



# Harim Tok Tok

PAPUA NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES EX-MEMBERS ASSOCIATION Inc.

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## PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Our Association held its 81st Anniversary Service commemorating the loss of the 1053 Australian men, 845 POWs and 208 civilian internees, including at least 36 NGVR soldiers, when the Japanese ship the MV Montevideo Maru was sunk on 1st July 1942. The service was held in the undercroft in the Brisbane Cenotaph Saturday 1st July 2023, full details with photographs are available on page 18.

This year I attended the National 81st Anniversary Rabaul and Montevideo Maru commemoration in Canberra, which was held in the form of a luncheon at the Pavilion Hotel followed by the Australian War Memorial (AWM) Last Post Ceremony when the story of the three Turner Brothers who died on the Montevideo Maru was told. The Brothers were members of 1 Independent Company. The notorious Canberra weather proved kind this year with crisp, sunny, cloudless days and importantly no wind.

Over 50 attended the luncheon including many descendants of those lost and several of the team which assisted in finding the wreck of the Montevideo in mid-April 2023. The luncheon was organised by PNGAA's John Reeves. Kylie Adams-Collier sang her *Montevideo Maru 1942* song at the start of the luncheon. The keynote speaker was Andrea Williams who was on the search ship *Fugro Equator* when the wreck was located. Andrea's talk was accompanied by many photographs and a good description of the technicalities involved finding a vessel over 4,000m under the ocean using an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV). Another speaker was Mark Dale, a nephew of the Turner Brothers, who gave a moving address at the luncheon. Other Association members present were Michael White and Neil Gow.



The Last Post Ceremony was well attended by many who were at the luncheon, other descendants and general public. Photographs of the service are available on this link <https://www.flickr.com/photos/australianwarmemorial/albums/72177720309498662>

Wreaths were laid by the descendants including the Dale family for the Turner Brothers and Page family, PNGAA representative and Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Group Chair, Andrea Williams, Rabaul Historical Society Representative John Reeves, 2/22 Battalion and Lark Force Association Rebecca Mills, Philip Winter RSL Australia CEO; and on behalf of the NGVR & PNGVR Association Phil Ainsworth. For those who have not visited the AWM in recent times, I

remind you that the \$500 million works programme is well underway: parking is difficult; access to the main building complex; there is a need to book before visiting to see the limited displays; and tickets are necessary to view the Last Post Ceremony. The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Monument is in storage and will not be re-installed until at least 2027.

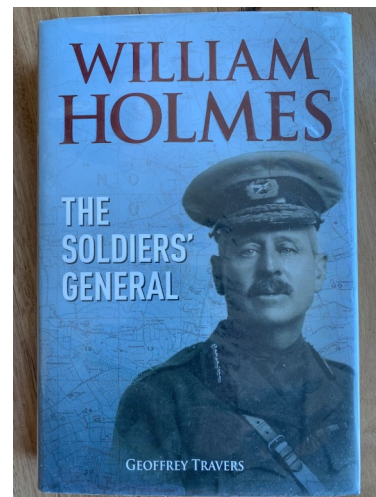


Our Association's AGM will be held 10am Saturday 21st October in our Wacol Museum. The AGM will be followed by a lunch in nearby

Everymans' Hut to mark the 50th Anniversary of the disbandment of PNGVR on 31st December 1973. This is an important date for the Association so please diary it. Further details will be given nearer the date.

Recently I picked up a book in Mona Vale public library titled *William Holmes: the Soldiers' General* by Gregory Travis. The author, who is related to the family, paints Major General Holmes CMG, DSO, VD, MID (12 September 1862 - 2 July 1917) in a good light and confirms Holmes' many attributes and achievements in his civil and military careers. Few people know anything about General Holmes. Perhaps you have sighted the street named after him near Sydney airport, I have. He could be remembered for his public service developing Sydney's Water and Sewerage systems; he should be remembered as one of Australia's foremost citizen soldiers of his time. Before Holmes commanded the first independent military expeditionary force in WW1, and in New Guinea accepted the first German surrender for Australia, he served with distinction in the second Boer War, being wounded in the Battle for Diamond Hill. At Gallipoli, Pozieres, Bullecourt and Messines, Homes earned a reputation for fearlessness in battle, believing that at critical times and during pauses in engagement, reconnaissance should be conducted by the officers in command making the decisions. He was known to all his soldiers and leadership inspired their affection and loyalty. Philosophical about the risks he took on the battlefield, it was cruel irony that Holmes was killed by a stray shell when he was escorting the Premier of NSW near the Battle for Messines. He was the most senior Australian Officer killed in action on the Western Front. A contemporary of General John Monash, arguably he achieved more

than Monash did in his early career. The author claims Holmes would certainly have been a contender for command of the ANZAC Cops in 1918 had he still been alive. When he was killed in 1917, he was the Commander of an AIF Division. I found the book to be well written and a good read.



Phil Ainsworth, July 2023

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## Battle of the Coral Sea, 4-8 May 1942

### Japanese intentions

By April 1942 the Japanese had formed a defensive perimeter which stretched from the Kuriles southward through the Marshall Islands to New Britain, then westwards to Java, Sumatra, the Andaman Islands and Burma. Within that perimeter Japanese authority was, or soon would be, unchallenged and every strategic position occupied. In the South-West Pacific Area outposts were held at Lae and Salamaua in northern New Guinea.

Yet the Japanese were not quite satisfied with their conquests. Impressed by the ease with which they had achieved their strategic goals, a number of Japanese leaders began to consider extending the perimeter to gain an extra measure of security. The Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, was concerned that despite the crushing blow dealt at Pearl Harbor to the US battle fleet, the strike force had missed the aircraft carriers. These ships were beginning to make their presence felt with a number of raids on Japanese bases in the central and south Pacific. These considerations were given further impetus by the Doolittle raid on Tokyo using medium bombers launched from the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet* from a position well within the defensive perimeter. Yamamoto wished to fight the decisive battle which would complete the destruction of the US Pacific Fleet before it was able to rebuild its strength. By doing so he hoped to gain the time needed to consolidate the Empire's defences. He began planning for a move against the island of Midway.

In the South Pacific the Japanese Army was keen to extend the perimeter to provide defence in greater depth for the base at Rabaul and also to cut the lines of communication between Australia and the west coast of the United States. Japanese operational doctrine held that advances should always be made under cover of land-based aircraft. This doctrine governed the choice of new targets and had been rigidly adhered to in operations in China and in the Pacific. Techniques had been developed to bring newly captured airfields into use as quickly as possible.

In this context the Solomon Islands could be seen as an opportunity for expansion south to New Caledonia, the New Hebrides and Fiji; they could also be seen as a highway for an Allied offensive aimed at Rabaul. Port Moresby was also in air striking range of Rabaul and the Japanese were becoming concerned with the build up of Allied air power in the area. Conversely, its occupation would lead to Japanese aerial dominance of north-eastern Australia. Nauru and the Ocean Islands would also be occupied.

Consequently the Japanese put in train Operation MO. The object of this operation was the capture of Port Moresby in New Guinea and Tulagi in the southern Solomons. The forces allocated to the operation were:

1. A group consisting of a seaplane tender supported by two light cruisers, three gunboats and minelayer would establish an air base at Deboyne island in the Louisiade Archipelago.
2. A landing group of eleven transports and a number of small supply ships, escorted by a light cruiser and six destroyers, to assault Port Moresby.
3. A covering force for the landing group consisting of the light carrier *Shoho*, four heavy cruisers, a destroyer and a tanker.
4. A carrier striking force consisting of the fleet carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, two heavy cruisers and six destroyers and a tanker to operate in the Coral Sea to destroy any Allied force attempting to interfere.
5. A force of seven submarines to provide distant reconnaissance and attack any opposing forces.

6. A landing group of one troopship with a seaplane carrier a minelayer and some smaller vessels, escorted by two destroyers, to occupy Tulagi.

7. Land-based air support from aircraft of the 25th Naval Air Flotilla, based mainly at Rabaul but with detachments at Buna, Lae and the Shortlands.

During late April and early May these forces began their movement south.

### The battle - 4—8 May 1942

As the Japanese made their preparations for the invasion of Port Moresby and the occupation of Tulagi, the US Navy, forewarned by signals intelligence of the impending operation, made their dispositions to counter it. On 1 May two carrier task forces, Task Force 17, built around *USS Yorktown* (Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher), with 3 heavy cruisers and 6 destroyers (one escorting an oiler), and Task Force 11 consisting of *USS Lexington* (Rear Admiral Aubrey B. Fitch), 2 heavy cruisers and 7 destroyers rendezvoused off Espiritu Santo. From Sydney Task Force 44, consisting of the heavy cruiser *HMAS Australia* and the light cruiser *HMAS Hobart*, under the command of Rear Admiral J. G. Grace, RN, departed Sydney (eventually to join the carriers on 4 May). The cruiser *USS Chicago* and the destroyer *USS Perkins*, also part of Task force 44, came up from Noumea.

On 2 May the two task forces separated when Fletcher, leaving Fitch replenishing, steamed north-west to a reach a position 550 miles south of Guadalcanal by dawn on the 3rd. That day, covered by the *Shoho's* group, the Japanese occupied Tulagi, and established a seaplane base with six A6M2-N floatplane fighters. The Japanese carrier striking force remained north of Rabaul. Fletcher heard of the occupation of Tulagi that evening. He detached his oiler and its escorting destroyer and proceeded north at high speed.

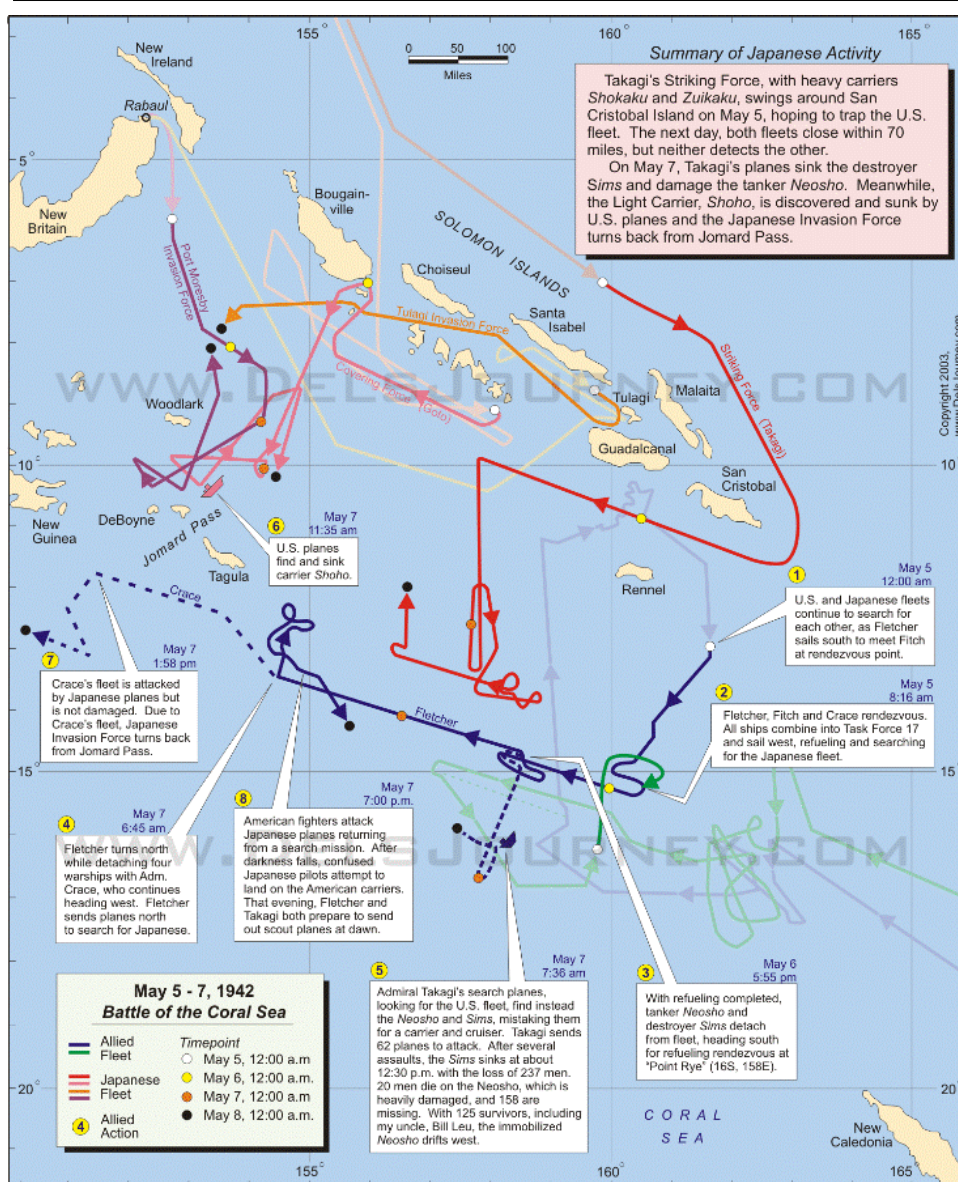
Task Force 17 reached a position 110 miles south of Tulagi on the morning of 4 May and at 6.30 am launched a strike comprising 12 TBD torpedo bombers and 28 SBD dive bombers. The attack went in between 8.15 and 8.30, catching the Japanese by surprise. The dive bombers sank two small minesweepers and damaged the destroyer *Kikuzuki* beyond repair. Minor damage was inflicted on a minelayer and supplies on the beach. The torpedo bombers sank the minesweeper *Tama Maru*. A second strike destroyed five of the six aircraft based there, and a third sank four landing barges. Three aircraft from the second strike were lost, the others suffering no casualties. The strikes gave a valuable edge to the *Yorktown's* Air Group's efficiency, which had been built up over nine weeks of intensive training.

