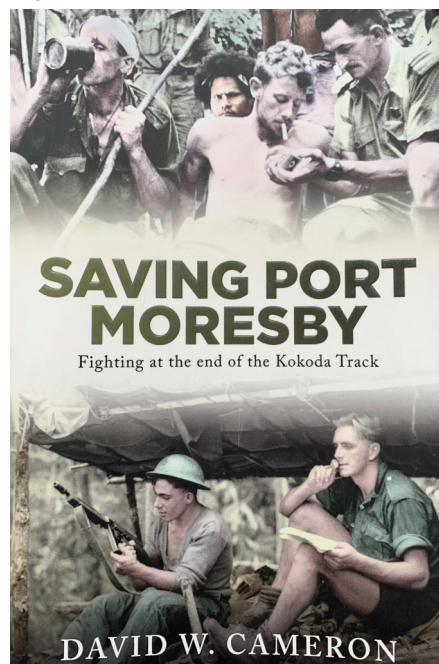


The book is available from Ray Gilbert from Defence Service Nurses RSL, email rgilbert29@bigpond.com for \$25, This A4 size, soft-back 170 page book contains numerous photos and diagrams but few maps.

Another book I have read is **Saving Port Moresby, Fighting at the end of the Kokoda Track** by David W Cameron, published in 2022. This 545 page, soft-back book is available from Bigsky Publishing for \$32.99.

The book details the Australian fighting withdrawal south down the track from the Battle for Isurava on 2nd September 1942 to when the Australians counter-attacked and occupied Ioribaiwa on 27th September and their push north towards Nauro.

The author is an academic and has authored many books on military and other subjects. The book contains photographs but too few maps.



Please remember members and friends are welcome to attend our committee meetings and BYO luncheons, the gatherings are more social than business.

Phil Ainsworth, March 2023

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Capt. H.J. Murray, MC. DCM. Coastwatcher

The story of the Papua New Guinea Coastwatchers is one of extreme bravery and sacrifice. This is one man's story about the events that contributed so much to the ultimate Allied success in the Pacific campaign.

Harold John Joseph Murray (1898-1968), army officer, planter and businessman, was born on 13 November 1898 at Balmain, Sydney, third son of native-born parents James Francis Murray, a general indent agent, and his wife Rachel Esther, née Gray. Harry worked as an order-man in a timber-yard. He raised his age by two years, enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 11 May 1915 and saw action with the 2nd Battalion towards the end of the Gallipoli campaign.

Proceeding with his unit to the Western Front in March 1916, Murray was promoted corporal in the following February. During an assault on 9 April 1917 against German positions at Hermies, France, his platoon commander and sergeant were wounded. Murray took charge and captured a strongly defended trench; for his leadership he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and immediately made a sergeant. He was commissioned in June 1918 and promoted lieutenant in November. In June 1919 he returned to Australia. His A.I.F. appointment terminated on 10 August, but he continued to serve as an acting area officer until he moved to the Mandated Territory of New Guinea in February 1921. Living in the Kavieng area of New Ireland, he developed copra and coffee plantations, traded in timber, and bottled mineral water. At St Bede's Anglican Church, Drummoyne, Sydney, on 11 March 1930 he married Florence Irene Johnston.

When the Japanese invaded Kavieng on 23 January 1942, Murray and sixteen others escaped by sailing a small boat to Oro Bay, Papua.



Captain Harold John Murray MC, DCM during the Second World War.

Harry Murray enlisted and found himself attached to an outfit known as the "Z" Special Unit one of a number of units under the control of Colonel Mott. The men recruited for this unit were men who had a special knowledge of all areas now occupied by the Japanese. The unit comprised men who were willing to return to these areas and work behind the enemy lines, obtaining information on enemy strength and disposition of forces, carry out sabotage by disrupting communications, mining ships, destroying arsenals and generally harassing the enemy.

The New Guinea team were relocated to Cairns and immediately began training. Parties were formed consisting in most

cases of four members: one leader, two utility men and one wireless operator. All members, however, were given instructions in wireless operations, which would be their life line. The weapons to be used - Tommy guns, Owens, Stens, rifles, revolvers - were all given the full work-out and grenades, explosives, and booby-traps were handled until the men became proficient in their use.

After completing a course at Cairns on the use of limpet mines the unit received orders to return to Melbourne where accommodation was provided for them at various hotels. When all was ready for departure, Murray was called to Colonel Mott's office to receive last minute instructions and the necessary movement papers. It was then that he learnt that the contents of the containers labeled "valuable sup-

plies" would be under his charge for the journey and that they contained the highly powerful plastic explosives which was still on the secret list.

The party moved from Melbourne to Adelaide then north to Alice Springs. They then travelled by train from Alice Springs to Darwin where they were conveyed five miles out of the township to the Quarantine Station which had been taken over for the "Z"



Left: Commander Eric Feldt, O.B.E. Right: Commander J. C. McManus, O.B.E.

Special Unit. To hide their true identity, they were referred to as the "Lugger Maintenance Section". Murray then received orders to proceed to Townsville in North Queensland where he was to report to Commander Feldt at the Naval Staff Office. Commander Feldt succumbed to illness in March 1943 and his job was taken over by Lieutenant-Commander J. C. McManus, R. A. N., who was assistant to the

Director of Naval Intelligence. Murray received orders to return to Brisbane and report to Commander McManus at an address in Queen Street.

Commander McManus explained that Major Keith McCarthy had been instructed to return to Port Moresby to select natives to be trained in Australia to play their full part in wresting their island home away from the enemy. McCarthy had reported that natives from almost every island and township throughout the territory had been found and that arrangements were under way to transport them to Brisbane. Murray's job was to establish the training camp as a centre to accommodate and train outgoing parties, an act as rest centre for incoming parties. Murray established the camp a few miles south of the Beaudesert township. Within a few days, the camp was a hive of activity with stores and equipment arriving daily. Towards the end of the first week, the first members began to trickle in. Among these were Sergeant R. W. (Bill) Dolby, Corporal R. J. (Percy) Cream, and Corporal C. F. (Snow) Evans. Ten days later 360 natives arrived by army trucks and commenced special training.

As more submarines and planes became available for Allied Intelligence Bureau use, party leaders were called together and told to prepare their respective parties for the job ahead. The parties usually consisted of the leader, a junior officer, one highly trained wireless operator, an assistant wireless operator and one general utility man who had a knowledge of medical work. Murray and Commander McManus made a point of farewelling each party at the airstrip, no matter what time they departed. The training camp proved so successful that American forces began training there following the same pattern as for the Australians.

Eventually, Murray received a telephone call from Commander McManus to come up to Brisbane at once. Murray was asked if he felt that he could get into New Ireland as information was required from that area to cover the American landing at Torokina. Captain B. Fairfax-Ross was appointed to take over as Camp Commandant, and Murray set to work picking his men and natives for the coming landing on New Ireland. Murray picked Sergeant Dolby, and Corporals Cream and Evans because he liked them, knew they were thoroughly dependable and had the necessary local knowledge. Murray also took a half-caste lad named Julius McNichol as well as eight natives.

On Saturday, 23rd October, 1943, the party left Beaudesert and set off for Amberly aerodrome where an American Liberator was waiting for them. The plane took off at 4 a.m. and five hours later they touched down on New Caledonia. They spent a day at Noumea, then a DC3 transport plane conveyed them to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. The party left at noon for Tulagi, and embarked on the submarine *Scamp* which was awaiting them, under the command of Commander Ebert, U. S. N.

The *Scamp* arrived at her destination off the east coast of New Ireland at 04.30 hours on 3rd October and lay quietly under the sea to await daybreak. At first light the periscope was upped and the shore closely scanned. During the day, bearings were taken, and they moved slowly along inspecting the coast in order to select the correct landing spot. Carefully, they scanned the shore for signs of Japanese activities looking for new buildings and installations that would indicate a Japanese presence.

The spot chosen for their landing was not far from the mouth of the Weitin River, which indicated the floor of the valley, and therefore should afford them easier and quicker movements away from the beach-head. When darkness settled over land and ocean, the submarine surfaced and stood off a little over a mile from shore to await zero hour. At 1930 hours Murray and Dolby synchronized watches with the rest of the team and in two separate groups headed for shore, the second group only leaving when they received the all clear from the first. Even so, the two teams became separated with the second team coming ashore about two miles away down the coast.



Coastwatcher Lt A.F. Kyle DFC who was beheaded by the Japanese.

From this point onwards, Murray decided that they would travel up the river bed, walking close into the bank where the overhanging bushes would afford them from protective cover. At night, they set up camp and sent a radio signal to say that they had landed safely, cleared the beach head and that no enemy had been contacted. Soon all efforts were thrown into finding a lookout that would provide a first rate view of the east coast and islands lying to the north west. Eventually, a good place was found and the camp site was then moved to the new position. At the new site, magnificent trees rose to a great height and the sun never penetrated to the ground. A rattan ladder was made up and placed against one of the tallest trees and a platform was placed on top.

When the successful Allied landing at Torokina was over, the Japanese were on the defensive all along the line from Guadalcanal to the Philippines and were slowly being starved out. Murray became concerned once the position of their camp had been discovered by the natives and relocated the camp to another high position on an adjacent mountain range. On the 21st November, Percy Cream received the message from Headquarters informing them that a parachute drop of food, batteries and medical supplies was about to be made. Headquarters requested that a suitable location be picked and identification fires be arranged. It was then discovered that the Japanese had decoded their radio signals and that they should retreat to higher ground immediately after the drop. On the following night, the party moved from their hilltop camp into the valley to prepare for the air drop scheduled for 03.00 hours on 21st November. It was a long wait but exactly two minutes to three they heard the sound of an approaching plane. The fires were lit and the plane was dead on target with the parachutes opening and billowing as the packs floated down to earth. The pilot returned with a second run and five more parachutes were dropped as the plane continued down the valley and out to sea, its mission successfully completed.

The main purpose for which they had been inserted into New Ireland had been fulfilled and it was decided that the party should be removed from the island. At the appointed time and place, all ears were strained to catch the sound of the P.T. boats but there was no sound of engines. The fires were lit and they watched for the signal that would tell them that the P.T. boats were offshore. An-

other twenty minutes passed then suddenly there was flash from the sea and the boats came into the shore and the party went on hoard.

With throttle opened up, the boat was soon hitting more than 40 knots and daylight found them almost opposite Buka Passage when one of the boats broke down. Slowly, the other two circled around the disabled craft while repairs were done with thousands of Japanese not two miles away at Buka Passage with enough guns to blast the three small patrol torpedo boats out of the water.

When Murray arrived in Guadalcanal, he was informed that his services would be made available to the Americans in whatever capacity they desired. A few days later, he was taken by American transport plane to Noumea on New Caledonia for conferences at Admiral Halsey's Headquarters. From Noumea, he was flown straight to Brisbane where he reported immediately to Commander McManus. He then returned to Guadalcanal where he joined the crew of a B-24 bomber on a daily routine search between Emirau Island and Truk (Chuuk) in the Caroline Islands. For his next mission, Murray chose his own team from the members of the New Ireland party - Sergeant Bill Dolby, and four native scouts, Nein, Sarlie, Selas, and Keip Marlin.

On Christmas Day, 1943, a party of ten Americans, two Australians, and four natives proceeded from Guadalcanal to Tulagi, where the *U.S.S. Pefo* lay at anchor, ready to convey them on a special mission. Shortly after midday, they got under way from Tulagi harbour and for the next three days the submarine made its way to the Tanga group of islands which lay off the east coast of New Ireland.



The combined Australian and American party for the Tanga landing.