Realising that the Japanese would now be aware that there was at least one American carrier in the offing, Fletcher quickly retired southwards through the night to rejoin Task Force 11 at dawn on 5 May in a position some 400 miles south of Tulagi. This force had been joined by Task Force 44 the previous day. The Allied force spent the day replenishing.

Meanwhile, the Japanese Carrier Strike Force had moved rapidly down the eastern flank of the Solomons and by midday on the 5th they were to the east of San Christobal Island, covering what they anticipated to be the US carriers' line of retreat. Traditionally the American carrier task forces had rapidly cleared the area after a raid.

All through 6 May the opposing forces remained in ignorance of each other's whereabouts. The Japanese carriers rounded San Christobal and steamed westwards to a position 100 miles south of Guadalcanal, then turned south. They flew no searches that day, leaving reconnaissance to the long-range aircraft of the 25th Air Flotilla based mainly at Rabaul. The American carriers remained roughly in the same area all day and at one stage the fleets were only 80 miles apart.

The Japanese Port Moresby invasion force was moving south and by nightfall of the 6th was just north of the Louisiades. Its covering force, the *Shoho* and her accompanying cruisers, had



bombed by land based aircraft, had turned back permanently and the strategic objective of the Allies had been achieved.

Further to the east the searches launched by the Japanese Carrier Striking Force were successful in sighting the *Neosho* and *Sims* at about 8.30 am. They were mistakenly reported as a carrier and light cruiser. After two unsuccessful level bombing attacks by B5Ns the two ships were attacked by 36 D3A dive bombers at noon. The *Sims* was sunk and the *Neosho* heavily damaged but remained afloat until discovered and sunk by friendly forces on 11 May. While these strikes were airborne Admiral Takagi, commanding the Japanese Carrier Striking Force, received his first intelligence of the position of the American carriers. To his chagrin he was unable to launch a strike until late that afternoon. The Japanese pilots missed Task Force 17 and on the return flight they were intercepted by American fighters and badly mauled. Further heavy loss resulted from their inability to find their carriers in the dark and only four aircraft landed of the 27 despatched.

That night, the two carrier groups drew away from each other, the Americans moving south to find better weather for the next day's operations, the Japanese steaming north to avoid precipitating a night battle.

Task Group 17.3 had also been in action that day. After being detached by Fletcher that morning Crace had proceeded at 25 knots to take up a blocking position south of Jomard Passage. At 2.47 pm, when the force was 70 miles south of Deboyne Island, aircraft were engaged ineffectively at long range. At 3.06 pm 12 G3M torpedo bombers attacked the force with no result despite some near misses. The ships were then strafed. Five bombers were claimed shot down. Immediately following this attack the *Australia* was subjected to an accurate level bombing attack which was avoided by skilful ship handling. A few minutes later three American high level bombers bombed the ships with no result. Task force 17.3 remained on patrol until 1.00 am on 10 May then proceeded to Australia, arriving at Cid Harbour (west of Whitsunday Islands) on the 11th.

refuelled after covering the Tulagi landing. They then moved south-westwards towards the Jomard Passage. They were sighted and unsuccessfully attacked by B-17s from Australia. When enough information became available to make the Japanese intentions apparent, Fletcher, having amalgamated his three task forces to form the single Task Force 17, steamed westwards through the night in preparation for launching search flights at dawn. The fleet tanker *Neosho* and her escorting destroyer *Sims* were left to steam southwards to a new refuelling position.

On the morning of 7 May Fletcher turned Task Force 17 to the north. At 6.45 am he detached Crace's Support Group, now re-designated Task Group 17.3, to the north-west, towards New Guinea. The group comprised the *Australia* and *Hobart*, *USS Chicago* and the destroyers *USS Perkins*, *Wallke* and *Farragut*. Crace's mission was to prevent any Japanese force debouching from the Jomard Passage into the Coral Sea. Both the Japanese and US carrier forces launched searches at dawn. At 8.15 am American scouts sighted a force (reported as 2 carriers and 4 cruisers) 225 miles to the north-west.

At 9.26 am *Lexington* launched 28 SBDs, 12 TBDs and ten F4F-3 fighters. Twenty minutes later the *Yorktown* launched 23 SBDs, 10 TBDs and 8 F4Fs. Although the search aircraft had actually discovered and mistakenly identified the force bound for Deboyne Island, en route to their target the strike aircraft sighted the *Shoho* and, at 11.00 am, attacked her. Hit by 13 bombs, up to 7 torpedoes and a crashed SBD she sank at 11.35 am with a loss of 638 dead. Three aircraft were lost. By that time the Port Moresby landing force, aware of Crace's blocking force and having been

Returning to the carrier forces: at 6.00 am on the morning of 8 May, the Japanese, who had steamed southwards during the night, launched searches to cover a south-east to south-west arc. Fifty-one strike aircraft and 18 fighters were ranged in readiness. The American carriers launched 18 SBDs on an all round search at 6.25 am. The two carrier groups were each detected at approximately the same time. The Americans launched 24 bombers and nine torpedo bombers and six fighters from the *Yorktown* and 24 bombers, 12 torpedo bombers and 10 fighters from the *Lexington*. *Yorktown's* aircraft sighted the Japanese at 10.32 am. As the American aircraft approached, the two carriers separated, with *Zuikaku* disappearing into a squall. The *Shokaku*, however, turned into the wind and began to launch aircraft. Attacked by defending fighters and defended desperately by their own, the dive bombers attacked the *Shokaku* scoring two hits. The torpedo bombers dropped

from too far out and all missed. The flight deck was damaged preventing aircraft launches, though not recoveries, for an hour; a gasoline fire started up and the aero-engine workshop was wrecked. The *Lexington's* group did less damage. Many were unable to find the target and only 11 TBDs, 4 SBDs and 6 F4Fs attacked. They scored only one bomb hit.

Meanwhile, the Japanese attacked the US carriers which they caught at a time when their combat air patrol had too little fuel to intercept and the relief patrol with insufficient time to scramble and intercept the attackers. The carriers were desperately defended at low level by those SBDs which were airborne on anti-submarine or reconnaissance patrols as well as two F4Fs which had been launched in time. The *Yorktown* was fortunate, avoiding all torpedoes and being hit by only one 250-kilogram bomb. The bomb hit started fires below decks which were quickly brought under control.

The *Lexington* was less fortunate. Larger and less manoeuvrable than the *Yorktown*, the carrier was pinned by a well coordinated attack by six aircraft, three converging from either side of the bow. At 11.20 am she was hit twice on the port side, forward and amidships. Dive-bombing was less successful, only two light bombs hitting the ship although near misses buckled her hull plates.

This attack is believed to have cost the Japanese 20 aircraft. It was, however, to cost the Americans the *Lexington*. At first glance the carrier was not grievously damaged. Counter-flooding had corrected the list caused by the torpedo damage and three fires were burning which could normally have been brought under control. Unfortunately, the damage from the near misses had so distorted her hull that the lifts were stuck in the "up" position and her aviation gasoline tanks were leaking. Although the carrier continued to operate aircraft until 1.45 pm, a spark ignited the gasoline vapour and the resulting inferno forced the abandonment of the ship shortly after 5.00 pm. She was torpedoed and sunk by the destroyer *Phelps* at 8.00 pm. Two hundred and sixteen of her crew were lost.

Both forces were now too battered to continue the fight. The *Zuikaku* escorted her damaged sister back to Japan. In the course of the voyage the *Shokaku* came close to capsizing in a gale. Fletcher retired to the New Hebrides and then to Pearl Harbor, arriving on 27th May.

#### Australia's involvement

Australia was involved in the Coral Sea battle from the very first when locally-based signals intelligence units made a significant contribution to the early detection of the Japanese thrust. Combining this information with that gleaned from coastwatchers and aerial reconnaissance the Combined Operational Intelligence Centre in Melbourne issued an assessment on 25 April that a Japanese operation to occupy Port Moresby was imminent. Aerial reconnaissance flights were flown from Australia and Port Moresby by USAAF and RAAF aircraft. Eleven US submarines based in Brisbane were deployed to the Papua area.

The Japanese force tasked with the occupation of Tulagi was sighted en route to its destination by aircraft and, on 2 May, by coastwatcher D. G. Kennedy on Ysabel Island. The small Australian garrison at Tulagi was withdrawn the same day.

Meanwhile, on 1 May Task Force 44 (Admiral J. G. Crace, RN), consisting of the heavy cruiser *HMAS Australia* (Captain H. B. Farncomb, RAN) and the light cruiser *HMAS Hobart* (Captain H. Howden, RAN), departed Sydney under orders to join the US carriers. After refuelling from *HMAS Kurumba* in Hervey Bay the two cruisers proceeded east, joining the US force on 4 May. On that day a concentration of transports and warships was sighted at Rabaul by Australian-based aerial reconnaissance and *Shoho* was seen 40

miles south of Bougainville.

5 May was spent refuelling and on the 6th the entire force was amalgamated as Task Force 17. Crace, with *Australia*, *Hobart*, the heavy cruiser *USS Chicago* and the destroyers *USS Perkins* and *Walke*, commanded the Support Group, designated Task Group 17.3. It was late on this day that enough information had been gathered and assessed to make clear the Japanese intention to move south through the Jomard Passage.

At 7.00 am the Support Group, reinforced by the destroyer *USS Farragut*, was detached to the north-west to block any Japanese force debouching from the Jomard Passage. It was soon sighted by Japanese reconnaissance aircraft. Crace proceeded at 25 knots to take up a blocking position south of Jomard Passage. At 2.47 pm, when the force was 70 miles south of Deboyne Island, aircraft were engaged ineffectively at long range. At 3.06 pm 12 G3M torpedo bombers made a determined attack on the force. Dropping their torpedoes at a range of between 1,000—1,500 metres the aircraft came onto strafe the ships. The torpedoes were narrowly avoided by skilful handling of the cruisers. Five bombers were claimed shot down. Immediately following this attack the squadron was subjected to an accurate level bombing attack by nineteen aircraft. The *Australia* was narrowly missed, again being skilfully conned by Captain Farncomb. A few minutes later three American high-level bombers bombed the ships with no result.

Admiral Crace was uncertain about what was occurring at that stage as he had received no situation reports from Admiral Fletcher, although intercepts of Australian reconnaissance reports and from US aircraft radios gave some indication of the carrier battle in progress on the 8th. That evening, the *Hobart*, short of fuel was detached to Brisbane as was the *Walke*, which had engine defects. The remainder of Task Group 17.3 remained on patrol until 1.00 am on the 10th then proceeded to Australia, arriving at Cid Harbour on the 11th, where the ships refuelled again from the Kurumba.

Although Task Force 17.3 had not gone into action against the Port Moresby Landing Force its presence, combined with bombing attacks from shore-based aircraft, was important in influencing the decision by the Japanese Commander-in-Chief to turn back the landing force early on 7 May — thereby achieving the Allies' strategic objective for the battle.

Carrier task forces had conducted simultaneous raids on the Gilberts and Marshalls, Wake Island and Marcus Island during February and March in an attempt to divert Japanese strength from the South Pacific. In the southern area, a raid had been attempted against Rabaul in February by the *Lexington*, but it was cancelled when the attacking force was discovered. On 10 March the Japanese were attacked by aircraft from the *Yorktown* and *Lexington* at Lae and Salamaua, where they had landed on 8 March. The strike force was launched from a position 45 miles south of New Guinea and flew through a gap in the Owen Stanley Ranges. The most spectacular raid, and that which concerned the Japanese most, was the bombing of Tokyo by US Army B-25 bombers launched by the carrier *USS Hornet* from a position well within the Japanese defensive perimeter. These raids did not cause extensive damage, but they did provide valuable operational experience for the US carrier force. More importantly, they gave weight to those voices in the Japanese High Command which favoured further expansion of the defensive perimeter.