When the first party had reached the shore, they found, a short distance away from the beach, a house which was occupied by a lone man. They went along to inspect it and woke the occupant, a terrified native who had been told by the Japanese that all the "masters" were dead. The occupant was able to supply the party with all the details of the Japanese occupation of the island. Of the second party, there was no sign of the missing boat and men and it was apparent that the group of four Americans would have to accomplish what had been set down for the whole party of ten. After being warned by the local natives that the Japanese were aware of their presence on the island, the first party returned to where their boat had been hidden and hid themselves in the bushes. Twenty-five minutes later, a Japanese party came along comprising an officer and six men, two carrying machine guns and the rest armed with rifles. emerged into the clearing and halted. It was obvious that the officer knew where the boat was hidden and fortunately made no attempt to go to the spot and destroy the craft but rather he ordered his men to hide in the adjacent bushes. During the resultant gun battle, three Japanese



Captain Harold John Murray, MC, DCM being presented with the Silver Star of the United States of America by Major General Ralph J. Mitchell, Commander 1st US Marine Aircraft Wing, Torokina, South Bougainville Island, 25th April 1945. (AWM 030500/30)

soldiers lay dead including the officer still with the sword in his hand. The bodies of the dead enemy soldiers were quickly searched and everything of importance was collected.

With just enough light to see, they launched the rubber boat and paddled out to sea through a heavy surf to meet the submarine. The time slowly slipped by and eventually a large flash blinked at them and a voice cried out: "Is that you Captain Murray?" They entered the warm, quiet, grey interior of the *Peto* and an officer escorted Murray to the conning-tower, where Commander Nelson was on duty. At that moment, the ship's general alarm sounded as they had been spotted by the Japanese. In a matter of seconds the submarine was under way and the Japanese surface craft left far astern.

In January 1944, the Allied counter-offensive in the Pacific was well under way. In this vast operation, in which hundreds of thousands of Allied fighting men of all services were to be engaged, the full story would require an extensive treatment. As part of this effort, the work of the Coastwatchers cannot be underestimated. Before this new concentrated harassment, however, the United States Navy had also conducted aerial raids on Kavieng which was known to be an important supply base for Rabaul.



Australia's "Cloak and Dagger" men, who operated behind the Japanese lines during the war, were honoured on 15th August 1959 - the 14th Anniversary of the end of the war in the Pacific - when Senator Gorton, Minister for the Navy, officially dedicated and lit the COASTWATCHERS MEMORIAL LIGHT at Madang, New Guinea.

At sunset, the beacon sent its one million candle-power beam into the Bismark Sea for the first time, honouring the Coastwatchers, living and dead, European and native, who

took part in the war's most hazardous spy operation.

Altogether, thirty-six Coastwatchers lost their lives. At the base of the Coastwatchers Memorial Light, one of the three plaques lists the names of the fallen men. The inscription beneath their names reads:

THEY WATCHED AND WARNED AND DIED THAT WE MIGHT LIVE

Much of the material in this article is from HUNTED, A Coastwatcher's story, by Mary Murray, wife of Harold Murray.



Bundi airstrip PNG. Madang District. 1595m.

The Slouch Hat

The slouch hat is an object strongly associated with Australian identity.

The Army refers to the slouch hat by its official designation; Hat khaki fur felt (KFF) - to everyone else it is a 'Slouch Hat'.

The word 'slouch' refers to the sloping brim. The brim is made from rabbit-fur felt or wool felt and is always worn with a pugger-ree.



History has it that the origins of the Slouch Hat began with the Victorian Mounted Rifles; a hat of similar design had been worn in South Africa by the Cape Mounted Rifles for many years before 1885. The design of the Victorian Mounted Rifle hat originated from headgear of native police in Burma where Lieutenant-Colonel Tom Price had recognised its value.

The Victorian hat was an ordinary bush felt hat turned up on the right side. The intention of turning up the right side of the hat was to ensure it would not be caught during the drill movement of "shoulder arms" from "order arms".

By 1890, State military commandants had agreed that all Australian forces, except the artillery corps, should wear a looped-up hat of uniform pattern that was turned up on the right side in Victoria and Tasmania, and on the left side in all other States to allow for different drill movements.

The Slouch Hat became standard issue headdress in 1903 and its brim position was mostly standardised. The slouch hat became a famous symbol of the Australian fighting man during World War One and continued to be worn throughout World War Two. Its use since that time has made it a national symbol.

General Bridges, the first commander of the 1st Australian Imperial Force, was found wearing his slouch hat back to front when he was fatally wounded at Gallipoli. As a mark of respect and remembrance for Bridges, when the slouch hat is worn at Royal

Military College - Duntroon, it has become traditional to wear the chinstrap buckle on the right side of the face and the brim down.

This tradition commenced at the Royal Military College in 1932. However, when the slouch hat is worn ceremonially, for example on ANZAC Day, it is worn in accordance with the wider Army custom - brim up and chinstrap buckle on the left hand side.

Today, Army members wear the slouch hat with the brim down to provide additional protection from the sun when not performing ceremonial duties.

Army web site

If you get a loan from a Bank you will be paying it back for 30-40 years.
If you rob a Bank you will be out in 10 years.
Follow me for more financial advice.

Bell, Frederick William Bell, VC. (1875–1954)
by H. J. Gibbney

Frederick William Bell (1875-1954), soldier and colonial administrator, was born on 3 April 1875 in Perth, son of Henry Thomas Bell, clerk, and his wife Alice Agnes, née Watson. Educated at A. D. Letch's preparatory school and at the government school, Perth, he joined the Western Australian Public Service in November 1894 as a cadet in the Department of Customs where he later became a cashier.

On the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899 Bell enlisted as a private in the 1st West Australian (Mounted Infantry) Contingent. He first saw action at Slingsfontein, and later took part in the relief of Johannesburg and of Pretoria and the battles of Diamond Hill and Wittebergen; on 19 July 1900, in a sharp engagement at Palmeitfontein, he was seriously wounded and was invalided to England. He returned to Perth in February 1901, was commissioned lieutenant in the 6th Contingent on 8 March, and re-embarked for South Africa. On 16 May at Brakpan, Transvaal, while his unit was retreating under heavy fire, he went back for a dismounted man and took him up on his horse. The animal fell under the extra weight and Bell, after insisting that his companion take the horse, covered his retreat; **for this action he received the Victoria Cross—the first awarded to a Western Australian.**

After his discharge in May 1902, Bell joined the Australian section of the coronation escort for King Edward VII. He then settled in Perth but returned to England, joined the colonial service in 1905 and was appointed to British Somaliland as an assistant district officer in April. Made an assistant political officer later that year he held the post until 1910. While in Somaliland he took up big-game hunting and in 1909 narrowly escaped death when he was badly mauled by a lion. He was assistant resident in Nigeria in 1910-12 and from then until the outbreak of World War I was an assistant district commissioner in Kenya. In 1914 Bell, who had been commissioned in the 4th Reserve Regiment of Cavalry in August 1907, served in France with the Royal Irish Dragoon Guards. He was mentioned in dispatches and promoted captain in October 1915. On his return to England he was made commandant of a rest camp and promoted major; later, in the rank of lieutenant-colonel, he commanded an embarkation camp at Plymouth. Two of his three brothers

were killed in action with the Australian Imperial Force.

After the war Bell returned to the colonial service as a district commissioner in Kenya. In May 1922 in London he married a divorcee Mabel Mackenzie Valentini, née Skinner, and in 1925 went into retirement in England. His wife died in 1944 and on 20 February 1945 he married a widow Brenda Margaret Cracklow, née Illingworth. He revisited Western Australia in 1947. His wife survived him when he died at Bristol on 28 April 1954.

This article was published in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 7, (MUP), 1979

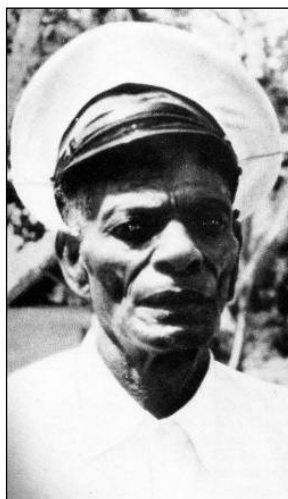


Preparing rice & bully beef for a road construction crew Bulolo 1968. Sounds ordinary but in the Kokopo area of New Britain the locals added green coconut milk to the mixture, then roasted it in banana leaves and it made a delicious meal.

HTT Vol 138 contained an article on the PNG Indigenous Coast-watchers. This article is on one of them.

GOLPAK – “Number One Friend Belong Australia True”

It all began on the 3rd Nov 1943. Bill led his Squadron (22 Squadron) on a sortie from Goodenough Island, just north of Milne Bay, to attack the Japanese invasion barges that had been gathered in New Britain. Flying a Boston armed with bombs, and flying at low level, David successfully bombed the targets. The AA fire from the ground was very heavy, and just when he was about to target a bridge with his front guns his port engine packed in. After congratulating himself on having a second engine, a quick glance at his starboard engine soon shattered his illusions; he saw a shell exiting the top. With both engines out of action he had no option but to ditch. He landed like a flying boat, the dinghy popped out, and they paddled the 400m towards the shore. Fortunately, the jungle ran straight down to the shore-line and they were able to get into cover before the Japanese search teams could locate them.



After eleven days on the run, and surviving on the jungle and their survival rations, the men found a track that led to a native village. Friendly natives took them in, gave them food and water, and the men slept happily in smoke filled huts. This was paradise compared to sleeping on the jungle floor with the monsoon rains, mosquitoes and leeches for companions. After a short while the natives took their evaders to another village where they were introduced to a man called Golpak. Golpak was the man in charge of the area. He wore an old Aussie hat, carried an old Winchester rifle, and greeted the men with a smile saying “I am number

one friend belong Australia true". He said he would look after them, hide them from the Japs, and return them to their own forces over 200 miles away across the Coral Sea!!! Golpak kept his word. He had done it for others. The Japs were however quite near to the village and the two airmen were moved very quickly on a number of occasions. One one occasion they hid in deep water while the Japs searched the village, only to be told by Golpak, when they got out, that the water was full of crocodiles. After two months being cared for by the villagers, and Jap patrols passing nearby and through the village of Sali, the two men were awoken one morning to the cries of "Japan ee cum". A Jap patrol had raided the village early that morning and was arresting many villagers. Bill and Dave decided that they would leave the village for good rather than risk the lives of the villagers.

On advice from Golpak, the two men decided that they should head north across the mountain ranges to try to reach a group of Aussie Coast Watchers, who had been inserted into enemy territory to report on enemy shipping, aircraft, and troop movements. After very arduous treks with a guide and much walking done in pitch darkness, the men reached the area but were unable to find the Coast Watchers, who eventually found them!. Once contact was established, they then met up with Fred Hargesheimer, an American pilot evader who had also been hidden by Golpak's group in another village. The Coast Watchers were in radio contact with friendly forces, and reported on the three evaders to their base location.

While waiting for instructions the men worked alongside the Coast Watchers, carrying out intelligence gathering. Finally a message came through instructing the men to go to a pre-arranged RV point to meet up with, what they thought would be, a sea plane that had been arranged to collect them. After a very long walk through hostile terrain, the men arrived at the RV late, expecting their pick up to be blown. However, it was not an aircraft, but a submarine. The American Capt, Lt Cdr Bob Foley, of US Submarine Gato, had remained on post, and on a signal from the ground lowered rubber boats to collect the three men. David and Bill had been looked-after by natives for nearly three months. Fred had been hidden for nine months, but had spent weeks before that living in the jungle and had developed fever and dysentery. He had been unwell when help finally arrived, and was taken in by the villagers and nursed back to health. The care he received no doubt saved his life.

At the end of the war Golpak was made an MBE for his services to the Allies in assisting evaders and for controlling a network of safe-house jungle villages. When he died in 1959, a memorial was erected in his village on the spot where he first met David and Bill. Fred Hargesheimer never forgot his villages or his villagers. After getting his life back together after the war, he decided it was payback time, so in 1961 started fund raising to build a school in the jungle area of his evasion to encompass the villages that had assisted evaders like himself. No



1961 unveiling the Memorial to Paramount Chief Golpak
Photo by George Oakes

schools were available to the villagers at that time. The money came in and the school started to be built. The school was known locally as 'the school that fell from the sky', and was built at the village of Ewasse, the main village that hid him. The title of the school today is 'The Airman's Memorial School'. Fred and his wife worked at the school for four years to get it established, and then returned on yearly visits. In 1961 there was no education for native children. The school has grown and grown, and I was informed from New Britain, Papua New Guinea two years ago (2005), that the school could now boast that the first two of its pupils from Ewasse had now graduated from Universities in Australia and were now taking up senior govt positions in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. ELMS made a link with the school a number of years ago, but communication is difficult. All credit for the school must go to the evader who never forgot – Fred Hargesheimer.

Roger Stanton



B-17 Flying Fortress 'Miss Donna Mae II' downed by friendly bombs.

The "Miss Donna Mae II" drifted out of position while over the target and under another B-17 "Trudy", also from the 332nd Bomber Squadron. One of the 1,000 lb. bombs from "Trudy" tore off the left horizontal stabilizer and sent the plane into an unrecoverable spin. One of the wings came off at about 13,000 feet.

All 11 crew member were killed. Crashed Oderbergerstrasse, Berlin 19th May, 1944.

Maxim MG08/15 Light Machine Gun converted to .303 calibre

In WW2 the Waikerie VDC trained on dismantling and reassembling the German maxim machine gun, a trophy awarded to the town after WW1. Waikerie is on the Murray River in S.A.

In doing so they realised with some machining they could adapt it to fire .303 English ammo.

This was successful and it would fire 8-10 rounds before jamming. This was advised to HQ in Adelaide who ordered it to Wingfield for a demo to the army. This was done and an order was made for a demo in Melbourne about 3 weeks later. By the time this was done they'd altered and amended the gun so it would fire freely.

After this the Dept Defence (War dept) ordered all maxims recalled for alteration and use. They were used in Home defence and Bren Guns etc recently manufactured were sent

overseas where they were desperately needed.

(Converted Maxims were used at the Cowra Breakout)



Description

German Maxim MG08/15 Light Machine Gun converted in Australia to use .303 inch ammunition. The fusee cover, pistol grip and butt have been remade. The feed block has been modified and is stamped 9399. It is missing the muzzle compensator but retains its original round leg bipod. Overall painted green and has 9929 painted in white on the barrel jacket.

History / Summary

First World War German Maxim 08/15 machine gun which has been modified in an Australian Army workshop to fire British .303 inch rimmed ammunition. The gun was originally designed to fire 7.92 mm (.311 inch) rimless rounds. It was a trophy gun brought back to Australia at the end of the First World War. With a shortage of light machine guns in the early stages of the Second World War, it was decided to convert a number of these trophy guns and provide them to the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC). Consequently, it has a number of original or converted parts. Nearly 1400 guns were converted using the method devised by VDC personnel from Waikerie, South Australia's original round leg bipod. Overall painted green and has 9929 painted in white on the barrel jacket.

AWM Website

Late Night Phone Call To The Vet

A dog lover, whose dog was a female and 'on heat', agreed to look after her neighbour's male dog while the neighbours were on vacation.

She had a large house and believed that she could keep the two dogs apart. However, as she was drifting off to sleep she heard awful howling and moaning sounds, rushed downstairs and found the dogs locked together, in obvious pain and unable to disengage, as so frequently happens when dogs mate. Unable to separate them, and perplexed as to what to do next, although it was late, she called the vet, who answered in a very grumpy voice.

Having explained the problem to him, the vet said, "Hang up the phone and place it down alongside the dogs. I will then call you back and the noise of the ringing will make the male lose his erection and he will be able to withdraw."

"Do you think that will work?" she asked.

"Just worked on me," he replied.

The Japanese "Hell Ships" of World War II

Allied prisoners of war called them "hell ships," the requisitioned merchant vessels that the Japanese navy overloaded with POWs being relocated to internment on the Japanese Home Islands or elsewhere in the empire. The holds were floating dungeons, where inmates were denied air, space, light, bathroom facilities, and adequate food and water—especially water. Thirst and heat claimed many lives in the end, as did

summary executions and beatings, yet the vast majority of deaths came as a result of so-called "friendly fire" from U.S. and Allied naval ships, submarines, and aircraft.

In his comprehensive study of the sources, historian Gregory F. Michno shows that by the end of the war, 134 Japanese hell ships had together embarked on more than 156 voyages, which carried an estimated 126,000 Allied prisoners of war. Approximately 1,540 Allied POW deaths resulted from conditions in the holds and violence aboard hell ships, whereas more than 19,000 deaths came as a consequence of Allied attacks. The U.S. Navy carried out most of these attacks but with the help of Allied intelligence services and the Royal Navy's Far East patrols. On 18 September 1944, for example, a British submarine torpedoed and sank the Japanese hell ship *Junyo Maru*. Nearly 6,000 people died: 4,120 Javanese laborers and 1,520 Allied POWs.

The Empire of Japan required great numbers of workers—often enslaved or coerced—and huge quantities of oil and other raw materials in order to wage war against the Allies, particularly the resource-rich United States. Japanese hell ships therefore became integral to the massive effort to keep the war machine running. They plied the waters with the necessary cargoes, which the Japanese extracted from subject populations in occupied areas. As Japanese forces picked up more and more Allied prisoners of war between 1942 and 1944, the cargo-laden vessels doubled as prisoner transports, obscuring any last distinction between ships that should be attacked and ships that should be spared.

In the process of sinking these vessels, the U.S. Navy and the Allies effectively drowned many of their own men, who were trapped and concealed in the holds. These men and the other Allied POWs below decks were not, of course, the Allies' target. The targets were the vessels as such and the people and supplies on board that were necessary to the continuation of the Japanese war effort.

Attacking Japan's Requisitioned Merchant Ships

Montevideo Maru became the first of the hell ships to be sunk by the U.S. Navy, on 1 July 1942. Lieutenant Commander William L. Wright's submarine, *Sturgeon* (SS-187), had been in pursuit of its target for several hours before finally launching a torpedo attack in the small hours of the morning.

Within minutes of the first explosion, *Montevideo Maru* sank by the stern. There had not even been time to pump the holds or lower more than a few of the lifeboats. More than 1,000 Australian troops and 200 Australian administrative personnel, captured by the Japanese from New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, and the Solomon Islands, went down with the ship.

Intercepted radio transmissions were the Allies' most important source of information about Japan's requisitioned merchant ships. The commanders of these ships sent two daily communications to the Japanese military's general headquarters, and these communications would have included POW counts.

In order to intercept, decode, and act on these transmissions, the Allies established the Joint Intelligence Centre Pacific Ocean Area (JICPOA) in September 1943. Allied intelligence units in Australia and elsewhere in the region monitored Japanese and other Axis radio traffic and relied on the decryption and translation skills of women and men at intelligence facilities in Bletchley Park, England; Delhi, India; and Colombo, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). Their work done, the intercepted messages now constituted actionable intelligence.

This actionable intelligence was then edited down for use in *Ultras*, short for "ultra secret" communiqués going out to theatre commanders. Next, those theatre commanders would read the *Ultras* and decide which information to release to Allied ship commanders. In the end, the ship commanders received

the bare minimum: ship name, location, destination, approximate size, and defences. Somewhere along the chain, between the deciphering of the intercept and the transmission of information to ship commanders, details about POWs were excised. Individual ship commanders would not have known that their targets contained Allied POWs or even Japanese civilians.

In the last years of the war, moreover, the efforts to sink Japan's requisitioned merchant ships intensified. In early 1944, intelligence workers' efforts registered an increase in radio traffic around the Philippines and therefore intercepted more messages more frequently. In the first two months of that year, according to archivist Lee Gladwin, analysts and their assistants generated more than 3,700 index cards as a means of organizing information about Japan's busy fleet of requisitioned merchant vessels.

By fall 1944, the radio traffic had reached a frenzy. The Battle of Leyte Gulf (October 1944), which signaled the start of the American reconquest of the Philippines, prompted the Japanese to move resources and people—including POWs—to the Japanese Home Islands.

Toward the end of 1944, as the Americans took more and more territory in the Philippines, they effectively flushed out tens of thousands of Allied POWs. In the mad rush to evacuate, the Japanese massively overloaded their requisitioned merchant vessels with supplies and people. Conditions deteriorated quickly. Civilians and military personnel crowded the vessels' superstructures and upper decks; Allied POWs languished in abject wretchedness below.

In haste, the requisitioned merchant vessels steamed north, trying to outrun the U.S. Navy, but Navy officers, armed with the latest intelligence, had the decisive advantage. The hell ships in particular, which were poorly defended and heavily laden, succumbed in great numbers.

The Case of *Oryoku Maru*

Perhaps the best documented sinking, from the perspective of the American victims, is that of *Oryoku Maru*, which set off from Manila, in the Japanese-occupied Philippines, on 13 December 1944. The sinking of *Oryoku Maru* is exceptional, therefore, not because the experience of its prisoners was unique per se, but because their experience is so well documented in testimony collected after the war.

Oryoku Maru had been built as a luxury liner just before the war but was requisitioned for its new purpose shortly thereafter. Now, down in the holds, at least 1,600 Allied POWs awaited departure. Conditions were deplorable. Lieutenant Colonel O. O. Wilson, USA, in the after hold, later explained how so many hundreds of men occupied so little space:



Oryoku Maru

The hold was about 25 to 30 feet from the main deck reachable by a steep ladder which one man could descend at a time. Bays in double tiers were built around the hold, these bays being about 7 feet by 8 feet. Twenty men were jammed into each upper and

lower bay. The only way possible of crowding that number into such a small compartment was to have each man sit jammed into the crotch of the man behind him in four rows with five men to a row. When all the bays had been filled in this fashion, all remaining space in the hold was filled by men in a standing position packed one against the other,

cutting off all air for men in the bay.... It soon became evident to all that men would die very quickly from heat exhaustion and suffocation. The heat was terrific and the air stifling; men were bathed in sweat immediately and began to pass out from suffocation and dehydration.

Most of the POWs who boarded *Oryoku Maru* on 13 December 1944 had been in custody since the Bataan campaign of 1942 and had survived some of the war's most notorious death marches. They were now exceedingly weak and malnourished.

The following morning, 14 December, the pilots of U.S. Navy planes from *Hornet* (CV-12) caught sight of *Oryoku Maru* and its convoy off the east coast of Luzon. By 8 a.m., *Hornet's* dive-bombers were on the offensive. They returned two hours later to continue the attack. Separately, aircraft from *Cabot* (CVL-28), which was also covering operations off Luzon, also attacked the ship. According to an eyewitness account on board, it was at this point that *Oryoku Maru's* escort ships fled the scene and left the liner to its fate.

Prisoners in the after hold descended into panic. Several tried to climb ladders to the deck but to no avail. The Japanese guards fired indiscriminately down into the darkness, driving the men away from the hatch.

Hornet's bombers returned every 30 minutes or so and then zeroed in for a massive attack in the late afternoon. Japanese gunners continued to defend *Oryoku Maru*, not least of all to save their own lives, but also because the ship was loaded with as many as 2,000 Japanese civilians in hasty flight from the American advance through the Philippines. The screams of Japanese children were audible to POWs below decks, whose heads and shoulders became wet with the trickles of blood coursing down from the superstructure.

Yet the damage, which included the splintering of the decks, had also introduced air and light into a few areas of the holds. These came as a relief to many POWs once the attacks were over for the night.

For others, however, the second night of the voyage was even worse than the first. Historian John Toland describes in lurid detail the scene in the forward hold:

There were shouts of "Quiet!" and "At ease!" but as the temperature reached 110 degrees, riot again erupted.... Men were going mad. They collided with one another in the dark, slipping and falling in the faeces; the sick were trampled; wild, deadly fights erupted. Men dropped to their knees... to lap up sewage running in open drains.

Meanwhile, the Japanese passengers who had survived the aerial bombardment were boarding launches and heading for the Philippine beaches nearby.

At dawn on the 15th, as a handful of POWs housed amidships were in the process of escaping the stricken liner, *Hornet's* planes returned. A series of direct hits caused the bow to flood, and the ship took on a serious list.

More aircraft arrived overhead from both *Hornet* and *Cabot*. They strafed the deck and dropped 500-pound bombs and multiple rockets that nearly tore the ship apart. Girders buckled; fires engulfed the upper decks. As POWs, bloodied and terrorized, clamoured up the hatches from the holds, Japanese sentries shot them dead. Yet the men kept coming, forced out of the holds and into the fires by rising water. Eventually, the chaos, the strafing, and the fires became too much for the Japanese jailors, who abandoned ship.