Source. AWM.

My wife sent me a text that said "Your great".  
So, naturally I wrote back "No! You're great".  
Since then she's been walking around all happy and smiling.  
Should I tell her that I was just correcting her grammar or leave it?

### The term "Digger"

The term Digger is well known in Australia and overseas. The word is familiar in news reports of Australian soldiers during conflicts O/S, although the term can embrace all soldiers and others in the Australian Defence Force.

The origin of the word has always been the subject of debate.

From the Macquarie Dictionary we read:

"The first specialised use of digger in Australian English was a reference to someone digging for gold in a goldfield and dates back to the 1850s gold rush in Victoria. This use carried on through the century right up to the goldfields rush in WA in the 1890s. In New Zealand a digger might be a miner in the goldfields of that country, or someone digging for kauri gum, a fossilised resin used for jewellery. When Australian and New Zealand soldiers went to World War I in France and were introduced to trench warfare, the term digger perhaps came more naturally than the British sapper. These were privates who earned this name, the soldiers at the frontline who actually did the digging in the trenches, but the use spread until it encompassed all Australian and New Zealand soldiers of any rank and was used as a form of greeting. Prime Minister Billy Hughes was affectionately nicknamed 'the Little Digger' by the Australian troops he visited in France. In World War II the term was restricted to Australian soldiers."

I might mention that there is evidence that it had an earlier genesis as we see the use of the term in England.

There is a manuscript written by rebels in Warwickshire during the Midland Revolt of 1607, that circulated as a rallying cry to other 'diggers'. The Midland Revolt was a peasant uprising against land owners who enclosed common and rented land. The copyist gave the letter the title: 'The Diggers of Warwickshire to all other Diggers'. Also, the political and social upheaval that resulted from the English Civil War in the seventeenth century led to the development of a set of radical ideas centred on movements known as "Diggers" and "Levellers". The Diggers were led by William Everard and aimed to use the earth to reclaim the freedom that they felt had been lost partly through the Norman Conquest.

As far as our ownership of the word we know that in the Eureka rebellion which was fuelled by discontent with the mining licence, which the gold miners—or 'diggers' as they were known— claimed was taxation without representation and a tax upon labour.

It is rare indeed to be able to accurately establish the date at which a tradition begins, which is why folklore studies often lack the kind of chronological specificity important for historians.

The Digger Tradition certainly derives much from the earlier figure of the Australian bushman, a heroic worker who liked to fight, drink, swear and gamble, was anti-authoritarian, egalitarian and resourceful. This figure appears in Australian bush ballads, colonial and more popular literature, and painting; and he has reached the status of national hero through the ambivalent form of the earlier figure, the bushranger Ned Kelly.

Diggers understood the concept of mateship. This notion had real significance in colonial Australia where mates worked together in an environment that was harsh and dangerous, particularly if you were on your own. Activities like mining really couldn't be done by one person, the best way to work was with a mate who was in effect a business partner. Mates shared what they had – provisions, earnings, whatever. Through a combined literary and folkloric process, one beginning almost as soon as war was declared in 1914, the bushman transmogrified into the figure that would eventually be known as 'the digger'.

By the time the Gallipoli campaign was abandoned in Decem-

ber 1915, 'the digger' concept was well and truly established. However, and interestingly, the word does not become used by him or about him in a generic sense until 1917. During the First World War the term digger became popular for describing the Australian soldier. The word fell easily into the military language in France and Belgium, where soldiers were continually digging trenches. The digger and the Anzac assumed all the virtues previously attributed to the bushman, central among which were mateship and egalitarianism.

On the night of 25 April their hold in the beach and the cliffs of Anzac Cove seemed so precarious that General Birdwood, the Corps Commander, considered withdrawing. The story is told by the Force Commander, Sir Ian Hamilton, in his "Gallipoli Diary" as follows:

"At 0005 am on 26 April, Braithwaite awakened me with a message from Birdwood inferring withdrawal".

Hamilton records that he discussed the situation with his staff, then "without another word, all keeping silence, I wrote Birdwood as follows 'your news is indeed serious but there is nothing for it but to dig yourself in and stick it out . . . make a personal appeal to your men . . . to make a supreme effort to hold their ground. You have got through the difficult business. now you have only to dig, dig, dig, until you are safe'".

When read Out on the beach to the weary and disheartened Anzacs the message had an extraordinary effect; but it was really the postscript, containing the vital and motivating word thrice repeated, that transformed them so that they began at once to "dig, dig, dig" in a fury of redeeming effort.

On the morning of 26 April Hamilton cabled to Kitchener:

"The Australians have done wonderfully at Gaba Tepe . . . things looked anxious for a bit. but by this morning's dawn all are dug in, cool, confident".

Perhaps the real birth of the word dates from this incident, the conception having occurred half a century previously at Eureka, as mentioned earlier. The physical similarity between Gallipoli and the goldfields was striking and evocative.

A common remark made by veterans of the First World War in looking back on their experience is that what made it worthwhile was the close friendships and mates they found in the war.

Finally, from the Australian Corps and the Flanders winter of November 1917–March 1918. C. E. W. Bean wrote "The old elasticity of the "Diggers" might never quite be regained". Bean's claim that the word did not come into general use until late in 1917, but it seems possible that he was too close to events to have assessed the true origin of the word.

The DIGGERS of Australia and YES New Zealand as well!!!

*Anzac Military Memories - Gareth McCray OAM.*



Lengbati Airstrip, Morobe Province. 1,535 m. asl  
Steep drop off at end.

### William Ellis (Bill) Newton VC

Flight Lieutenant W.E. (Bill) Newton completed his pilot training in 1941, and garnered such high recommendations that he was commissioned, and to his chagrin posted immediately to training duties. After much agitation on his own behalf, he was finally posted in 1942, to the newly formed 22 squadron to fly Boston's in New Guinea. Based at Ward strip the squadron had to negotiate the Owen Stanley range to reach its targets, and Newton soon earned a reputation as a skillful courageous pilot through his direct and unflinching attacks on heavily defended targets, often refusing to take evasive action, so that he could be sure of hitting the objective. This tactic proved to be very effective, and Newton's targets were often left in flames.

In early March 1943 their targets were in the Salamaua area, and enough sorties were carried out that the enemy gunners had become familiar with the machines of 22sqn, and they with the placement and accuracy of the various guns. The crews of the guns and the aircraft became so familiar with each other that it had almost become a personal duel between them. Because the attacks were often carried out a very low levels, the gun crews were able to recognise the pilots of the Bostons, especially Newton who habitually wore a blue cricketers cap.



On March 16, a sortie against the Salamaua Isthmus was carried out by six aircraft from 22sqn, led by Fl. Lt. Newton. Their objective being to hit the supply dumps near Macdonald's road, and the adjacent anti-aircraft battery. On arrival near the target, after flying over the Owen Stanley range, Newton commenced his run in through 800m of intensely heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire. The battery protecting the target was directly in line with the line of attack required, so the aircraft had to fly straight towards the guns, presenting the best possible target. Despite four direct hits during the run in that holed fuel tanks, punctured the fuselage in a number of places, and ruptured a wing main spar, Newton continued undaunted and dropped his bombs directly on the target from minimum altitude, as his right engine was put out of action.

Newton made a climbing turn away from the target and was able to see the fires that he had started as he began the long 290km slog back over the Owen Stanleys to base. The fire would grow to send flames shooting as high as a thousand feet, and smoke to eight thousand, destroying in the process a number of buildings and store dumps, including two forty thousand gallon fuel tanks. The remainder of the flight was uneventful, but when Newton made his landing approach, he found to his dismay that one of the main tyres had been punctured in the attack. After appraising the crew of the situation, he made a very careful touchdown, but was unable to prevent the machine swinging violently off the runway, fortunately injuring no one. The aircraft, despite being severely damaged, was repaired and flew on until June 1944 when it was destroyed in a take off crash at Gurney Strip.

Two days later, on March 18, the squadron was briefed to attack the Salamaua Isthmus again, this time aiming for a building which had not been destroyed in the previous attack, and was situated right next to the anti-aircraft battery. Even though he'd barely escaped with his crew intact on the 16th, Newton flew the mission, his fifty second, with no outward signs of uneasiness, and attacked from only fifty feet this time, to make sure that they wouldn't have to come back. He scored a direct



The Grave of Bill Newton VC. In the Lae War Cemetery.

hit on the building, and the battery scored one on him, turning his Boston into a fireball. The remaining crews in the attack saw the crippled machine turn and fly low along the shoreline, trying to put distance between them and the enemy, finally ditching in the sea on a reef near the

shore, (where the aircraft remained visible until the late sixties). Two crew members were seen to leave the aircraft and swim to shore, however the pilot's hatch was not opened, and Newton was presumed to have perished in the crash. Neither of the crew members was seen alive again.

With these actions in mind, the CO recommended Newton for a Victoria Cross on July 10. The crew members who escaped were in fact Newton and his radio operator Fl. Sgt. Lyon, and upon reaching the shore they were picked up by some natives who began to lead the men to the Coastwatchers. Unfortunately, Newton and Lyons became distrustful of the natives and soon struck out on their own only to quickly run into a Japanese search patrol. They were recognised as aircrew and interrogated, after which Lyons was bayoneted to death. Newton was recognised as the pilot of a Boston, because of the blue cricket cap which he was carrying. He was then returned to Salamaua, and beheaded. The following September, (1943) Salamaua was recaptured, and Newton's body found, along with some natives who gave testimony as to his demise. Fl. Sgt. Lyon's body was not found until 1948.

*Kokoda Historical.*

**Newton's VC was the only such award made to a member of the RAAF in the Pacific theatre.**

The older I get the more I have in common with computers. We both start out with lots of memory and drive, then we become old and outdated, crash unexpectedly, and eventually have to have our parts replaced.

**Bill Doolan's Last Stand: Ambon, 1942**  
by Alistair Pope

#### The Medal of Gallantry

On 4th December 2020, the Government Gazette published a Notice that the Governor-General had announced the awards of three Medals for Gallantry (MG) for previously unrecognised acts of heroism. One was from Gallipoli in 1915, one from the Battle of Balmoral in 1968 and the third was awarded



to Driver William Thomas Doolan 'For acts of gallantry in action in hazardous circumstances as part of 2/21st Battalion as part of Gull Force at Kudamati village, on Ambon Island on 1st February 1942.'

**The Australian Response to the Axis Threat: 1939-1942**

Winston Churchill and others had watched with alarm the unchecked rise of the

Nazi war machine, but such was the international desire to avoid another war after the carnage of WW1 that their warnings were ignored and only limited upgrades were made. Most of the preparations that were initiated in the UK were inadequate and uncoordinated at best and poorly managed at worst. In parallel, Australia was also monitoring the unprovoked Japanese aggression in China, but without realistically preparing to react to the obvious threat as we also proceeded at a leisurely pace. It was an act of faith that the massive military and naval base in Singapore was impregnable and that we were guaranteed the protection of the might of Britain and the Commonwealth.

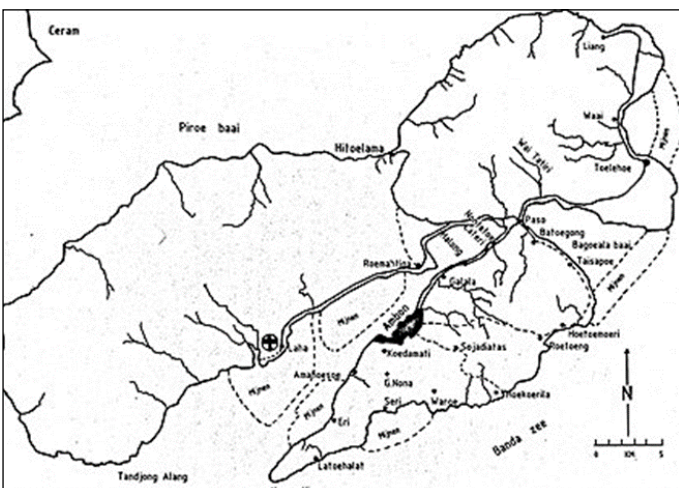
On 3rd September 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany, which resulted in a chain reaction of Australia immediately declaring war on Germany and later on Italy. The Government authorised Army Headquarters to raise four Divisions for overseas service and a number of Militia and Home Guard units for the Defence of Australia and Papua New Guinea. In a repeat of WW1, recruiting was swift as Australians flocked to join. As soon as they were ready, the 6th, 7th & 9th Divisions were despatched to the Middle East, while the 8th Division (less a Brigade of three battalions) was sent to bolster the key British defence facility in Singapore.