Left to their own devices, more than a thousand POWs ended up in the water and swam toward land. The Japanese captured them in the water and on the shore—it is unclear whether anyone actually escaped. The guards then herded their pitiful charges to a tennis court on shore for the next stage of their deadly ordeal.

In sobering detail, historian Edward J. Marolda has traced the

fates of the group of men who survived the sinking of *Oryoku Maru*. Most of them were loaded onto another requisitioned merchant ship, which subsequently sank off the coast of Taiwan. The survivors of that sinking went on to Japan to contend with "starvation, disease, and exposure to the elements." Of the 1,600-plus men who had embarked on *Oryoku Maru* on 13 December 1944, some 1,000 never made it to Japan.

Those who did make it to Japan were subject to further abuses and neglect as well as another hellish trip at sea, this time to Korea, where, at the end of the war, U.S. authorities could find only 128 of *Oryoku Maru's* POW survivors, a mere eight percent of the total number of POWs on board when the ship had departed the Philippines en route to Japan in December 1944.

Japanese treatment of Allied POWs was deadly in and of itself, Allied sinkings of hell ships notwithstanding. Even in a case like that of *Oryoku Maru*, with so many survivors, a prisoner's chances of making it to the end of the war were slim.

Conclusion

The sinking of *Oryoku Maru* was the result of intercepted Japanese radio transmissions that would have revealed some information about POWs on board. Whether that information made its way down to the theatre commanders is unclear. At any rate, there is no evidence to suggest that commanders at sea had any knowledge of the presence of POWs on Japanese ships.

The issue of culpability is complicated and disquieting. As yet, no historian has taken it on directly. Gregory Michno, who has done more than anyone to uncover and make sense of the history of hell ships, offers a most sobering explanation: "War is hell, and hell is relative. The fatal Ultras were sent. Axis and Allies died together."

*Adam Bisno, Ph.D., NHHC Communication and Outreach Division,
November 2019 US Naval History and Heritage Command*

Hell Ships Sunk by Allied Forces, 1942–1945

Ship Name	Date Sunk
Montevideo Maru	1 July 1942
Lisbon Maru	1 October 1942
Nichimei Maru	15 January 1943
Suez Maru	29 November 1943
Ikoma Maru	21 January 1944
Tango Maru	25 February 1944
Tamahoko Maru	24 June 1944
Harugiku Maru	25 June 1944
Koshu Maru	4 August 1944
Shinyo Maru	7 September 1944
Kachidoki Maru	12 September 1944
Rakuyo Maru	12 September 1944
Junyo Maru	18 September 1944
Hofuku Maru	21 September 1944
Arisan Maru	24 October 1944
Oryoku Maru	15 December 1944
Enoura Maru	9 January 1945

This morning, I accidentally changed the GPS Voice to "Male."

Now it just says, "It's around here somewhere. Keep driving."



Hell Ships Memorial, Manila, Philippines.

Poor old Grandad's passed away, cut off in his prime,
He never had a day off crook, gone before his time.
We found him in the dunny, collapsed there on the seat,
A startled look upon his face, his trousers around his feet.
The doctor said his heart was good, fit as any trout,
The Constable he had his say, 'foul play' was not ruled out
There were theories at the inquest, of snakebite without trace,
Of red-backs quietly creeping and death from outer space.
NO-ONE HAD A CLUE AT ALL, THE JUDGE WAS IN SOME DOUBT,
WHEN DAD WAS CALLED TO HAVE HIS SAY AS TO HOW IT CAME ABOUT.
'I reckon I can clear it up,' said Dad with trembling breath,
'You see it's quite a story, but it could explain his death.
This here exploration mob had been looking at our soil,
And they reckoned that our farm was just the place for oil.
So they came and put a bore down and said they'd make some trials,
They drilled a hole as deep as hell, they said about three miles.
Well, they never found a trace of oil and off they went, post haste,
And I couldn't see a hole like that go to flamin' waste,
So I moved the dunny over it, real smart move I thought,
I'd never have to dig again, I'd never be 'caught short'.
The day I moved the dunny, it looked a proper sight,
But I didn't dream poor Granddad would pass away that night.
Now I reckon what has happened, poor Granddad didn't know
The dunny was re-located when that night he had to go.
And you'll probably be wondering how poor Granddad did his dash,
Well, he always used to hold his breath, until he heard the splash!

Australia's peacekeeping missions since 1947

Australians have served in peacekeeping roles every year since 1947.

The first Australian peacekeepers were deployed to the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia). Their intense experience of observing the front between Netherlander troops and Indonesian republicans foreshadowed the experiences of generations of Australians to come.

We commemorate the contribution made in the service of peace by Australian defence personnel, police and civilians.

Australia as a leader

As a leader in its region, Australia has led or taken a leading role in:

- UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) from 1992 to 1993
- Multinational Peace Monitoring Group in Bougainville from 1998 to 2003

- Multinational International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) from 1999 to 2000
- Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) from 2003 to 2017.

United Nations missions

In 1945, during the final months of World War II, representatives of 50 nations met to talk about the role and structure of the United Nations (UN). The UN officially started on 24 October 1945 with 51 member states. Its role was, and remains, to maintain international peace and security. Today, the UN has 193 member states.

Australia played an important role in the formation of the UN and represented the interests of smaller, less powerful nations. Since then, the Australian Government has continued its support for the UN: Australia is firmly committed to effective global cooperation, including through the United Nations (UN) and its specialised agencies and regional commissions. Engaging with the multilateral system is a key pillar of Australia's foreign policy. This is because we live in a complex, inter-connected world where countries cannot address on their own some of the major challenges we face today

The Australian Government has provided peacekeepers and resource support to many UN-led peacekeeping missions. However, not all Australian operations have involved the UN.

Commemoration of Australians

With so many Australians having been involved in often-dangerous peacekeeping operations over the years, some Australians have been killed or suffered injury and trauma.

In earlier decades, people debated how to commemorate the service of peacekeepers. It's now recognised that although some aspects of peacekeeping are unique, the operational experience of peacekeepers is war-like service.

Roll of Honour

The Australian War Memorial records the names of Australia's war dead. The Council of the Memorial made a historic decision on 6 March 2013 to change the criteria for the Roll of Honour to include Defence personnel who died in non-warlike operations. The council added the names of Australian peacekeepers to the Roll of Honour that day.

Australian Peacekeeping Memorial

A national memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra was officially dedicated by the then Governor-General, Sir Peter Cosgrove, on 14 September 2017. The memorial commemorates the contribution made 'in the service of peace' by Australian defence personnel, police and civilians.

Dept of Veterans Affairs—ANZAC Portal



Australian Peacekeeping Memorial, Canberra Australia
AWM 2018/4/297/7



Japanese Tunnels During WW II East New Britain Province

Most of the underground tunnels were dug during the period 1943 to early 1945. Many of the tunnels were dug by Indian, Korean, Indonesian and Chinese labour, captured in Malaysia, China and Singapore and transported to Rabaul. The majority of these were to die of disease, starvation, atrocities and overwork. The Japanese also used local Tolai labour from surrounding villages, as well as their own troops, who saw to the engineering and would at times work in the tunnels.

Allied POWs were also employed. Some 600 British POWs who surrendered at Singapore were transported to Rabaul and forced to work for the Japanese before being shipped to Bailale in the Solomons to construct an airfield. At war's end in Rabaul, 18 were found alive from those transferred. POWs at Bailale did not survive.

This was primarily to hide and protect the Japanese and their materials from Allied air-raids.



The Japanese had many small forges and made a lot of their own tools. They were masters at getting the job done. In the early days most of the picks and shovels were brought in by ships from Japan and Singapore. The POWs used these. Pick and mattock

marks can still be seen on the tunnel walls.

The removal of tailings from smaller tunnels was by using woven bamboo or coconut frond baskets. Also used was a two wheel, wheelbarrow. In larger systems small trolley carts on rails and even sleds pulled by the workers were utilised.

On the Gazelle Peninsula, 13 Army hospital complexes, housing over 4000 patients, were dug within 6 to 9 months. In the early days of 1942-43, before going underground, these hospitals took troops from Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Milne Bay, Buna/Kokoda and the New Guinea mainland. The Navy also had two underground hospitals capable of 1000 patients each. At Gunanur the entrances were in a valley, with a small creek at the bottom which they had dammed to store water.



There was a small paddle wheel to lift and divert water inside the system. This system had blast doors and electricity, powered by an onsite generator.



Insulators could still be seen anchored to the cement walls, however the wire had long gone, although pieces could still be seen protruding from the insulators.

Some of the chambers of this system

were three metres high, with other smaller chambers going off at right angles from the main passage way. Steps with hand rails were easily defined which lead to exits along the valley floor.

The immense tonnage of overburden showed up as "excavations sites" with the lighter colour pumice showing up clearly against a jungle background. The Japanese hid the tailings by covering the piles with palm fronds.

Recently, a tunnel was found at the top end of Mango Avenue up against the caldera wall. Washed out in 2010, it had oil lamps and rotting wooden logs still in place, struggling to hold up the tunnel roof.

At one stage electricity was used, as light bulbs were found bearing the Japanese characters and the Japanese "Anchor", symbol of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN).

Most of the larger tunnels or those that were deemed necessary were shored up by timbers. Most of these have now rotted away although evidence can still be seen of the support beams. The design of the tunnels was usually the same with curved or arched ceilings on all small earthen tunnels.

The larger ones were usually used to house supplies. The cement ones were also built with rounded ceilings or with arched or flat ceilings complete with buttresses. Most were lit by coconut oil lamps. The more elaborate ones, such as command complexes, had electricity. The oil lamps were set into the walls of the tunnels in little recesses, just large enough to hold an oil lamp. Normally lighting was poor, as was ventilation, causing the system to be musty and damp.



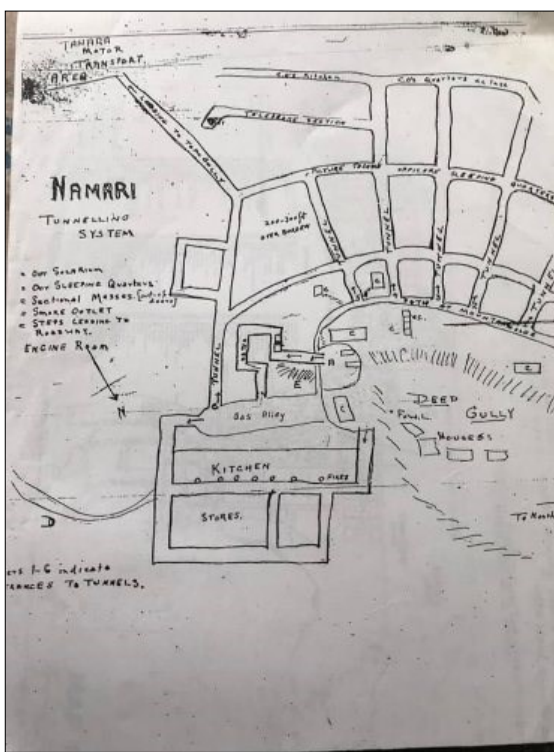
The tunnels had at least two exit doors separate from the main entrance in case of accidental cave-ins from allied bombings. There were sometimes many passageways leading to underground chambers of various sizes for storage of ammunition, stores, sleeping quarters and also workshops as nothing could be done outside the system due to the frequent air raids. Most of them had exits close to AA positions or above ground installations.

Some of the larger tunnels

were used to hide barges brought up on rails from the water 200 metres away. Up to five Japanese Daihatsu barges can still be seen inside a partly cemented tunnel on the road from Kokopo to Rabaul at the back of Vulcan. Other larger tunnels are at Blue Lagoon. These are huge tunnels, big enough to drive a truck into and were used as storage systems.

In a system close to the barge tunnels is a complete hospital, which covered three stories of tunnels along with tiled operating theatres, all dug into a near vertical wall of pumice, complete with stair cases and many chambers.

There are many tunnels within an easy walk of the Rabaul Hotel. The hotel also has its own underground bunker below the restaurant, now a pistol range. The New Guinea Club (now turned into a museum) has a deep cement bunker known locally as Yamamoto's Bunker. There is a map of Simpson Harbour on the ceiling of the bunker.



Map of one tunnel system supplied by Don Green

There is a fascinating tunnel system at the top of Tunnel Hill and the road to the Volcano Observatory, where the "Kempi Tai" (Japanese Military Police) had their headquarters. This is also where the Allied prisoners, few of whom survived the war, were quartered. Many references are found in books relating to the conditions of the POWs in the Tunnel Hill complex. Many died here from beatings, sickness and untreated wounds and the tunnels are a direct remainder of what they must have suffered.

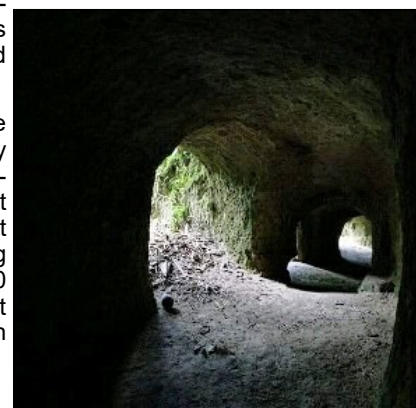
At one complex opening, there is a system which not only housed the men and munitions, but was also used for cooking and even had a stream for water catchment. The stream can still be seen today. Deeper underground via a spiral staircase carved into the pumice going down 30 metres, you will find the passages are long and wide enough to drive a small vehicle through.

Above ground, a spectacular view overlooks both sides of the caldera, Watom Island to the North and Simpson Harbour and the Beehives to the south.

There are another three entrances. On the walls of this tunnel, you can clearly see the marks left by the digging tools. There are also six 75mm high-elevation AAs, all aimed skyward, slowly rusting under a canopy of palm trees.

On Namanula Hill, overlooking Simpson Harbour, we came upon several more tunnels, recently uncovered by the monsoonal rains. The entrances to these tunnels were concrete and had steel doors.

On the first tunnel the doors had rusted away allowing us the opportunity just to look in. It was a small cement rendered cavern, going back no more than 20 feet. The end of it looked like it has been sealed off.



The next set of tunnels is further up the road. The road is now an overgrown track and about 12 feet above what is now Namanula road. The first entrance was well hidden under a mound of dirt. The concrete archway was just visible and we managed to crawl in backwards. This tunnel had a couple of corridors going off in different directions: some led to a dead end and others had had cave-ins where exits once existed.

Home to two active volcanos and some of the most abundant earthquake activity in the world, the township of Rabaul in Papua New Guinea does not seem to be the ideal place for a massive military encampment.

But a strategically significant harbor, the Japanese built one anyway during World War II, leaving behind over 500 miles of tunnels snaking beneath the island when they were routed.

Japanese forces overtook the town of Rabaul in 1942 as WWII was in its early years, and quickly established a massive military complex serving their navy, air force, and, infantry.

At its height, the Rabaul base and its surrounding encampment served over 97,000 soldiers and thousands more accompanying personnel.

Due to the Island's remote location, the main threat to the base was bombardment from the air, which was frequent and often devastating.

To counteract this, hundreds of miles of tunnels were built beneath the town where a number of fully functioning facilities were installed.

The tunnels were dug by laborers who were captured in Malaysia, China, and Singapore and transported to Rabaul. Many of these laborers died from disease, starvation, poor treatment, and overwork. The Japanese also used local Tolai labour from surrounding villages and prisoners of war.

The hospital, barracks, storehouses, and command centres were moved into the underground labyrinth with some of the chambers built as large as four stories tall.

Some of the tunnels were hewn right from the existing rock, and some were crude structures supported by palm beams, while others still were fully built out concrete bunkers. All in all, the system became one of the longest and most elaborate in the world.

When the Japanese were driven from the island at the end of the war, the base and its copious tunnels were simply left behind.

Today, most of the contents of the base have been cleared out but dangerous ammunition and other remnants can still be found in the depths of the tunnels.

A volcanic eruption in 1994 nearly buried the entire city beneath volcanic ash and most of the populace were forced to evacuate, but the area is slowly recovering and the tunnels beneath the island are slowly being rediscovered.

*Freelance Journalism. News and Media Website
Pictures By Rabaul Historical Sites*



Salamaua War Cemetery 1944

Those there now rest in Lae War Cemetery which was commenced in 1944 by the Australian Army Graves Service and handed over to the Commission in 1947.

It contains the graves of men who lost their lives during the New Guinea campaign whose graves were brought there from the temporary military cemeteries in areas where the fighting took place.

The Indian casualties were soldiers of the army of undivided India who had been taken prisoner during the fighting in Malaya and Hong Kong. The great majority of the unidentified were recovered between But airfield and Wewak, where they had died while employed in working parties. Of the two men belonging to the army of the United Kingdom, one was attached to 2/9th Australian Infantry Battalion and the other was a member of the Hong Kong-Singapore Royal Artillery. The naval casualties were killed, or died of injuries received, on H.M. Ships King George V, Glenearn and there are four men of the Merchant Navy

Lae cemetery contains 2,818 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, 444 of them unidentified. It was unveiled by the Governor-General of Australia, Field Marshal Slim, on 21 October 1953.



11 April 1944. The Kokoda War Cemetery viewed eastwards from the Kokoda plateau with the Japanese cemetery at left foreground. The temporary graves from the area between Efogi and Wairopi were removed to this cemetery. Those there would now rest in Bomana War Cemetery.



Building the Highlands Highway 1950's

An American and a Russian are arguing about which country has more freedom.

The American says "I can walk right up to the White House and shout "Down with Joe Biden!" and nothing bad will happen to me."

The Russian replies "Guess what! I can walk in front of Kremlin and shout "Down with Joe Biden!" and nothing bad will happen to me either."



2022. WW2 bombs to be disposed by the PNGDF Bomb disposal team at Awar village, Hansa Bay, to clear the area of old bombs to allow for the upgrade and sealing of the Bogia Highway between Bogia Station and Awar near the mouth of Ramu River.

Hospital Ship No. VIII (Grantala) and the Australian Nurses

At the beginning of the First World War, the passenger vessel *Grantala*, owned by the Adelaide Steamship Company, was requisitioned by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). It was renamed *Hospital Ship No. VIII* and was converted into a hospital ship with room for 300 patients within three weeks at the Cockatoo Island Dockyard and the Garden Island Naval Base. *Hospital Ship No. VIII* became Australia's **first hospital ship and the only RAN hospital ship of the First World War**. The purpose of this hospital ship was to be the hospital ship in support of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (ANMEF) which was being sent to New Guinea to take control of the German New Guinea colony.

Interestingly, this ship was not commissioned by the RAN and retained most of her civilian crew of around 80, including the ship's master. Also, the seven nurses who were recruited from



Group photo of sick bay staff from Hospital Ship No. VIII

the Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital in Sydney retained their civilian status and were not commissioned as military nurses. They had to purchase their own uniforms.

Hospital Ship No. VIII anchored off Rabaul on 13 September 1914 and began treating the wounded, sick and injured from the ANMEF, the German forces and other ships & vessels, including 20 sailors from the French warship, *Montcalm*, who had gastroenteritis. The ANMEF soon took control of German New Guinea and *Hospital Ship No. VIII* was needed more at Suva where the Allied forces were confronting the German forces. On 4 October 1914 *Hospital Ship No. VIII* sailed from Rabaul to Suva. She arrived at Suva on 13 October and remained in port until the German East Asian Squadron has been destroyed at the Battle of Falklands on 8 December 1914.



Hospital Ship No. VIII anchored at Suva

Hospital Ship No. VIII arrived back in Sydney on 22 December 1914 and all the ship's naval and medical staff, except Dr Trinca, were paid off. The ship was restored to her original configuration and returned to her owners in early 1915.

After the nurses were paid off, they were very keen to continue with their war service nursing, but they were advised that further overseas service was unlikely as the war would soon be over. However, this advice did not defer these nursing sisters. Sister Rosa Kirkcaldie promptly made her own way to England and joined the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve. She treated wounded soldiers from Gallipoli and the Western Front, including working on hospital ships. Matron Sarah De Mestre and four of the other nursing sisters later joined the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) and served overseas. Several of the nursing sisters served on hospital ships.

However, the nurses' experience on the *Grantala* did not help in their later wartime nursing careers. Sister de Mestre told the official First World War medical historian: "I may say that I had on return to reapply for Active Service and our work on this 'Exped' did not count towards our seniority in the AIF." Finally, on 3 March 1920 the RAN recognized that the service of these nursing sisters would be accepted as naval war service and they were awarded Returned Sailors Badges. Also, on 1 March 2010 the RAN announced that *Grantala* would be awarded the Rabaul 1914 Battle Honour. This battle honour can now be added to the Australian Service Nurses National Memorial at Anzac Parade, Canberra.

Other ANMEF/Tropical Nurses

Jenny Baker on her website, Looking for the Evidence: AN&MEF nurses, has listed the names of 19 additional nurses who served with the ANMEF/ Tropical Nursing Service until 1921.

Also, Dr Kristy Harris has compiled an updated list with some more names. This list is at <https://kjhh.net.au/australiannursesatwar/world-war-one-australian-nurses>

Information about the ANMEF

Michael White has written about the ANMEF and I have posted this information on the Australian War Memorial's Places of Pride website at <https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/memorials/266470>

Sources

- Hospital Ship Grantala: Royal Australian Navy website
- Hospital Ship No. VIII: Australian Defence Force Journal, Vol. 8, April 2007
- Australian War Memorial website
- Naval Office minute 20/1415, dated 3 March 1920: National Archives of Australia
- Royal Australian Navy website, 1 March 2010, re new battle honours

Thank you Patrick Bourke



18 Dec 1945. The Australian 6th Division returns home from Wewak on board HMA Implacable. The 6th Division fought in Nth Africa, Greece, Crete, Syria and New Guinea.

Some favourite oxymorons

assistant supervisor
 new tradition
 original copy
 plastic glass
 uninvited guest
 highly depressed
 live recording
 authentic reproduction
 partial cease-fire
 limited lifetime guarantee
 elevated subway
 dry lake
 true replica
 forward lateral
 standard options

The death of Kevin Parer

The first Australian to be killed by the Japanese Imperial Force on the New Guinea Mainland was Kevin Parer. Kevin and his plane were shot up and he was killed at 11.55am on 21 Jan 1942 on the runway in Salamaua in his DH84 VH-AEA plane during take-off by a Zero fighter as part of a force of 30 "Betty" bombers and 60 Zero fighters that took off from a Japanese carrier fleet and attacked Kavieng on New Ireland and Lae, Salamaua, Bulolo and Madang on the New Guinea Mainland. The lack of air defence planes and ack-ack guns allowed the Japanese to spend 45 minutes in the

target area carefully picking targets and bombing from as low as 2,000 feet. Initially they attacked the township and then the aerodrome with machine gun and cannon fire.

In total 16 civil aircraft were destroyed and an RAAF Hudson – this included Kevin's two machines on the runway of Salamaua. As Anthony Cooper describes it in his book *Kokoda Air Strikes: Allied Forces of New Guinea*, "in one stroke the Japanese had destroyed the flourishing Australian civil aviation in New Guinea – and particularly the heavy freighter aircraft, which would have proved most useful in the ensuing mountain campaign had they survived."



Kevin, with in front, from left to right Warwick, Kevin Jr and Nance Parer in a family portrait in 1938.

In "No Turning Back" by ETW Fulton, Jack Thurston, who was Kevin's initial financial backer in Parer's Air Transport described Kevin's last flight, "Kevin was in New Guinea right to the beginning of the war. He actually flew my wife Betty out, she was the last person to leave the Sepik area as all women were supposed to leave New Guinea at that time. She flew to Salamaua then Kevin took her over to Moresby. He landed there, said goodbye to her on the strip, then flew back to Salamaua. He landed at Salamaua, got out of his plane, the engine was still running and he started to walk away as three Japanese Zeros came sweeping down. Instead of running to the side of the drome and getting into a trench, old Kevin ran back to his plane and jumped in to take off. They got him and he was killed. It was an absolute tragedy as Kevin left a wife and young children."

Kevin was killed by a cannon shell and died almost immediately.