With the surrender of France and the German invasion of Holland in 1940, the Dutch overseas colonies became very vulnerable to Japanese territorial ambitions. With the agreement of the collaborationist French Government, Japan moved considerable forces into French Indo-China (particularly Vietnam and Cambodia), which placed them within striking distance of Dutch Indonesia, Malaya, Borneo and Singapore. Through faulty Australian strategic planning and a lack of foresight, the stage was being set for a future tragedy.

The Australian strategic plan was to take the detached Brigade from 8th Division and break it into three reinforced battalion sized forces, designated 'Sparrow Force', 'Lark Force' and 'Gull Force' and despatch them to defend isolated islands that were seen as being geographically on the vital approaches to Australia. Although the intention is politically understandable, the plan to disperse the limited forces available among three independent locations defies common sense and the military principles of concentration of force and mutual support. Should the Japanese decide to move south to capture the Indonesian oil fields then Gull force on Ambon would be particularly vulnerable to being overwhelmed. As it turned out, all three forces were overrun, with only Sparrow Force on Timor able to withdraw inland to fight on for months before many of its survivors were evacuated.

### The 2/21st Battalion Deploys to Ambon

Although the Australian strategic plan is militarily incomprehensible, the three detached battalions of 8th Division accepted their orders and deployed to their designated locations. The 2/21st Battalion had been raised in Victoria in August 1940,



with Lt Col. L. N. Roach, MC appointed as Commanding Officer. The 6th, 7th & 9th Divisions had priority for both men and equipment as they were designated for active duty in the Middle East. 8th Division (and therefore the 2/21st Battalion) were of a lower priority so they were short of equipment for training to battle standards.

By 23rd March 1941 the Brigade was fully trained, kitted out and moved to Darwin. The surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7th December 1941 and their invasion of Malaysia resulted in hasty forward defence plans being immediately implemented. On 9th December 1941, 2/21st Battalion was designated as Gull Force and notified to prepare for embarkation to secure the island of Ambon, 1,040km away in the Dutch East Indies. The battalion was reinforced with one anti-tank battery and a number of support troops, bringing their total strength to 1,131. There were also about 2,000 Dutch & Dutch Colonial troops on Ambon. However, the military problem was that only a few possible invasion beach sites could be defended, and none in sufficient strength to stop a successful landing.

### Ambon

On arrival on Ambon, Gull Force was tasked to defend the harbour and air strip. To achieve this LtCol Roach split the battalion into two groups with 292 sent to defend the air strip at Laha (on the western side of the bay that almost splits Ambon in half.) with the larger portion deployed to cover the harbour and bay. Technically, Gull Force was subordinate to the Dutch Commander, though coordination between them appears to have been limited.

It did not take LtCol Roach long to conclude that his task was impossible. In two plain-spoken letters he expressed his disgust at being isolated in an indefensible outpost and on 13th January 1942 (as a result of an intelligence report indicating that the Japanese were assembling a large invasion force) he stated that '... we could not hold out for more than one day.' He requested that Gull Force should be withdrawn and preserved to carry out a more realistically achievable task. As so often happens, the gulf between office strategists and the plain-speaking appeals of a frontline officer resulted in his being immediately replaced by another WW1 veteran, LtCol W. J. Scott, DSO.

### Battle for Ambon: 30th January – 3rd February 1942

On 30th January, about 1,000 Japanese marines and IJA personnel landed on the north coast. Other elements of the 228th Regiment landed on the southern coast of the Laitimor Peninsula. Although the Japanese ground forces were not numerically superior, they had air support, naval and field artillery and tanks and overwhelming infantry superiority at the points of contact. Within a day of the Japanese landings, the Dutch detachments in their vicinity were overrun or had withdrawn towards Paso. The destruction of bridges was not carried out as ordered, allowing the Japanese advance quickly.

### 31st January 1942

In the early hours of 31st January the Japanese moved to encircle the eastern flank of the Paso positions forcing the Dutch Commander, Kapitiz to reinforce the position at Kudamati to protect his flank. Unfortunately, telephone communications between Kapitiz, his subordinates and LtCol Scott ceased when the Japanese cut the lines. The Japanese force which had landed at Hitu-Lama then attacked the Paso defences from the north-east, then, in the words of the Australian official historian: 'at 6 p.m. a motor-cycle and sidecar was seen on the road to the west of the Paso position showing white flags and travelling towards the Japanese. Firing on the Paso perimeter was suspended on the orders of the Dutch company commanders. It is not clear who authorised this surrender, so Kapitiz ordered the Dutch troops to recommence fighting. However, when the company commanders returned to their positions, they found that their troops had been taken

prisoner, and they were forced to surrender.

The airfield at Laha was attacked by a strong Japanese force, but it was repelled. On the other side of the Bay, Japanese forces were also approaching the town of Ambon, and by about 04:00pm the Japanese had captured the town, including an Australian casualty clearing unit.

### 1st February 1942

In the early hours of 1st February, several Japanese attacks were launched simultaneously resulting in the capture of Col. Kapitz and his staff. Kapitz surrendered the remaining Dutch and Australian forces under his control and urged LtCol Scott to do the same. This message did not reach Scott for two days. The Australian transport unit and KNIL positions at Kudamati were attacked by infantry, but held out.

### Driver Bill Doolan's Last Stand

There are conflicting stories about the actions of Bill Doolan. As best as can be determined, he began his brief war as part of a reconnaissance patrol into Ambon city where the Japanese had established their headquarters. On being detected they made a fighting withdrawal in the direction of Kudamati pursued by a large force of Japanese infantry. Unfortunately, Kudamati was by now effectively encircled, cutting off their escape route. Private Doolan collected the patrol's spare submachine gun magazines and took up a position behind a large tree from which he held back the Japanese for over two hours while his mates escaped. Depending on which story you prefer, he was either killed by a Japanese sniper, or wounded and incapacitated, then killed by bayoneting.

What is not in dispute is that of all the soldiers who served, fought and died in Gull Force, it was the heroic last stand of Driver Doolan that the Ambonese chose to remember in song and by naming a street in his honour.

### The Fighting Predictably Concludes

By dawn on 2nd February it was clear that the battle was lost. Laha airfield had been attacked during the night and had lost ground and men. As a new attack began at dawn, it appeared likely they would be overrun that day. At 10:00am, only about 150 Australians and several KNIL personnel were still able to fight at Laha, so Major Newbury ordered them to surrender.

By the morning of 3rd February, the last of the Australians around Eri were struggling to cope with increasing air and naval attacks, wounded Australians, the influx of Dutch personnel, diminishing supplies and widespread fatigue. A Japanese flag had been seen flying on the other side of the bay, at Laha, so they knew that position had fallen. LtCol Scott, met the Japanese and decided to surrender. At midday the last Allied position at Kudamati was surrendered separately.

Ambon War Cemetery currently holds the graves of 1,956 servicemen

### Aftermath

The statistics of Gull Force are sobering.

Original Strength of Gull Force = 1,131,  
 Killed in Action (estimated) = 54,  
 Massacred at Laha = 229, Executed in POW camps = 17,  
 Killed in bombings = 13,  
 Killed in Chinese ambush on Hainan = 9,  
 Died as prisoners on Ambon = 378,  
 Died as prisoners on Hainan = 66, Missing on Hainan = 10,  
 Died after liberation = 3.

Total Deaths = 779, Survived and repatriated in 1945 = 352,  
 (including 52 who escaped from Ambon).

In a final twist, Max Gilbert, the last living survivor of Gull Force celebrated his 101st birthday in 2021!



Ambon War Cemetery currently holds the graves of 1,956 servicemen

A young fella with his pants hanging half off his arse, no front teeth and a half inch thick gold chain around his neck, walked into the local unemployment office to pick up his benefit money.

He strolled up to the counter and said:

"Hi there, you know what... I really HATE claiming benefits, I'd really much rather have a job. I don't like taking advantage of the system and getting something for nothing."

The social worker behind the counter said:

"Wow, your timing is excellent. We've just received a job opening from a very wealthy elderly man who wants a chauffeur and bodyguard for his beautiful daughter.

You'll have to drive around in his brand new Mercedes-Benz CL, he'll supply all of your clothes and because of the unsocial hours, meals will be provided free of charge. You'll also be expected to escort his daughter on her overseas holiday trips, but you will also have as part of your job, to satisfy her sexual urges as the daughter is in her mid-20's and has a rather strong sexual appetite."

The guy, jaw dropping and wide-eyed said.

"You're bull-shittin' me !"

The social worker said.

"Yeah, well . . . You started it . . ."

### Tiger Moth at War

Waiting at the side of the sweltering Jungle airstrip. Flg Off Thomas Leonard Collier and his Tiger Moth. A17-489 were about to participate in a historic mission for the RAAF. It was September 14, 1945. The place. Cape Worn, Wewak. New Guinea.

Collier, at 30 years of age, was rather older than the typical Aussie pilot serving in the front-line jungle airstrips of one of World War Two's most arduous theatres of operation. His unit. No 12 LASU, operated Australian-built Tiger Moths, and was one of the unsung flying organisations which provided the means for transporting men and delivering vital supplies to the front in this jungle-clad mountainous and primitive land.

As Collier sat waiting in the rear cockpit of '489 under the searing noonday New Guinea sun, a short stern-faced man with close-cropped hair and greying moustache approached the aircraft, accompanied by several staff officers. It was *Rikugun Chujo* (Lt-Gen) Hatazo Adachi, Commander, Imperial Japanese 18th Army. Adachi and his men had been fighting an unsuccessful three-and-a-half-year battle with the forces of the USA and Australia, trying to hold on to New Britain and New Guinea and vowing "not to set foot on my country's soil again but to remain as a clod of earth in the southern seas with 100,000 officers and men".





By the time the Emperor of Japan had ordered all of his troops to surrender. Adachi's command had shrunk to some 13,500 men. After being flown into Cape Worn the previous day in a RAAF Douglas Dakota along with members of his staff. Adachi

had been compelled to offer the surrender of all Japanese forces in New Guinea to Maj Gen H.C.H. Robertson, General Officer Commanding. 6th Division, Australian Army, amid great pomp and ceremony.

### A short but historic flight

Following Adachi's formal surrender, during which he handed over his sword to Robertson. the Japanese commander was required to attend a series of conferences with Australian staff officers to discuss arrangements arising from the proceedings.

After the conferences Adachi was to be flown to Kiarivu. this time with no ceremony, whence he would return to his own headquarters. Chosen to fly this historic sortie was Flg Offr Collier in A17-489

The two men in the foliage- green Tiger Moth were to finish their war services soon after. Adachi was tried and convicted of war crimes in 1947 and was sentenced to life imprisonment. He died later that year. Collier was discharged from the RAAF in 1946 as a Flight Lieutenant.

As for the aircraft, after service with No 8 Communications Unit and No 111 Air-Sea Rescue Flight, both at Madang. New Guinea, A17-489 was Struck off RAAF charge and sold to A.T. Collins of Lae. New Guinea, for £175 sterling in late 1946. Registered VH-AQT the aeroplane was later owned by Mr G Larum of Lac and then W.A. Lussick of Kavieng. New Ireland. The registration was cancelled on 8 Aug, 1957.

Among the thousands of Tiger Moths built on several continents and used during World War Two. '489 is undoubtedly the only one to have carried a Japanese World War Two general!

### Post War

'489 was sold into civilian hands and then became a 'project' - many parts coming from the remains of several other Tiger Moths—and passed through the hands of various owners.

Finally Alan Reber , after two years of work finding parts, making others, researching colour schemes and getting Federal Aviation Administration Certification A17-119 made its post restoration flight in 2004.



*Aero-  
plane  
Magazine  
May  
2010*

### Did You Know?

From 1941 to 1945, a total of 17,955,000 Americans were medically examined for induction into the armed forces. Some 6,420,000 (35.8 percent) were rejected as unfit because of some physical disability. Altogether, 16,112,566 Americans

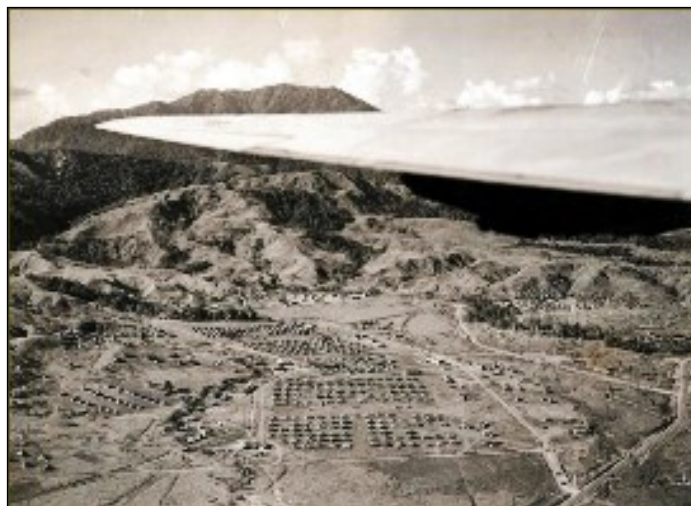
served their country in World War II.