Ernie Clarke, who later received a George Medal for this action, was to fly the Fox Moth VH-AAX with Kevin at the time had the plane started.

"My plane was ticking over and Kevin was having difficulty getting his to start. He was in the plane and sang out to me to give him a kick over. I came over to his plane and got hold of the propeller. On looking up saw the Japanese plane about 50 ft overhead. A burst of machine-gun fire from another sprayed around us. I dropped under the shelter of the engine. Another burst ripped right along the plane. I got up and saw Kevin get out of his seat and dash to the back of the cabin where he fell. The Japs were still coming. I covered Kevin with a blanket and made for a shelter. When the Japs were clear I ran out to the plane, which was now on fire. I tried to get Kevin out, but couldn't manage it. A couple of bullets ripped across my legs above the knees, but they were nothing, only flesh wounds."

After the attack on Pearl Harbour on the 7th December 1941, Kevin, with his three plane fleet of Parer's Air Transport and other pilots, began air lifting the women and children to Port Moresby as part of the evacuation to Australia of some 800 people. This included Kevin's pregnant wife Nance and children Warwick, Keven and Mary-Pat. They were crowded onto and shipped out on the decks of the merchant ship SS Katoomba on 17 December 1941. An emotional, public embrace between Kevin and Nance and they were away. They arrived in Brisbane on Boxing day. Kevin remained. The RAAF had pressed those of the Lae and Salamaua civilian facilities for refuelling and servicing. With sustained efforts in trying flying conditions, Kevin and his team continued evacuating the remote men of New Guinea and flying in the military and supplies.

Nance received notice of Kevin's death, not through official

channels, but by letter from Father John Glover written the day after, though not received until the 30 January. This showed how disorganised and caught napping Australia was in this theatre of war. Fr Glover said, "your husband was regarded as one of the finest and most lovable characters ever to live in the Territory. There are those who would gladly have died so that he might live. He had the sympathies of a little child." Father Glover said further that he hoped to get down to Salamaua the following day to bless the grave. Kevin's grave still resides where it looks out over the Huon Gulf.

Kevin's Uncle John Arthur and Aunt Theresa Parer, cousins Phonse, Doreen, Ben, Cyril and Adrian and siblings Ray, Bob, Mary, Bernard and Kevin were all or had recently been in the New Guinea Mandated Territories on the northern shores with their families. Kevin's cousin Damien was an experienced veteran of the war having worked through the Syrian, Lybian and Greek campaigns. When Australia's troops were recalled to defend Australia, he knew exactly what was at stake for the nation.

Kevin's death made the war all the more personal for Damien



Damien and Alan Anderson next to the War Photographer van outside the house in Maleny where his parents were staying after the New Guinea evacuation on their way from Sydney to Townsville

and on his return to Sydney, Australia he made his way to Townsville with Alan Anderson, where he stopped in to see Nance at Warwick on the 8th of March. Nance was at the hospital having just given birth to Helen. A sister placed baby Helen in Damien's arms and said, "here is your daughter Mr Parer". With a

heavy heart he replied, "I wish it was, but I am afraid it is not".

Damien made his impassioned talk at the start of Kokoda Front Line: "There seems to be an air of unreality as though the war was a million miles away. It's not. It's just outside our door now. I've seen the war and I know what your husbands, sweethearts and brothers are going through. If only everybody in Australia could realise this country is in peril."

When he said that, he knew both sides of the war, the front line and the impact on the family back home in Australia. Damien focussed the prism of his lens on all the aspects of the war, in a manner and with a clarity not previously seen he delivered that to the Australia audiences.



Kevin Parer – Lest we forget

Parer History 2018

Blue bird of paradise (Paradisaea rudolphi) There are 39 species in PNG

A man was helping one of his cows give birth, when he noticed his 4-year-old son standing wide-eyed at the fence, soaking in the whole event. The man thought, "Great... he's 4 and I'm gonna have to start explaining the birds and bees. No need to jump the gun - I'll just let him ask, and I'll answer."

After everything was over, the man walked over to his son and said, "Well son, do you have any questions?" "Just one," gasped the still wide-eyed lad. "How fast was that calf going when he hit the back of that cow?"

A flat-pack WW2 Jeep still in the box ready to be built! How cool is this!?



Expo Showcased Dogs of War

They're nicknamed robot dogs, but the mechanical movements of Army's quadrupeds walking around Land Forces don't prompt warm feelings like a real canine. While you may not want to pat them, their value is in what they may one day do for Army.

It could be clearing rooms in urban areas, thanks to their stair-climbing ability, or setting up surveillance from buildings where it's too dangerous to put recon teams.

Uncrewed ground vehicle models of the Ghost Robotics Vision 60 were showcased at Land Forces to highlight the work of the Robotic and Autonomous Systems Implementation & Coordination Office (RICO) and their exploration of where Army might use robots and autonomous systems.

Lt Col Alex Palmer, from RICO, said his area gave soldiers off-the-shelf technology to see how it could aid in their current roles.

The robot dog has so far been used for such things as carrying radios for re-trans in hard-to-access areas, along with urban building clearances as the V60 can negotiate stairs.

Though normally operated by remote control, Lt Col Palmer's team have been teaching 7th Combat Service Support Battalion soldiers to pre-program their movements.

"We're asking 'what can it do that humans can, to save humans from going into harm's way?'," Lt Col Palmer said.

They carry a payload of up to 15 kilograms and have from four to six hours of battery life. RICO have been experimenting with them for four years, using several versions.

"It can have any surveillance system bolted to it," Lieutenant Colonel Palmer said.

"When patrolling a perimeter, it doesn't need to take a break. It can come back and recharge while another one is out. I can program it to be random, unlike humans who fall into a pattern."

RICO have been using the robot dogs at Land Forces to draw people in to talk about other projects.

Including their optionally crewed armoured personnel carriers, which recently had their control systems downsized so four units can be controlled from one vehicle.

"Unlike a human that has to stop for break, I can drive these into the ground or into harm's way," Lt Col Palmer said.

RICO are also responsible for the leader follower project, where one manned vehicle leads a convoy of four driverless vehicles.

"We could have a convoy of five trucks but it's only putting two soldiers in danger rather than 10," Lt Col Palmer said.

They are now working with Deakin University and Australian Road Research Board to take them on public roads.

The benefits from robotics and autonomous systems could also have flow-on effects for commanders in the field, according to Lt Col Palmer.

"There's AI components that could help prioritise information commanders are getting so we're not overburdening them, meaning they can make quick, informed decisions," he said.

Lt Col Palmer said RICO's interaction at Land Forces helped industry explore Army requirements and to see what industry could offer.

"We're seeing all those things and are able to collaborate and advise them what Army may want in the future," he said.

"We will always have soldiers where their critical thinking is needed, but robotics and autonomous systems can take them away from dangerous and dirty jobs."

Army Newspaper 1523



North Coast Escape

Brown and Woods, the Hardware shop Kamareri street Rabaul

Norm Woods's nic name was dewai, which in, pisin English means Wood.

I met Norm in 1958 in Colonial pre-independence Rabaul.

The interior of Brown & Wood's store in Kamareri street was lifeless. Morning sun streaked through the windows, hi-lighting dust particles swirling inside.

On entering the store, I saw Norm's ageing figure seated at a bare wooden table; Overhead dangled a bare light bulb. Norm or "dewai", was dressed in a faded stud shirt, the stud collar long abandoned. His baggy long grey pants looked uncomfortably hot, and his thin bare ankles disappeared into his worn shoes.

Dusty hardware stock surrounded this forlorn figure. There were cans of paint with tattered labels strewn around the room. Grimy boxes, packed and unpacked, lay scattered. Former customers had all but abandoned his hardware shop. No doubt lured to the better-stocked Collyer Watsons situated nearby. Norm had the grand-sounding name of managing partner and was in charge of this once-thriving business now futilely struggling against closure.

In the early years. Norm was part of a close-knit Rabaul business group, He was a member of the class-conscious New Guinea Club. I found his name engraved on a bar table inside the club lounge, verifying his stature in the elite establishment. Now much older, he was a sad loner, seemingly an outcast known only to older residents.

Norm had instructions from the board of Vulcan Concrete, my Bosses. He was to monitor my sales by checking my invoices and other bookwork. This routine was irksome to me. I thought it unnecessary, But I learned over time to appreciate Norm's guidance and dry sense of humour, and we became friends.

In addition to his advice on basic bookkeeping, Norm spun yarns about his experiences in the bush. His storytelling skills were disarming. Soon, he had me listening to his every word. He had total recall of crucial detail. He chatted laconically sometimes, with a clacking ivory grin as he recalled amusing scenes from his memory bank.

His colourful yarns were exciting. He enthralled me. I listened to Norm's stories and enjoyed them immensely.

He told stories of adventure. Travelling at will in and around the tropical islands by land and sea, He saw primitive young bare-breasted meris suckling piglets. Witnessed witch doctors inflicting payback with puri-puri on their chosen victims.

He described life in lonely bush camps where white men died lonely deaths from malaria, crocodiles, snakes, and horrific unattended industrial injuries which they suffered on their own.

Norm certainly had gotten around in his younger days. But predictably, old age caught up with him. When I met him, his lifestyle had deteriorated. As he aged, his stature diminished. Eventually, Brown and Woods, the business and premises, relocated. Norm was left behind.

He was rescued from his plight by the unpopular to some but indefatigable to all, the energetic Mr Jack Chipper (Hydraulic Jack). Another member of the business elite.

Jack housed Norm rent-free in a small cabin perched on the caldera slopes above the Torchbearers school. He employed him part-time for fuel sales at his new built Shell service station on Malaguna road.

This sparse grey-haired Australian had a wry sense of humour. He narrated a story I wanted to record.

The other players around him at the time died at the hands of the Japanese invaders. Norm was indeed a survivor.

A few years after our first meeting, Jack Chipper arranged a burial for this lonely man somewhere in Rabaul, Quietly, I believe even secretly, and without fuss.

Norm's Story: My Escape from Rabaul

Some days before the inglorious fall of Rabaul, when invading Japanese assaulted the tropical beaches of the Gazelle Peninsula. I made plans to escape from them to my logging camp in the Binings area of the Gazelle Peninsula; my camp was situated deep in the bush. There I would be safe from the invaders. I knew the people. And the surrounding bush and was confident I could avoid all contact with them. I discussed my escape plan with my companion and dear friend, a sister stationed at the Namanula hospital. I had hoped in vain that she would agree to escape with me.

Rumours were rife, and many. I was gravely apprehensive. We knew the Japanese invasion was imminent.

Rabaul numbers had been cut by government-controlled evacuations. This afternoon those remaining, including me, had gathered for drinks at Namanula hospital. But they did not appear to appreciate the deadly danger they were facing.

To me, the gathering seemed a futile exercise in childish bravado. I was cynical about our chances. I had reluctantly attended similar parties during that terrible time. Whilst my peers were excited, I harboured depressing thoughts of impending doom.

To attend the meeting, I set off through the depressed town to Namanula Hill carrying a few belongings. I was to meet my friend, a nurse who worked at the hospital there.

The imbibing planters and residents, with what seemed to me misplaced heroics were sporting .22 rifles and double-barrelled shotguns. Most of the planters believed that the Japanese soldiers were inferior. Saying the bastards could not see straight and squinted through thick bottle glasses.

Such sentiments were to be repeated many times to me. I was amazed this was the stuff of American comic books. How could mature adults believe that shit? The situation was unreal and reinforced my misgivings.

My girlfriend was aware of my plans to sit this war out on my well-stocked bush camp 40 miles away, but she declined to go with me. She felt she could not leave her post. I tried unsuccessfully to change her mind, but she decided to stay. I have not seen her since.

I intended to quit the party early. The doctor in charge offered the loan of a small Austin four-seater car. He, too, would stay on, never to be seen again.

My friend, the doctor knowing my plans, agreed that I would leave the car at Kerevat, to proceed further on foot. In the meantime, he would arrange for another driver to pick the car up.

A great plot! But alas, nothing went to plan. Japanese marched on Rabaul the very next day. They did so swiftly and aggressively. There was no hint of widespread eye weakness that many inebriated planters had attributed to them. These troops were professionals and deadly. Unfortunately, the men on Namanula Hill, had been proven wrong.