A total of 38.8 percent (6,332,000) were volunteers. In all, 405,399 American service men and women gave up their lives in a war that cost the US \$288 Billion Dollars.

The most decorated unit in U.S. military history is the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, whose motto was "Go for Broke." It consisted of Japanese-American volunteers.

Together they won 4,667 major medals, awards, and citations, including 560 Silver Stars, 4,000 Bronze Stars, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, and one Medal of Honor, plus 54 other decorations. It also held the distinction of never having one single case of desertion during the entire war.

*From "The Sea & Land", the Royal Marines Assn of Qld Journal.*



Nadzab 1944 Photo credit 71st T.R.G. Thanks Chris Fleay



### 1940: Brocklesby Mid-air Collision

On 29 September 1940, a mid-air collision occurred over Brocklesby, New South Wales, Australia. The accident was unusual in that the aircraft involved, two Avro Ansons of No. 2 Service Flying Training School RAAF, remained locked together after colliding, and then landed safely. The collision stopped the engines of the upper Anson, but those of the machine underneath continued to run, allowing the aircraft to keep flying.

Both navigator and the pilot of the lower Anson bailed out. The pilot of the upper Anson found that he was able to control the interlocked aircraft with his ailerons and flaps, and made an emergency landing in a nearby paddock. All four crewmen survived the incident, and the upper Anson was repaired and returned to flight service.

A young guy from the country moves to Sydney and goes to a big department store looking for a job.

The manager says, "Do you have any sales experience?"

The kid says, "Yeah, I was a salesman back home."

Well, the boss liked the kid, so he gave him the job. "You start tomorrow. I'll come down after we close and see how you did."

His first day on the job was rough but he got through it. After the store was locked up, the boss came down.

"How many sales did you make today?"

The kid says, "One."

The boss says, "Just one? Our sales people average 20 or 30 sales a day. How much was the sale for?"

Kid says, "\$101,237.64."

Boss says, "\$101,237.64? What did you sell him?"

Kid says, "First I sold him a small fish hook. Then I sold him a medium fish hook. Then I sold him a larger fish hook.

Then I sold him a new fishing rod. Then I asked him where he was going fishing, and he said down at the coast, so I told him he was gonna need a boat, so we went down to the boat department, and I sold him that twin engine Chris Craft. Then he said he didn't think his Honda Civic would pull it, so I took him down to the automotive department and sold him that 4X4 Blazer."

The boss said, "A guy came in here to buy a fish hook and you sold him a boat and truck?"

Kid says, "No, he came in here to buy a box of tampons for his wife, and I said, 'Well, since your weekend's shot, you might as well go fishing.'"

### Zero Salvaged

Newsbeat, Aug.-Sept., 1970 — 7

Beneath the sheltered waters of Rabaul's Simpson Harbour and those close by, it is estimated that there are approximately one thousand objects which were sunk during World War II: These include submarines, destroyers, sea trucks and aircraft.

However, because of the depth of the volcanic crater of the harbour only forty-seven of these have been accounted for.

Their significance now is of little importance, except for the salvage diver for use as scrap metal. Even the most adventurous of tourists prefers to push his way through the tropical undergrowth in search of war relics, rather than delve beyond the surface to the ocean floor.

Recently, however, the hidden relics of the harbour proved to be of great importance to the American Fighter Aces Association, a group of wartime fighter pilots who have at least five enemy strikes to their credit in aerial combat.

In San Diego, California, the association is constructing their first Hall of Fame. It was decided that the preliminary monument should be dedicated to American and Allied Fighter pilots who lost their lives during World War II from Guadalcanal to Rabaul, and that the appropriate monument should be a Japanese Zero.

In 1967, the association wrote to the Australian Historical



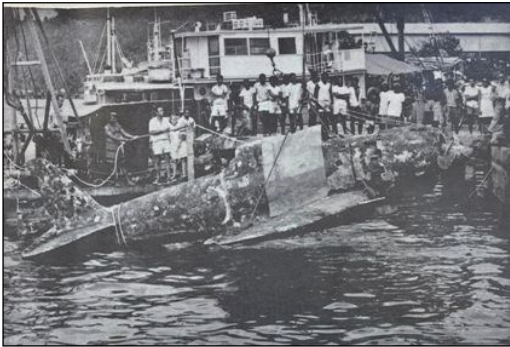
Society requesting the feasibility of directing them to the location of a Zero which could be rehabilitated for the purpose. It was not until two months ago that an an-

swer was received.

A Rabaul diver, Mr. Bob Scott and his associates were able to throw light onto the search quite by accident. They had located a Zero lying in fifty feet of water off Matupi Island, while searching for a propeller which had fallen from their boat. Hearing recently of the request for a Zero Scott informed the Aviation Society of its whereabouts.

The news reached America, and within a short time, three members of the Fighter Aces Association, Captain Marshall Beebee Ret., Commander James French Ret., and Commander Eugene Valencia Ret. had flown to Rabaul to inspect the plane.

After 20 years the Zero was brought to the surface in a huge cradle, bringing with it a collection of seaweed and shell growth which had accumulated over the years. The open cockpit, the almost undamaged framework, except for bullet holes through the engine and fuselage, indicated that the Zero had landed on the water following an air attack, allowing the pilot to escape, before sinking.



The condition of the plane was beyond all expectation for the three men, and after much of the shell and debris had been scraped from the surface, the familiar red circle and even the number of the plane was

clearly visible. It will now be left to dry out before being crated and flown by Hercules Transport to California. Taking with them the number of the Zero, French, Valencia and Beebee intend to return to America via Tokyo, in the hope of locating the pilot.

For the American Fighter Aces Association this was the end of a search begun three years ago, and the beginning of their first Hall of Fame. However for Commander Eugene Valencia, U. S. Navy Ret. the visit to Rabaul with the Zero drip-drying before being crated and flown to California, U.S.A. had a little more personal significance. Almost twenty seven years earlier, on the 11th November, 1943, he and his squadron had taken off from the aircraft carrier "Essex", lying 125 miles off the coast of New Britain, and had made a pre dawn surprise attack on enemy held Rabaul.

Joined by squadrons from aircraft carriers "Bunker Hill" and CVL *Independence*, they took the Japanese by surprise. Before going on to attack Tokyo, they had recorded on film the destruction of fifty-four Japanese single engine dive bombers and zeros.

During the attack on Rabaul, the "Essex" lost only one plane. The pilot was last seen photographed in his life raft at the entrance to the harbour, waving to his squadron as it returned under fire to the carrier. As he flew into Rabaul this month for the first time since that day, Eugene Valencia recalled the helplessness he had felt looking back on the tiny raft with its single occupant.

Determined to throw some light onto the fate of the pilot, Valencia, with the help of a Roman Catholic Priest, Father Frankie and several mission and native people, travelled for miles from village to village along the coast, hoping that some of the older villagers may have come in contact with the man, or knew whether he was able to reach land only to fall into the hands of the enemy. However, despite endless hours and miles, the search proved fruitless.

The personal lives of the three Fighter Aces involved in the search for the Zero is in itself another story. All three were involved in the war in the Pacific, and are anxious to preserve the

memories of those who gave their lives, and the stories surrounding them. As President of Valor Productions in America, Valencia plans to complete a series of films for television based on the lives of the greatest Fighter Aces. The series will consist of over 150 stories from pre World War 1. The Zero taken from Rabaul will be used as a pattern to construct identical planes for use in the films.

Marshall Beebee, who is now connected with Real Estate and land development in California, was so successful as an air-group commander during and after World War II. that the noted author James Mitchener dedicated his book "The Bridges of Toko Ri" to Beebee.

Jim French has still retained his interest in flying. As President of French Aviation Agricultural and Firefighting Contractual Co. in Bakesfield, California, he has converted bombers and fitted them with huge tanks containing a mixture of chemicals and water for use as firefighters. His company also has several light planes used for fire spotter and aerial crop dusting.

His admission to the Fighter Aces Association is well and truly justified. During World War II. French was a member of a division which shot down and recorded on film 50 enemy aircraft, without a loss or bullet hole in any of the 4 planes he flew.

Before leaving Rabaul, Eugene Valencia spoke to a Newsbeat reporter of the Zero mission, his own life and those of his companions with a quiet reserved pride. But above all he spoke with sincerity on behalf of the Fighter Aces, of the wonderful and warm hospitality they had received in Rabaul.

After travelling around the world several times. Valencia said he himself had never felt more at home or welcome anywhere as he had in Rabaul.

In 1943 he had left New Britain under enemy fire. This month in 1970 it was with regret that he boarded the aircraft for home, with a mission accomplished.



AT CHRISTMAS TIME IN THE PAST, WOMEN ASKED FORGIVENESS FROM THEIR HUBBIES FOR MISTAKES MADE DURING THE YEAR, PLEASE HELP PRESERVE IT, THIS WONDERFUL TRADITION DESERVES TO BE SAVED!!!

Sydney Cenotaph, Martin Place, Sydney



- 1) The original granite block for the Martin Place Cenotaph altar at the Moruya Quarry, NSW south coast, before being shaped.
  - 2) The same block at the quarry, but now shaped and engraved "To Our Glorious Dead". )
  - 3) The finished result in Martin Place showing the engraving "To Our Glorious Dead". The finished Cenotaph was unveiled in 1929, the granite altar resting on another 22 pieces of Moruya granite.
- Photo from WW2Cemeteries.com



The largest weapons and explosives cache found in Phoc Tuy Province during the Vietnam War. The 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment and a component from the 1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment), discovered the cache in a cave in the Nui May Tao mountains, twenty three miles north-east of the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) Base at Nui Dat, during Operation Marsden.



**1 NGIB**

Soldiers from 'B' Company of the 1st New Guinea Infantry Battalion on board the transport "Frances Peat" in November 1944 while being transported to the location in Jacquinot Bay area of New Britain where the company established its headquarters.

Company Sergeant Major Kube is pictured standing. (6 November 1944). The 1st New Guinea Infantry Battalion was a battalion of the Australian Army. One of four infantry battalions raised in New Guinea.

1 NGIB was formed in March 1944. In late 1944, the Battalion began deploying company-sized elements in support of combat operations on Bougainville, New Britain and on mainland New Guinea. It later became part of the Pacific Islands Regiment before being disbanded in June 1946.

**How a teenager trekking through the PNG jungle discovered the wreckage of an Australian warplane**

By PNG correspondent Natalie Whiting, Oct 2022.

The tip-off first came from a pig hunter who stumbled across the wreckage while tracking his prey. It was up in the hills of East New Britain, outside the town of Rabaul where Willie's family lives.

But getting to the site to investigate wasn't easy. "I collapsed on the way in, so it was pretty tough for me," Willie says. He blames himself for not eating enough before beginning the trek. "And all the river crossings going to the crash site, it was brutal, I ended up going back with a sprained ankle. But it was all worth it."



The chief of the nearby Barrum village hosted Willie Flinn before he set off on his expedition

He went in with a group of family friends. They were hosted by the chief of the nearest village, Barrum, with some of the villagers accompanying the group to the site.

From the village, it takes several hours of trekking to get to the site: through the bush, across sev-

eral rivers and up and down multiple mountain sides. For one stretch of the walk, the group used the river as their path, walking through the water for several hundred metres to reach the next point to climb. They used machetes to cut a rough path through the jungle as they went.

Then they came across the first piece of metal debris. "I was going nuts, I went bananas. I said, 'No way, what is this bit of metal doing in the middle of the jungle?'," Willie recounts. Pieces of the plane are scattered across the hillside. Some parts look like scrap metal, but others are clearly identifiable: part of a propeller, a bit of a door, several guns.

Willie and his crew had to dig to discover much of the plane which had been buried in decades of mud. "What helped identify that aircraft was a Beaufort control column," Willie says. "It was in the cockpit area, which was underground by about three metres maybe, so we dug down and took out the control column." The group could also see bones of the men who had been onboard, parts of a leather watch and the pilot's vest.

**The volunteers piecing together war history**

Willie brought the control column and some of the rusted weaponry back to his father David Flinn to try to identify the plane. David is president of the Rabaul Historical Society and the reason Willie has such an interest in WWII history. "I used to follow him out to investigate leads that others would provide for him, and we would go and see crash sites," Willie says of his childhood.

Rabaul was a significant site during the war. Guarded by a small contingent of Australian troops, it was captured by Japanese forces in 1942 and turned into a major naval and air military base. It then suffered intense allied bombing until the end of the war. Across Rabaul, huge tunnels still remain that were dug by the Japanese — largely using forced labour — to hide people and materials from the air strikes.