About 6 PM. It was a fantastic tropical evening. I parted from my nurse friend and left the hospital quietly. I made my way to the small Austin A7 Car. and headed towards town. Travelling fast down Namanula hill, the engine stopped. The car had run out of fuel; all I could hear then was the noise of the tyres on the road.

Was this a joke? Was it sabotage? I will never know. I remain unaware of any other person from that gathering at Namanula, surviving the war?

Free-wheeling downhill in the dark with muted headlights. Was a frightening experience. I had to maintain speed. At the bot-

tom of the hill, I was to make a sharp turn right. If all went well, I reckoned, I could continue coasting to the Burns Philp service station, which was around the corner. It was a miracle, but even at this late hour, someone was in attendance at the service station, and the car finally limped to a stop, spot-on at the petrol bowser.

A local man. with hitched up lap-lap readily filled my small car with fuel. Despite his protests, I quickly drove off, for I had no money, suggesting tongue in cheek as I went that the poor fellow should send me a bill!

I made my way along Malaguna road. There was no sign of any other locals at this hour. They had quit the town for the security of the surrounding villages. Over Tunnel Hill, I went. Along the north coast road heading towards Kerevat. However, at Pila Pila junction. A small group of soldiers from an Australian army platoon signalled for me to stop. They had barricaded the road. The officer in charge politely issued a warning that he was going to confiscate my vehicle. A war department receipt would be issued accordingly.

Patently, he listened to my pleading and relented. I was to be allowed to continue on my journey, with the provision a trooper would go with me and ferry the car back to Pila Pila. I said goodbye to them and continued with the young soldier beside me.

We travelled north along the road to Kerevat. Plantations were on one side of the road, the sea on the other; a big tropical moon was overhead, creating light flashes on the coral road ahead.

With a gentle breeze cooling us, we had no sense of danger. At length, the Gaulim junction appeared, and we headed down the Gaulim track. We met some natives on the way who warned us that they had seen Japanese troops on the road ahead of us. Not very far away. (em I no long wei too mus) We immediately backtracked to the junction and headed for Kokopo. I adjusted my plans. I would go to my bush camp via Vunapope. I terminated my partnership with the anxious trooper at Kokopo. He quickly took the car and drove back on the lonely coastal road towards Rabaul.

On my own, I stood watching the rapidly receding car. I had a desire for a cold beer, and needed relaxation. With this notion in mind, I walked along the deserted road to my mates' plantation house. I had reasoned that I would be better off staying the night there and heading off in the morning with a fresh start.

Trudging wearily up the long dirt road, I finally arrived. My friend had fled. There was no beer in the fridge. I was disappointed and angry. I was tired, bloody hell I did not want to be on my own. I left the silent, lonely building and retraced my steps down the road heading to Vunapope, Catholic Mission Station. This timely action saved my life.

Amazingly on the deserted road, just ahead appeared three Rabaul stalwarts. They were marching in step towards me. One was Jim Duncan, a Master Mariner and ships captain.

The ebullient trio were interested and curious to find out where I was heading? I hurriedly explained my plan; they argued against my idea and were incredulous. You know, one said, "The Japanese are right behind us, just minutes away, they are advancing on Kokopo."

They pleaded with me urgently to accompany them, so I changed my plan and did an immediate about-turn. We made a foursome and marched hurriedly along the road to the Vunapope jetty, all talking ten to the dozen and frequently looking over our shoulders.

On the way, I learned details about their escape plan.

Captain Jim Duncan owned a small ship (workboat) tied up to the Vunapope jetty. Which was just minutes away. The small boat was fuelled and stocked with provisions. We hurried to

board her and, without further ado, set sail under cover of the tropical night. We headed south on course for Australia.

After a long uneventful trip, we arrived in Cairns. There we were held in custody but were released by Australian Immigration, sometime later.

Norm Woods died in Rabaul soon after he told me this story. He was over 82 years old. His friend and benefactor Brett owned the famous Brett wharf in Brisbane. If anyone knows of Dewai, please contact me

*Thank you Gerry McGrade, Association Member, for this story.
Gerry goes back to Rabaul several times yearly.*

A man brings his best buddy home for dinner
.....unannounced at 7:30 pm after work.

His wife begins screaming at him and his friend just sits and listens.

Wife: "My hair and makeup are not done, the house is a mess, the dishes are not done, I'm still in my pyjamas and I can't be bothered with cooking tonight! Why the hell did you bring him home?!?"

Husband: "Because he's thinking of getting married and I promised him a demo!"

Exercise 'Long Hop'

Exercise 'Long Hop' was a combined exercise arranged by Area Command PNG involving most services but more particularly the PIR and the SAS.

It is well described in Bob Harvey-Hall's book "PNGVR: A History. 1950-1973" on pages 173/4/5 by Phil Ainsworth. This is Burnie Gough's description of Phase 3.

PNGVR nominated me to participate in Phase 3 of Long Hop from Kokoda to Owens Corner.

Phase 3 was scheduled for 1 week and I was to fly from Pt. Moresby to Kokoda.

I reported to Jackson's airfield on the required day and the DC3 departed at first light.

I was the only passenger. The load was 3 tons of rations and equipment.

On reaching Kokoda we circled for a half an hour then returned to Moresby due to weather.

Next day departure was repeated and we landed as planned.

I was met by a PIR HQ sergeant and escorted to Lt. Col Keith Murdock. When we were introduced his first comment was "where are your feathers Sergeant?" I replied cassowaries are very scarce. His second comment was "any relation to General Gough on the Western Front?" I replied that I had no idea. I would have to ask Dad. He nodded and asked me to tag on. (We were definitely not related to General Gough)

That first days walk from Kokoda to Deniki was exhausting. I was fit but this was something else. The 10 minutes rest each half hour were a blessing. That night we camped and the Colonel shared a bottle of Negrita that evening. We retired very contented.

The SAS were well ahead of our HQ and at night our troops infiltrated their lines. The PIR were told to tap their enemy on the shoulder and say "you dead master". The SAS were on the honour system to report the matter. Quite a few PIR penetrated the SAS lines during Phase 3.

Day 2 was climb and descent, climb and descent as was the rest of the Track. By now I was acclimatised and enjoying myself thoroughly until mid afternoon. The heavens just opened up and poured all night. Our hutchies were no match

and we were very cold.

Next day the Track was a complete mess. Luckily Kevin Short-house who had walked the Track for exercise told me to have the soles of my boots AB fitted with thick leather corporal stripes on the soles with a horizontal bar on the heels. All stripes were to be studded.

This limited falling on ones backside going downhill and very efficient going up hill.

From then on the Colonel insisted we overnight in village huts to keep the radios and ourselves dry. Even in dry conditions the radio sets were of limited use on the Track.

Dad had told me to take 2 pounds worth of coins. This gave us fresh fruit for breakfast every morning. At Efogi the Colonel asked both Padres to board the Cessna and fly back to Moresby which they did.

The PIR troops were in their element. They were naturally suited for this kind of jungle warfare. Having the right equipment and supplies they were able to function very well, every task allotted to them. I learnt so much during this exercise which Sgt Graeme Blanch and I compared with our 2 weeks at Canungra JTC and the exercise on Mt. Lamington in 1963.

On day five I developed foot blisters but persevered to disembark at Taurama where Sgt Peter Rogers noticed me and kindly drove me home to Newtown.

Sgt B.J. Gough 8/59837.

I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evening when a woman in the convertible ahead of us stood up and waved.

She was stark naked!

As I was reeling from the shock, I heard my five-year-old shout from the back seat, "Dad, that lady isn't wearing a seat belt!"

New website to honour heroes of the Kokoda Track

3 November 2022

Eighty years ago today, soldiers of the 7th Division of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force raised the Australian flag in the village of Kokoda, marking the end of the fierce battles along the famous track – now commemorated as Kokoda Day.

More than three months earlier, Japanese forces began a major push south from their bases on the northern coast of Papua New Guinea (PNG) with the aim of capturing strategically important Port Moresby. To do this they had to traverse the Owen Stanley Range, rugged mountains which are crossed only by a few foot tracks – one of which is the Kokoda Track – now synonymous with some of the most gruelling and fierce fighting undertaken by Australians in the Second World War.

The Australians, at first comprising a militia battalion along with the Papuan Infantry Battalion, fought desperately to slow, halt and eventually push back the Japanese advance over the Owen Stanley Range. More than 600 Australians were killed over the course of the Kokoda battles, more than 1,600 were wounded, and some 4,000 were afflicted by illness.

Assisting the troops were local civilians who became known affectionately as the 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels'. They carried supplies, built bases, airfields and other wartime infrastructure, and evacuated the sick and wounded from the fighting zones. In their honour, in Papua New Guinea Kokoda Day is commemorated as 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels Day'.

To help remember those who served, the Department of Veterans' Affairs has launched a new website – the Papua New Guinea Virtual Remembrance Trails: <https://www.pngremembrancetrail.gov.au/>

The website is another way for Australians to discover and con-

nect with the experiences and sacrifices of veterans. It uses a 'trail-like' approach of step-by-step discovery to tell the story of the Second World War in PNG through seven trails, including the Kokoda Track campaign, which ended 80 years ago today.

The steps of the trails follow the course of the war through Papua and New Guinea chronologically, geographically and thematically. They combine written, audio-visual and geospatial content to provide a multi-layered journey of exploration. There are also background sections on PNG wartime themes and guidance for teachers on how the resources fit into the Australian Curriculum.

On this day, we pause to reflect on the courage and sacrifice of the Australians and their Papua New Guinean comrades as they fought along the Kokoda Track to defend Port Moresby.

Vet Affairs Newspaper Dec 2022.



Kokoda Trail, Papua, 1942. Two members of the 2/4th Field Ambulance and three Papuan carriers pause for a rest on a section of the jungle track from Myola to Eora Creek

Memorial remembers Montevideo Maru

The incredibly moving story of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru in the Pacific - Australia's biggest single maritime loss of life - was thrust into the spotlight again recently with the unveiling of a memorial seat in Mornington and a story board dedicated to those who died.

The allied bombing of the Japanese prisoner-of-war ship on 1 July 1942 was an immeasurable tragedy, but one that somehow largely got lost in the horrors of the war. Unbelievably, the event is not something many Australians today have much knowledge of.

But that will all change if the incident becomes part of the film history of WW2, immortalised and documented on the big screen.

In 2005 Gillian Nikakis, the Mornington daughter of Bill Spensley, one of the 1050 civilians on board believed to have gone down with the ship, wrote a book about the sinking. "He's Not Coming Home", and is hoping the story can be made into a movie.

Nikakis, a retired nurse-counsellor who lobbied for the inclusion of the seat at Memorial Park, said telling the stories of war provided a necessary reminder to everyone about the everlasting impacts of conflict, particularly on families left behind.

"I'd love to see the story of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru told in film, because it had such a profound impact on so many people, and there are many stories of families and communities who suffered the anguish of losing someone or not knowing," she said.

"It is an incredibly important event in Australia's wartime years, but also covers a sad and often colourful period of history and



A place to reflect: The recent opening of a seat and storyboard in memory of those who died in the sinking of the Montevideo Maru is an important reminder of the sacrifices made during World War Two.

life that has so many elements to it."

Nikakis was born in Rabaul in the East New Britain province of Papua New Guinea, on the island of New Britain, but was evacuated to Melbourne as a toddler with her mother and brother shortly before the Japanese invasion in 1942.

She never saw her father again, but has spent years searching for people who may have known him, and documenting facts about his life, the family's time in the then Mandated Territory of New Guinea and life after the war.

As she gained more information and tracked her father's trail, she discovered there was much more to the story of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru, the fate of the prisoners of war onboard, and the actions of the Australian government at the time.

But her book is more than just a war story. Nikakis weaves the story around engaging tales of life in Rabaul and in Melbourne, and of her much-loved mother Tick, who she described as a vibrant, strong and "fun" woman who lived life to the full, but who never got over the loss of her beloved Bill.

Life in Rabaul was "self-indulgent" and privileged for expats in the late 1930s, and Nikakis's parents lived quite the social high life, along with the 1000s of other Caucasians (mainly Australian and German) in the provinces. Drawing on years of research, Nikakis provides an insight into life for Australians and other ex-pats in the colonies, bringing the colours, smells and characters of these places to life on the page.

Her book covers a lot of ground, describing the romance between her mother and father, who worked for a major import company, his capture by the Japanese after apparently being given up by locals, the excruciating uncertainty over who died on the ship, life during and after Rabaul and the enduring friendships and connections she made during her years of research.

"I am hoping there is a filmmaker out there who can see a film in this story, and takes it on," she said.

Western Port News, Hastings, Victoria. 8 Feb 2023.

Ed. 1. The highlighting in the story above is done to show that the article has one major error. The Montevideo Maru, at the time being used as an unmarked Prisoner of War transport, was torpedoed by the USS Submarine "Sturgeon" - it was not bombed.

2. The article does not mention that the PNGAA (Papua New Guinea Association of Australia) was the organiser and funder of the ceremony.

Thank you Association Committee Member, Tony Boulter, for forwarding this newspaper cutting.



General Monash Knighted in the Field

On the 12th of August 1918, Lieutenant General John Monash was knighted on the battlefield by King George V.

Monash was invested as a Knight Commander of the Bath for his services in 1918, particularly for the role he played in organising the offensive launched on the 8th of August at the Battle of Amiens.

The Battle of Amiens marked the blackest day for the German army, and undeniably led to their downfall 100 days later. Using a massed force of 580 tanks and armoured cars, the Australians advanced rapidly and demonstrated the superiority of combined arms. The Australians would advance some 10km deep across a 24km front during the first day alone. In just over three hours, the Australians overran the enemy front lines, capturing 29,144 prisoners, 338 guns, and liberating 116 towns.

Described by Field Marshal Montgomery as 'the best general



on the western front in Europe', General Sir John Monash is undoubtedly one of – if not the most – famous Australian commander in history.

The photo shows His Majesty King George V, knighting Lieutenant General Sir John Monash, Australian Corps Commander, at the Corps Headquarters in the Chateau, when General Monash was invested as a Knight Commander of the Bath.

Rachael Alexander. Australian Military History.

Don't Forget Saturday 21 October, 2023.

Lunch to mark the 50th Anniversary of the disbandment of the Papua New Guinea Rifles (PNGVR)

PNGVR was formed 1n 1951 and during it's time in PNG had depots at Port Moresby, Rabaul, Lae, Goroka, Madang, Wewak, Mt Hagen, Banz, Kainantu, Samarai and Wau.

It was disbanded on 31 Dec 1973, prior to Independence.

To mark the 50th anniversary of its disbandment, a mixed lunch at the Everymans' Hut in the Museum precinct will be held on Saturday 21 October, 2023, following the Association's Annual General Meeting.

Commence now making arrangements to come along, attend the AGM and the lunch and catch up with comrades from years past.

The Association would like to thank KING & Co Property Consultants for its continuing support, including the printing of this edition, together with the past 80 issues of Harim Tok Tok.

Its contribution is much appreciated.

John & Vanessa Roxburgh
Ph: 0466 633 273
Loc: 71 Pontiac Circuit, Warner, QLD
Web: www.jrmedals.com.au
email: info@jrmedals.com.au
15% Discount for all PNGVR members

New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles Ex Members Association Inc,

Includes former members of the PIR, PIB and NGIB.

For correspondence contact Secretary, Colin Gould, email pngvr@optusnet.com.au, phone 0424 562 030 (The Secretary, P O Box 885, Park Ridge, Qld, 4125)

For Military Museum enquires contact Paul Brown email paulbrown475@gmail.com. Phone 0402 644 181 or Colin Gould email pngvr@optusnet.com.au, phone 0424 562 030

(NGVR/PNGVR Military Museum, 1007 Boundary Road, Wacol, Qld, 4076)

Membership fee payments to Treasurer, Kieran Nelson email kierannelson@bigpond.com Phone 0412 236 013

(NGVR & PNGVR Ex-members Association : BSB: 064006 - A/C: 10001126)

Website Master: Trevor Connell email trevor.connell@internode.on.net, phone 0409 690 590

www.pngvr.weebly.com (all back copies of HTT may be obtained from our website)

Facebook Master: Kieran Nelson, email kierannelson@bigpond.com, phone 0412 236 013

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ngvrandpngvrilitarymuseum/>

Harim Tok Tok Editor: Bob Collins, email bob-collins@bigpond.com, phone 0413 831 397

President: Email p.ainsworth@kingco.com.au to get on members electronic distribution including Harim Tok Tok (you will receive it in colour, earlier and can adjust the print size to suit)

Chaplain. Rev Ron MacDonald. Phone 0407 008 624 email Cheryl.ron@gmail.com

NGVR/PNGVR service recollections are copyright.

FUNCTION DATES

Sat 1 April. Sat 6 May

Museum Open 10am—1pm. Come along and see the new exhibits.

Sat 15 April. Sat10 June.

Executive C'tee meeting. Everyone welcome. BYO lunch.

Tues 25 April. ANZAC Day

See separate instructions.

Jeep requirements to Colin Gould ASAP.

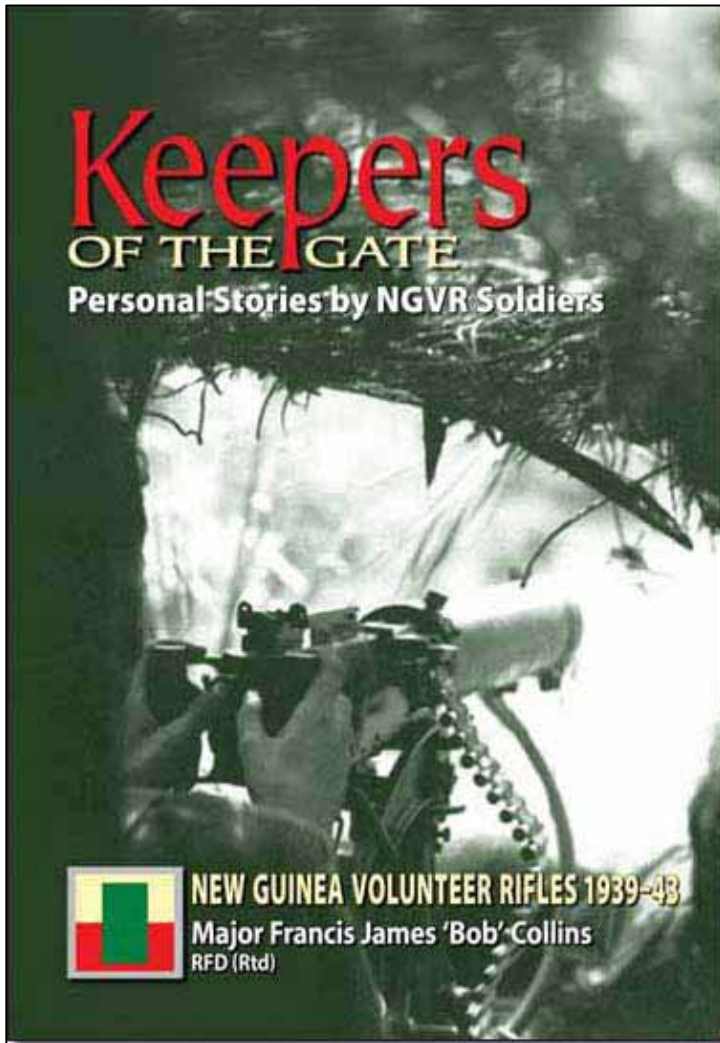
Sat 1 July.

Montevideo Maru Memorial Service ANZAC Square Brisbane. Details to follow.



ANZAC DAY 2023 BRISBANE MARCH WARNING ORDERS

March to commence:	10.00 am Tuesday 25 April (Regardless of the weather)
Overall order of march:	There will be a total of 100 Units marching in the Brisbane Parade in 2023 ARMY leading followed by AIR FORCE followed by NAVY then ALLIED Units
NGVR / PNGVR	Position Number: 37 Behind 49th Battalion and in front of PIB/NGIB/HQ PIR Association. We are in GROUP 4 –"Army Associations"
NGVR / PNGVR	Form up in GEORGE STREET / MARY Streets area. Look for our NGVR / PNGVR banner & flags The March commences at 10.00 am It is estimated that we will set off somewhere around 10.15—10.30 am (NB Be prepared for any last minute changes) Parade Marshalls and information will be available in Queens Park near the Casino.
Jeep loading point:	There will be a Buggy service operating from Queen Street & Eagle Street where veteran's and their carer can be dropped off and taken by buggy to the Parade Jeep loading point which is located in Queen Street / Edward Street adjacent to Post Office Square
Dress	PNGVR Anzac Day dress with full size medals and name badge, or sports jacket, trousers, white shirt and tie. Berets or hats should be worn. Please, no jeans or shorts .
"Eyes Left"	There are 2 'eyes left' - one at the saluting dais in King George Square and one at ANZAC Square.
	NB : Due to building and construction work in the City , veterans & guests are advised to take care during the march route
POST MARCH RECEPTION	Stock Exchange Hotel —crn Edward and Charlotte Streets. Enter via ground floor In Charlotte Street from approximately 11.15 am. Fees: \$15-00 per adult payable at the door—exact change please. <u>This is for light hot & cold finger food, tea and coffee .</u> There is also hot counter meals available at the hotel at hotel prices. <u>The Bar will operate as a CASH ONLY bar for all drinks for the duration of the function</u> hence the reduction in the entry fee to \$15 pp to cover air conditioned venue hire, post function cleaning etc. NB The Victory Hotel across from the Exchange Hotel has been closed down. The Hotel will open to the general public at 1.00 pm.
The Kieran Nelson Banking Corporation	Will be open until 12.30 pm for payment of any membership fees and 'donations'.
Paul Brown's Trade Store & Book library	Will be open until 12.30 pm for Q Store items and books— " <i>Keepers of the Gate</i> " and " <i>PNGVR—A History</i> " etc
	<i>Your Executive Committee looks forward to meeting you all again on ANZAC Day. Where ever you are, best wishes for ANZAC Day 2022</i> <i>Regards P Ainsworth - President</i>



Who were the Keepers of the Gate?

The New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR) — one of the few Allied military units engaging the Japanese in New Guinea in early 1942. With aggressive patrolling and reconnaissance the gate to the New Guinea Goldfields and central range south to Port Moresby and Australia remained closed to the enemy. Armed with WWI light infantry weapons, no air or artillery support, few rations, minimal ammunition supply, meagre medical services and limited communications, this poorly trained force was used to exhaustion and disbanded.

Many of the men never served again due to the deprivations suffered; others, after rest returned to New Guinea and served in the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) and units which needed their PNG knowledge and experience.

This is not a history of NGVR. These are the stories of thirty-seven NGVR soldiers—stories which reveal why they were in New Guinea as civilians at that fateful time, their wartime and postwar experiences and the effect on them and their families.

The stories were written as told to Bob Collins, who served in PNGVR, the postwar CMF unit in Papua New Guinea. He met many ex-NGVR men and saw many areas where NGVR operated on the frontline.

We are grateful to this small band of courageous and adventurous men, the Keepers of the Gate — our front line of the Pacific War — and these stories are a legacy these outstanding men deserve.

To: NGVR & PNGVR Ex-Members Association, PO Box 885, Park Ridge QLD 4125

Purchase for \$40.00 per copy direct from our Military Museum in Wacol or \$50.00 per copy including postage anywhere in Australia

Please send me copies of *KEEPERS OF THE GATE* at the purchase price of \$50.00
(Overseas purchasers, please include sufficient postage costs)

- Enclosed please find my cheque, made payable to NGVR & PNGVR Ex-Members Association, for \$..... **OR**
- I have transferred \$..... to **NGVR & PNGVR Ex-Members Association, BSB: 064006 A/C: 10001126**

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For more information, please contact Phillip Ainsworth p.ainsworth@kingco.com.au (email) – 0418 730 348 (mob.)
Kieran Nelson: kieranelson@bigpond.com (email) – 0412 236 013 (mob.)