Over on the main island of New Guinea in East Sepik province, the US Embassy recently carried out their own excavations to repatriate the remains of WWII soldiers.

David is among a small group of locals who volunteer to preserve the history and discover crash sites in Rabaul. He's glad to see his son take on the interest. "It's extremely important because people like us, we're at the end of our careers. I can't walk up into the bush like I used to," he says.

Rod Pearce, another local and an experienced diver, has identified more than 50 crash sites — mostly underwater.

Many families have come to Rod for help in locating relatives who were lost during the war.

"I always reply but in a lot of cases it's beyond me to even start a search, and a lot of times they don't know where he went down," he explains, sitting on his boat in Rabaul Harbour. But Rod has been able to assist many families, as well as authorities from the US, Australia, and Japan, in locating sites. It involves extensive research, planning, and trawling through records. "Some of the aircraft still have [people listed as missing in action] onboard, waiting for the authorities to do the recoveries. And that's what I like — to just see closure for those airmen from WWII," he says.

'The plane was shot at': Villagers share stories of the downed aircraft The memories of the war have also been passed down in many villages across East New Britain. "Stories of the war were passed down from generation to generation," Barrum village chief Israel Joseph says. "During the war, the Japanese had killed some of locals. Others were used as carriers, some died because of carrying heavy loads."

He came across the crash site that Willie is now studying 15 years ago. He says he has heard stories of the plane being shot down. "It flew that way and crashed over there. My grandfather told me this. They watched the plane crash land

from the old Vunga village."

The chief has protected the site and was glad to see Willie come to document and report it, but he's worried about people from a neighbouring village coming onto his land to try to steal parts of the plane.

Barrum is the closest village to the crash site, several hours' walk away.

David Flinn says many crash sites are lost to people pillaging. "The single-biggest problem we have is that people believe that these wrecks are very valuable," he says. "So, they go up and smash the site to bits and by the time we get to hear about them there's usually not a lot left."



Part of a wing

There is also concern about sites being destroyed by logging companies.

### Identifying the plane — and the Australians onboard

It's been a year since Willie first trekked out to the plane site. He recently returned to try to get more identifying information.

David and Rod are working on the guns he brought back from the first trip, trying to clean them up and find serial numbers.

On his second visit to the site, Willie was trying to find identifying numbers on the props and other parts of the wreckage, but the material was either too rusted or buried. Willie remains hopeful that the plane can be identified. "It would mean the world to me," he says.

The team has so far been able to identify the aircraft as an Australian Beaufort, and based on records of that type of plane and the area it was found in, the team believes there are two likely options. "It could be one of two — I wouldn't like to speculate who it is, simply because we haven't done enough investigation on it yet and it could take another year before we really find out who is in there," David says.



Also, they think four airmen would have been onboard, based on

the type of plane.

The Australian Defence Force was informed when the site was found last year, but they haven't been out to visit yet, so there hasn't been an official identification.

"In light of the eased COVID-19 related travel restrictions, further investigation of this remote crash site is planned in 2023," a spokesperson said in a statement.

There is a small team within the Royal Australian Air Force tasked with investigating wrecks like this one. The defence spokesperson said RAAF has provided guidance to minimise

disturbance to the site to ensure the best chance of positively identifying the aircraft and recovering any human remains.

"Defence is committed to the recovery, identification and burial of its men and women who died while serving their nation," the statement said.

David says he's hopeful the authorities will soon be able to make the trip, in order to finally bring closure to the families of those who went down with the plane.



### Catherine Anne Warnes

by Michelle Rayner

Catherine Anne Warnes (1949-1969), entertainer, was born on 7 December 1949 at Arncliffe, Sydney, second of three children of George Alfred Warnes, an English-born motor mechanic, and his wife Nancy Starnes, née Buck, from Sydney. Cathy attended Athelstane Public and Arncliffe Girls' High schools. She showed an early interest in the performing arts and, while in primary school, began taking singing and dancing lessons.

By the age of 12 Warnes was appearing on stage in local community and school concerts. Spotted by a talent scout, she was offered a permanent spot, dancing on television station TCN-9's programme 'Opportunity Knocks'. At 16 she won second prize for singing in the Starflight talent quest. This competition was conducted by another popular Channel 9 show, 'Bandstand', on which she became a regular performer. She began entertaining in clubs, even though she was under the legal age to enter these premises, and recorded advertising jingles for radio and television. Later she joined the 'pop' singer 'Col Joye' on several concert tours around Australia. Warnes used the stage name 'Cathy Wayne'.

In the first half of 1967 she travelled with other entertainers to the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) on a wartime



Catherine Warnes, about an hour before her death

concert tour sponsored by the Australian Forces Advisory Committee on Entertainment. Because she was not yet 18, it had been necessary for Bruce Webber, the organizer of the tour, to obtain the approval of her parents for her to take part. He recalled that she had 'leapt at the chance' to go to South Vietnam. Members of F.A.C.E. concert parties were not paid for their services but were given a daily living allowance and a security guarantee.

In mid-1969 Warnes returned to South Vietnam

as the lead singer in an Australian pop group, 'Sweethearts on Parade'. The tour was privately arranged by Ingrid Hart, a promoter and performer, and was not under the auspices of the Australian government. On 20 July that year at Da Nang, Warnes was on stage in a club for non-commissioned officers of the United States Marine Corps when a bullet, fired from outside the club, passed through the insect-screen of an open window and hit her in the chest, killing her. Her body was returned to Australia and cremated with Anglican rites.

Sergeant J. W. Killen, U.S. Marines, was convicted of the unpremeditated murder of Warnes, allegedly while attempting to shoot his commanding officer, Major R. E. Simons, who had been in the audience. Two years later, Killen was freed after a re-trial; the murderer has never been found. Nancy Warnes was reported as saying that she and her husband had not been in favour of their daughter's second trip to Vietnam but that 'she wanted to go—Cathy had a will of her own'. Her father told journalists that she had hoped to "save a few dollars" to help her singing career on return to Sydney'. Catherine Warnes was one of three Australian women killed in Vietnam during the war. The other two, Lee Makk and Margaret Moses, were welfare workers who died in an aeroplane crash in 1975.

*This article was published: in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 16, 2002*



Could you drive this? Mack 285HP Army transporter.

A young woman had been taking golf lessons. She had just started playing her first round of golf when she suffered a bee sting.

Her pain was so intense that she decided to return to the clubhouse for help and to complain.

Her golf pro Graham saw her come into the clubhouse and asked, "Why are you back so early? What's wrong?"

"I was stung by a bee," she said.

"Where?" he asked.

"Between the first and second hole," she replied.

He nodded knowingly and said, "Then your feet were too far apart."

### William Cook—Tol Massacre

William Cook was 32 years old when he enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Corps on 9th July 1940, service number NX56978. He was posted as a Nursing Orderly to the 2nd 10th Field Ambulance and was with a group of 22 who were detached to Lark Force and left for Rabaul on the Katoomba on 12th March 1941, landing in Rabaul on 22nd March 1941.

He was in Rabaul when the Japanese landed in Rabaul on 23rd Jan 1942, escaping with many others down the east coast of New Britain. He found himself at Tol where he was captured. He is one of the few survivors of the Tol Massacre, and in a comprehensive diary describes the events of



that fateful day after his capture.

*"One of the Japs walked behind our party and began to tie our thumbs together behind our backs, we were then tied together in groups of two or three by passing straps and native loin cloth between our arms and signed to shake off our steel helmets. Our captors marched us into the jungle towards Rabaul, the trail was narrow and being tied the way we were it was very difficult walking, at times we were walking sideways to stop tripping over the grass and vine growing beside the track.*

*The cord around my thumbs had cut into the flesh and*

*stopped the circulation, causing them to swell and became very painful. We were halted on a rise about 100 yards from the sea in a coconut plantation and were signed to sit down with our backs towards the sea and not to look around. The first prisoner was taken down the rise, one of the Victorians disobeyed the signs and looked around, he was hit on the side of the head with a rifle butt by one of the guards.*

*Another of the prisoners, not a medical man, protested of the treatment given to men wearing the Red Cross, the officer in charge laughed and ripped them off our arms. The next to be taken away were two tied together, at the word "next" (this was the only English word spoken by the Japs) the prisoner or prisoners stood up, said "cheerio fellows" and walked to their death, not a sound after their farewell and marched away with their heads up and shoulders back. It was a sight that made one glad to think that we were Australians, those boys died without a whimper and their parents, wives and sweethearts know that although the horror of their death will never heal, the memory of those words "cheerio fellows", showed the spirit of those boys.*

*There were only five left when the officer drew his revolver and by signs wanted to know if we would like to be shot or bayoneted, we elected to be shot.*

*Three of us were taken down the hill and as we walked we could see three japs on our left walking through to meet us at a given point, as soon as they were behind us they lunged and stabbed us in the back, knocking us face down on the ground, and standing over us as they kept stabbing. I received six wounds in the back and strange to say the pain was not very severe, each stab seemed like a dull prod and the area around the wound started to freeze and then warm up as the blood began to flow.*

*I held my breath and feigned death, the Japs walked away but one of the boys I was tied to groaned, one Jap immediately returned and stabbed him again, I could not hold my breath any longer and in breathing either moved or made a noise as the Jap then stabbed me four times in the neck and one which went through my ear, face and came out my mouth. Blood spurted from my mouth and the Jap covered us with a few palm leaves and vines, then left. Later I heard two loud reports followed by a volley of rifle fire, my mates had been given their last request and had been shot.*

*I lay there for a long time waiting to die, my wounds were painful and flies attracted to the blood were getting troublesome, once I thought I heard the voice of one very near to me call out "Bill". Although now I can say it was only imaginary, it saved my life as it gave me the idea of escaping. I was tied to my two mates with a native lap-lap and after fumbling around found the knot and undid it. This made me free to walk although my thumbs were*

*still tied together, I spoke to see if my mates were alive (I don't think I could have helped them if they were) and then started to walk."*

After his escape he moved down the coast where he caught up with a group led by Colonel Scanlon. They parted company and Bill with Harry Sissan, Eric Edwards and Bill Roberts wandered in the "jungle" for over a week where they met up with two other Tol Survivors, "Smacker" Hazelgrove and "Nipper" Webster, eventually arriving at Pal Mal Mal Plantation. They were eventually picked up by the Laurabada on 11th April and transported to Port Moresby and then down to Cairns on the Macdhui.

His diary is a comprehensive outline of his nearly 2-month struggle for survival after the escape from Rabaul, and can be located at the Australian War Memorial along with the accounts of many Lark Force survivors. Unfortunately these records are not digitised, so can only be accessed by visiting the War Memorial.

*Thankyou Michael White, a Canberra based member, for this article. Your Museum at Wacol has an extremely good exhibition of the Toll Massacre.*

Two women were playing golf.  
One teed off and watched in horror as her ball headed directly toward a foursome of men playing the next hole.  
The ball hit one of the men. He immediately clasped his hands together at his groin, fell to the ground and proceeded to roll around in agony.  
The woman rushed down to the man, and immediately began to apologise.  
'Please allow me to help. I'm a Physiotherapist and I know I could relieve your pain if you'd allow me.' she told him.  
'Oh, no, I'll be all right I'll be fine in a few minutes.' the man replied.  
He was in obvious agony, lying in the foetal position, still clasping his hands together at his groin.  
At her persistence, however, he finally allowed her to help. She gently took his hands away and laid them to the side, loosened his pants and put her hands inside.  
She administered tender and artful massage for several long moments and asked 'How does that feel?'  
He replied, 'It feels great, but I still think my thumb's broken.'

### **Veteran's 20 years of Volunteering Celebrated**

Cairns RSL Sub Branch 'Volunteer of the Year' Stan Carswell MBE has given countless hours to his community.

Across 20 years of volunteering for the Cairns RSL Sub Branch, Stan has given countless hours to fellow veterans and the wider community. Known locally as a fountain of knowledge on the military history of Cairns, Stan often steps in to help families locate war graves and loved ones who are buried in the Cairns District.

But it's his involvement in the final farewell to veterans, through a poppy service at their funeral, that Stan finds the most moving experience. "I still get emotional when I get down to their list of service and their service record. It breaks me up, even though I don't personally know the veteran that I'm conducting a service for," Stan says.

Stan conducted his first poppy service 20 years ago, and in April, he conducted his 159th. "The poppy service is for any veteran that passes away, irrespective of whether they're a member of the Sub Branch or not."

### **Nashos Sparks Dedication to Honouring Veterans**

Stan served as a National Serviceman (Nasho) for six months in 1952. He was among the early intakes of the scheme, which started his decades-long association with the Defence community. "I was lucky enough to be selected to do my service with the RAAF in Townsville, known as 10GR Squadron, for general

reconnaissance. It was quite an experience," Stan says.

After his service, Stan lived and worked in Papua New Guinea for 20 years before returning to northern Queensland with his family. He joined the Cairns RSL Sub Branch shortly after and has been actively involved in it ever since. Stan has held various positions on the Sub Branch's board over the years and served as Deputy President for RSL Queensland Far Northern District, all the while volunteering for any role that needed filling.

"I was the coach driver for the Far Northern District as we travelled around to the regions to hold our meetings in different locations, and I was the Sub Branch representative for the Warhaven Homes Governing Committee for many years," Stan says.

"Every ANZAC Day I serve rum and milk from the bar here; I've been doing it for about 18 years. My dear wife Agnes used to join me, but when she passed away three years ago, I decided to continue doing it on my own, and they've named the bar after me in honour."

Stan is currently assisting the Sub Branch with preparations for their Vietnam Veterans' Day commemorations. "I've been researching Vietnam veterans that may be buried in and around the cemeteries up here. There is one that we've been looking at – an ex-National Serviceman, actually. He was killed in action – just 25 years of age. I went to the cemetery yesterday to locate his grave site."

### **Volunteering Efforts Recognised and Celebrated**

Stan's willingness to put his hand up and his dedication to helping others haven't gone unnoticed. His service as a volunteer in his Sub Branch and the local community was recognised and celebrated when he was named the '2022 Volunteer of the Year' at last year's Cairns RSL Sub Branch Christmas party. Cairns RSL Sub Branch President Nathan Shingles, who presented Stan with the award, speaks highly of his fellow veteran and RSL member.

"Stan is a much-loved member of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch. He always goes above and beyond when caring for our Defence family," Nathan says. The award was a pleasant surprise for Stan, who says he doesn't do what he does for the accolades.

"I feel very humble and grateful. I don't do what I do for any bouquets or anything like that," he shares. "I volunteer because I feel that I'm in a position to offer something and to do something for the Sub Branch."

*Qld RSL May 2023.*

*(Stan served in B Coy, PNGVR)*



### **80th Anniversary of the Australian Army Medical Women's Service**

By Jason Smeaton. PhD candidate at the Australian Catholic University

On 18 December 1942 the Army formally established a women's auxiliary to support the staff of military medical establishments. Fundamentally, the role of the auxiliary was to provide support as orderlies to the trained nurses of the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS). Formed out of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) movement, it was part of the broader mobilisation of Australian women during the war and the creation of various women's auxiliary services. Given official status as an Army auxiliary, this service became known as the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS). The Navy and Air Force never called upon VADs, and instead relied on their own nursing services.

Alice Appleford (nee Ross King) is just one of the roughly 8,500 women who served in the AAMWS during the Second World War. She exemplifies the deep connection that existed between the nursing profession, the Army, and the AAMWS nursing orderly.

Following her First World War service where she was just one of seven Australian Army nurses to receive the Military Medal, Alice Ross King became a notable nurse in Australia. But, like many women, after her marriage to follow veteran, Sydney Appleford, Alice had to resign her position. This, however, was not the end of her commitment to nursing or the military.

In the interwar years, Alice joined the VAD movement. Here, with her nursing and military experience, Alice contributed to the recruitment and training of civilians in first aid and home nursing throughout the Gippsland region in Victoria. As civilians, the VAD prepared to support the military medical and nursing services as a technical reserve during an emergency. To Alice, her work with the VAD and then the AAMWS ensured that she was helping the service become a proficient auxiliary to the AANS.

Such a situation occurred when war broke out in 1939. At first, women volunteered as VADs in military hospitals. By mid-1940, the Army Director-General of Medical Services, Major General Rupert Downes, recognised their efforts and encouraged the Minister for the Army, Percy Spender, to enrol VADs in paid full-time service. From December 1940, women were enrolled in the Army as VADs and paid for their work as orderlies. With the creation of the AAMWS in December 1942, the women serving as VADs in the Army were absorbed into the new auxiliary. Alice Appleford was given the rank of Major and made leader of the AAMWS in Victoria.

As VADs, these servicewomen were posted to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and the Middle East and served on hospital ships. Then, as AAMWS, they staffed troop trains, worked in northern Australia, and served in the Pacific islands, including Morotai and New Guinea. They also staffed base and camp hospitals throughout Australia.

Servicewomen in the AAMWS took on a variety of roles in and around military- medical establishments. Many served in hospital wards as nursing orderlies. Others became technicians in laboratories and blood banks. AAMWS also worked in hospital kitchens and laundries, and ran the postal and telephone services. As AAMWS Private Sheila Sibley put it "Marching side by side with the Lady of the lamp... you'll find the lady of the laundry-, and her good companions, the ladies of the skillet and the scrubbing brush".

Assisting the registered nurses and medical officers, the AAMWS turned to any job that needed doing. Serving on Bougainville, Maud Whiting worked as a theatre orderly, monitoring the use of instruments and sterilising equipment.

Maud also became an expert in mending and preparing all manner of surgical equipment for reuse. Because of the shortage of resources, especially on the islands, surgical gloves with holes were not disposed of, but were patched over by AAMWS. 'Sister would check them after and blow

into them to see if there was any air coming in' Maud recalled. 'And they were worn over and over again'.

One AAMWS, who had trained with the local Warragul VAD formed by Alice Appleford, was Janet 'Jean' Wallace. Before the war, Jean had no ambition to become a nurse. But as an AAMWS, she got to see and experience what it was like to be one. Serving in Katherine in the Northern Territory, Jean recalled that, 'There was always something happening. New patients, new treatments to learn, and lectures to attend'.

Jean immersed herself in her nursing duties, which included distributing mixtures and medications, ensuring patients were fed according to any special diets, conducting urine tests, and checking temperatures. She also extended her knowledge of nursing by attending lectures on caring for and treating surgical cases, tropical diseases, pathology, and psychology. Under Alice's watchful eye in the AAMWS, the experience Jean gained saw her return to Warragul after the war to begin her formal training to become a registered nurse.

Through the guidance of leaders such as Alice, and the dedication to duty as shown by Maud, Jean and many others, the AAMWS made a positive contribution to the war effort, and to the nursing profession after the war.

*Vet Affairs Newsletter Vol 38 No3. Dec 2022.*



Two Australian Army Nursing Service sisters and a member of the AAMWS (left) attending a patient at the 2/1st Australian General Hospital, New Guinea, 1944.



Red Bird of Paradise

#### How to make a brief will

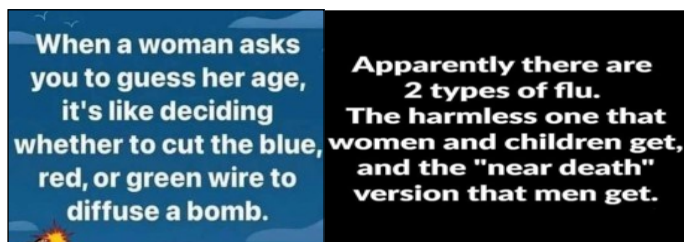
Arnold Kingsley was a Lance Sergeant in the AN&MEF and then a Major in 20th Battalion in WW1. He was killed at Passchendaele and his will is worth noting.



He said "I aint got nothing to leave so I don't give a god damn who gets it".

Short and to the point!!

*Thank you Michael White*



### ANZAC Day Manjimup WA

Once again many thanks to you and Bob, King and Co and all those involved in producing another excellent HTT.

Our ANZAC service in Manjimup was extremely well attended - probably more than ever before and the number of children present was notable. It was a very cold, wet and miserable day and fortunately we have a covered mall adjacent to the Cenotaph. The Manjimup Shire agreed for us to move into the covered area for both services.

One wonderful incident occurred - there was a sound system glitch at the beginning of playing the National Anthem. After a few minutes delay and silence somebody called out "Let's sing it!!" and oh boy didn't they sing it - so loud and clear and full of enthusiasm.

I am Vice President of the Manjimup RSL sub branch. We put on an excellent gunfire breakfast for hundreds of people all cooked and served by local high school kids and Scouts and Guides followed by the main parade then back to the club for an excellent lunch and two up.

I was invited to be the guest speaker at the ANZAC service the following day at Kearnan College here in Manjimup - a very prestigious school providing for children from Kindergarten to final high school.

My speech was well received and I spoke of the importance of the role of Peace Keepers. I will email a copy to you.

Before commencing my speech I asked the 17 and 18 year olds to raise their hand and then told them that I was called up to serve my National Service in the Royal Australian Navy when I was 17. I turned 18 on board HMAS Fremantle off the coast of Borneo. The Headmaster discussed that with me at the excellent luncheon after the service and could not believe that a lad of 17 was called up.

Phil I do intend to come over for the meeting and Luncheon in October if possible. I have been very sick and in hospital. Severe internal bleeding with damage to kidneys and liver and that on top of both hip replacements so it has been a pretty rough last 12 months.

Hopefully Julia can come with me to help me.

Anyway Phil we very much appreciate all that you and Andrea, the committee and members and Bob do for us. Please pass on our greetings and appreciation.

Regards,

Bill Bickerton and Julia Clegg.

*Thanks Bill. Trust you recover your good health quickly.*

Daughter: Dad, I have a flat tire!  
Dad: Can't you call your husband?  
Daughter: I tried, he didn't answer.  
Dad: Do you have a spare?  
Daughter: He didn't answer either.

### Driver Wilkie Desmond Collins NX57343

Extract from an account by Wilkie Collins of his escape from execution at TOL Plantation. Full account of his escape from New Britain held at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

Wilkie was travelling down the east coast of New Britain in a party of about 60.

"We got food from the Father, and then went in to chase a pig which we caught, just as we caught the pig a hail of machine gun bullets and mortar bombs swept the beach in our vicinity, we realised that the Japs were close, so made a dash into a nearby creek.

We were trying to get away but the fire from the beach area made it slow going, and shortly afterwards were captured by a Jap landing party, who had been put ashore to cut off any escaping parties, we were still crawling in the creek when the Japs who caught us started to laugh and caused us to look up, the motioned us to the beach, so we followed them. We were put aboard a waiting craft of which there were two and met a Policeman who had also just been captured at the mission, his name was NALTY. We were taken by sea to Keip about 15 miles away and arrived about 7.30 pm but no landing was made and we were returned to TOL, whilst on board we were given cigarettes and biscuits and treated quite kindly. I might state here that as we were being put on board the vessel we noticed about 6 undoubtedly Cavalry men saddling up the mission horses. They wore riding boots and breeches and carried sabres of a different type to the swords carried by the Japanese Officers, they rode off in the direction of Keip - I noticed that the saddles were brought ashore from the vessels.

We were landed at a native village and put into a house full of men also captives, there were three houses in all. The following morning we were called out and counted our names numbers etc were also taken, then we were marched to the house at TOL Plantation. We were given drinks of water and cigarettes to smoke, and during a period of about three hours our identification discs were taken from us and returned to us several times. We were again counted and this time all we had including Pay Books, Photos, Papers and discs were taken from us, and these were thrown into one heap. We were then tied up with our hands behind our backs, with a fishing cord, and all made into parties of 9 or 10 joined together. We were then marched off, into the long under growth. The parties going in several different directions. We were stopped after a short walk and told to stand up, a Jap Officer drew his sword, and also ordered the other Japs to fix bayonets, then after cutting the first man away from his party of ten, he motioned to him to go into the bush, which he did, followed by one of the Japs who had a gun with fixed bayonet, shortly afterwards we heard screams as we knew what was happening, this went on with several men and after each time the Jap would come out of the bush wiping his bayonet. One chap asked to be shot, this was done by the Officer in Charge, another in some way got loose and made a dash to escape, but the Officer caught up with him and slashed him in the back with his sword, he yelled in pain, and then was shot. Several were bayoneted only a few yards from me, without having been taken into the bush. Most of them cursed the Japs and said "You yellow B....s. You'll pay for this when our chaps catch you."

I was the last man, and on the end of the party of about 30 men, for some reason, the Japs except the Officer left, and I was left in his care for quite a while, when the others did not return, the Officer picked up a nearby rifle and after motioning to me to walk, let fire, his shot hit me in the left shoulder and I fell to the ground and lay still, he fired two more shots, one of which hit me in the left wrist and the other in the right hand, I remained still, this shot must have also caught me in the back paralysing my legs. I couldn't move for some time after which I decided to take a risk and get away. I got up and found that

one of the shots had cut away the line that bound my hands, there were no Japs about, and looking around I could see that the chaps were dead, so I made for the bush."

Wilkie was a driver with the 2/10th Field Ambulance and discharged on 12th December 1942 after his return to Australia. He enlisted again on 18th Jan 1943 and given the new service number NX99560 and was finally discharged on 16th May 1944.

*Thank you Michael White, Canberra Assn member.*

**Don Lawie OAM**

On behalf of the NGVR & PNGVR Association I congratulate Don Lawie for his being awarded an OAM in the 2023 Australia Day Honours list.

His investiture was held on Friday 12 May, 2023 in Cairns. Those present included the recipient former PNGVR Pte Lawie D. C 172341, his grandson Ted Lawie, the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr



Jeannette Young AC PSM, who made the presentation, and PNG Consul, Luke Kulimbao, who is based in Cairns. The citation simply said " for service to the community of Cairns and district. " but was accompanied by a 2 foolscap list of activities

Don's is wearing his PNGVR jacket made for

him in 1966 in Singapore. His RSL tie was presented to him by the Babinda sub branch. On his left side of his jacket are his PNGVR awards and on the right side he has two awards for 15 years of SES service; a Cyclone Yasi Group Award and a Meritorious Service Medal. Don was to wear a kilt at his investiture but he had lost too much weight and it did not fit him.

*Phil Ainsworth, President.*

*Ed. Congratulations Don. Some in the Association will recall an evening in the Sgts Mess during the 1964 Camp at Mt Ambra—Don playing the bagpipe whilst hanging upside down from a ceiling beam by his legs with the hem of his kilt closer to his head than his feet.*

**Montevideo Maru Service, Brisbane**

24 Assoc members and Friends as well as descendants of those lost on the Montevideo Maru and their friends attended this special service in Brisbane, the first conducted since the finding of the wreck of the Montevideo Maru off the coast of the Philippines in April this year.

Unfortunately for us another service, Reserve Forces Day Service, was conducted in the grounds of ANZAC Square and, as it was more visible than ours held in the Post WW11 Room, several people who intended to attend our service ended up attending that one instead. As Belinda McCarthy said when she made her way to the room after both services

had concluded and we were having a cup of tea/coffee and refreshments "I sat through the service waiting for someone to mention the Montevideo Maru and when nothing was said I asked someone why not and was directed here".

A special feature this year was the showing on the screen of a number of underwater photos taken at the time of the finding of the wreck of the Montevideo Maru. Some of those shots can be seen on the photos below and more on the web site.

M.C. Paul Brown opened proceedings and introduced Assn Vice President, Bob Collins, who was standing in for President, Phil Ainsworth, who was in Canberra with other members of the Silent World Foundation, the finders of the wreck of the Montevideo Maru. Bob welcomed all and read out an address from Phil which briefly addressed the discovery of the wreck.

Assn Patron Maj. Gen. Professor John Pearn AO. RFD. then delivered a very insightful address on "Closure—But not Forgotten", which follows.

Then followed prayers by the Assn Chaplain, Ron MacDonald, wreath laying, the Last Post and Reveille and the singing of the National Anthem.

Morning tea with all mingling and talking followed.

A special thanks to our Patron, Maj Gen John Pearn AO RFD for rising at 3am in Melbourne to ensure he made an early flight from Melbourne which was suffering numerous flight cancellations due to inclement weather and crew shortages.

PNGVR Members present were Patron, Vice President, Chaplain Ron MacDonald and wife Cheryl, Colin Gould MBE,



L-R. Colin Gould MBE., Bob Collins, Maj Gen John Pearn AO. RFD., 2nd row. John Davidson, Secretary Aust Commando Assn, Qld., Kevin Shorthouse, AM. OL., Rear row. Tony Boulter, Mal and Marie Zimmerman.



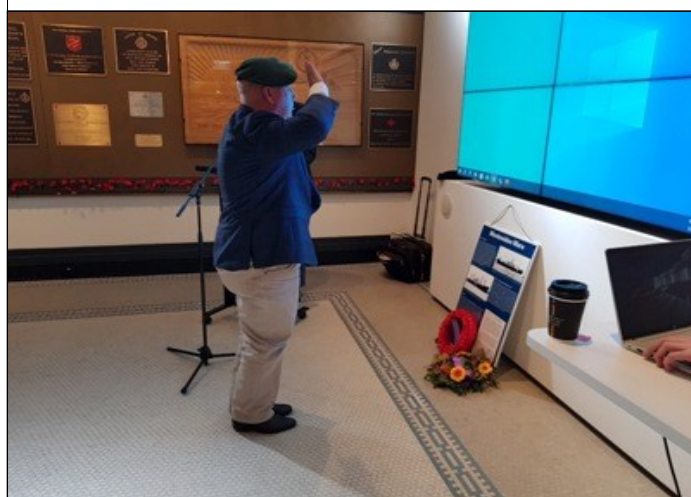
Bob Collins welcoming all.



Maj Gen John Pearn AO, RFD. "Closure—but not forgotten"



Chaplain Ron MacDonald and Paul Brown.



John Davidson, Aust Commando Assn, Qld., Laying wreath.

Paul Brown, Mal and Marie Zimmerman, Kieran Nelson who has now become "Snappy Kieran" at events, Tony Boulter and Kevin Shorthouse AM, MBE.

Thank you to our organisers Paul Brown and Colin Gould MBE.

#### **Maj Gen Professor John Pearn AO, RFD. address**

We meet today, in this quiet moment of tribute and reflection, to honour those Australians who perished at sea, victims of the sinking of the M.V. Montevideo Maru. Those 1053 victims were 845 Australian soldiers and 208 civilians who had been taken prisoner by the Japanese. These Australian servicemen and

civilians have no headstone, but from April 2023 the identified wreck of that prison ship is now an identified war grave. Their memory is held in honour by us, who follow on.

In meeting together on this day, 81 years on to the day of that catastrophe, we do not forget Australia's worst maritime disaster, and we do not let the memory fade of those whose grave is the unending sea. The civilians who perished were men and teenagers who had been serving in the Australian civil service and in business in the (then) Territory of Papua and New Guinea; and others who were planters and other workers in the New Guinea Islands. All had been captured by the invading Japanese. The soldiers came from many units. They were servicemen of the 2/22 Battalion; 17 Anti-tank Battery; 1st Independent Commando Company; Gunners of the anti-aircraft battery; Engineers and Signallers; canteen operators; members of the Dental Unit; Medical Orderlies; a Detachment of the 2/10 Field Ambulance and the 22 members of the Regimental Band of the 2/22 Battalion.

The Regimental Band of the 2/22 Battalion comprised 22 Salvationists, musicians of the Brunswick Citadel Band, a part of the Salvation Army's East Corps in Melbourne. Following Pearl Harbour (7 December 1941), as devout but courageous non-combatants, they had enlisted en bloc to function as stretcher bearers. Their bandmaster was Mr Arthur Gullidge (1989-1942), a popular and gifted composer of stirring brass band marches and hymns. His music endures as another Memorial to him and his fellow servicemen who perished in that terrible event. Today, the notes of the Last Post, played by our Salvation Army colleague, engender a special poignancy in this Memorial Service.

The prison ship was not marked as such, in contravention of the Geneva Conventions. Following its sinking by the United States submarine, USS Sturgeon, the men were drowned, trapped in cages below decks. Because of wartime censorship, the families of those who had perished had no knowledge of the fate of their loved ones. This lack of closure was the plight of many thousands of Australian families, whose menfolk were captured or (in some cases) missing in action. In late 1945, families learned that their loved ones had perished, and this brought a partial closure to those who had held out hope of survival throughout the preceding three years.

This Memorial Service today has special significance, as two months ago, on 24 April 2023, the undersea wreck of the Montevideo Maru was finally identified at 4200 metres on the seafloor, off the Philippines in the South China Sea. Its discovery has brought a final closure to the lives of surviving relatives and descendants of those 1053 men who, until this year, had no identified grave. When a person is lost, and whether they are alive or dead remains unknown, it is not only relatives and descendants who lack closure, but society more broadly. Thus the identification of what is now an identified war grave, has also brought closure to the many military units whose members perished in that terrible event.

When a person is missing, the parents and partners and relatives of the missing person experience something which psychologists call "ambiguous loss". This term was coined in 1977 by the United States' psychologist, Professor Pauline Boss, in the context of her research into the family dynamics of American soldiers missing in action. Closure is denied to relatives of those missing in war, in natural disasters such as floods and tsunamis; and in individual instances when children are missing, lost, abducted or murdered; and in instances where individuals end their own lives, alone and remote, determined that their body can never be found. Surviving relatives often live for years in the hope that there will be "a knock at the door".

For those surviving, the sadness of "ambiguous loss" can be relieved by closure. Closure exists in several sequential steps.

In the case of shipwreck, when the time interval for potential survival has passed, the fact that there can be no survivors is a first step with the implied certainty of death. However, if the ship is never found, with the implication that there is no identified wreck as a grave, closure for some is not complete. In the case of the MV Montevideo Maru, it was not until late 1945 — more than three years after the sinking — that relatives were informed that there was no hope of survival. That first step brought closure for many. Sixty years after the event, in 2003, Mr Yosiaku Yamaji, then 83 years old and a former merchant seaman (one of the 17 Japanese survivors of the Montevideo Maru), gave some first-hand details of the of the torpedoing of the ship and its subsequent sinking. This was a second step in closure for many. In 2012, 70 years after the disaster, the Japanese Government delivered the manifest of the Montevideo Maru to the Australian Government. It contained the names of the Australian prisoners who had embarked at Rabaul. This further step brought further closure to many of the surviving relatives — and also to the military units whose members had perished. The final step, in the sequence of events which has led to closure for many, was the identification of the images of the wreck on the sea floor — now an identified gravesite.

Society generally and individuals specifically erect monuments to those missing. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier — a moving Memorial in many Nations — is one such example. It is seen as a form of transferred or compensatory closure. In the instance of those 1053 Australians who perished, in the most unthinkable of circumstances, there is now a final closure, honoured in this 2023 Memorial Service.

Closure brings a finality to the story of those who have been lost, formerly without trace. However, closure does not mean forgetfulness. Rather, it gives a focus to our memorialisation.

So today, 81 years on, we remember them as we will continue so to do.



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 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.**

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

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[www.pngvr.weebly.com](http://www.pngvr.weebly.com) (all back copies of HTT may be obtained from our website)

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**Chaplain.** Rev Ron MacDonald. Phone 0407 008 624 email [Cheryl.ron@gmail.com](mailto:Cheryl.ron@gmail.com)

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**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.

**Acceptance to Treasurer Kieran Nelson by 7th October.** Cost will be \$40 p.p. with monies paid into Association Account BSB 064006—A/c number 10001126

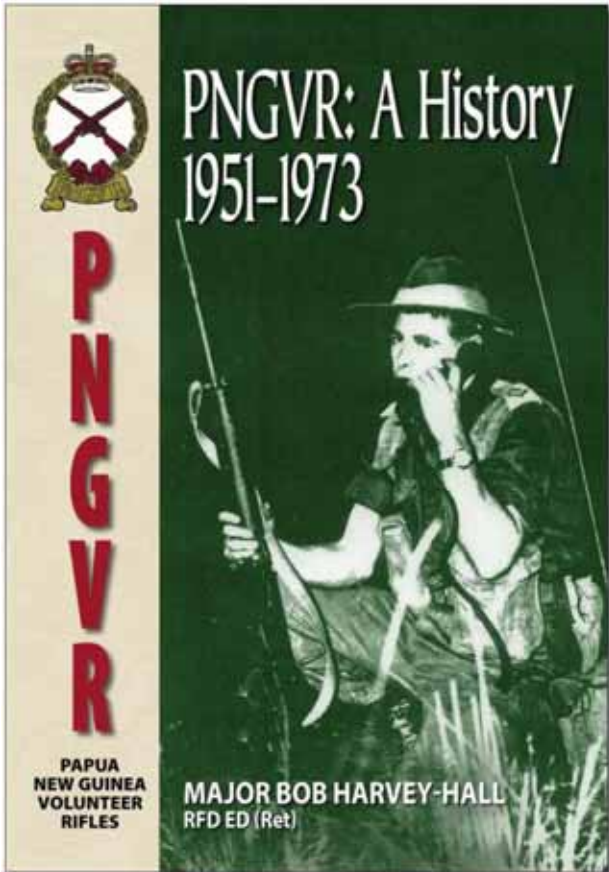
**The Association would like to thank KING & Co Property Consultants for its continuing support, including the printing of this edition, together with the past 82 issues of Harim Tok Tok. Its contribution is much appreciated.**

**FUNCTION DATES**

**Sat 5 August Sat 2 September**  
 Museum Open 10am—1pm. Come along and see the new exhibits. Exhibits are constantly being altered.

**Sat 12 August Sat 14 October**  
 10am. Executive Committee meeting. Members always welcome. BYO lunch.

**Sat 21 October**  
 10am. Annual General Meeting at the Museum to be followed by lunch in Everymans Hut to mark the 50th anniversary of the disbandment of PNGVR on 31 Dec 1973. See notice on previous column and attached flyer.



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES**

was the successor to the WWII New Guinea Volunteer Rifles Militia Battalion. It was the only Australian post WWII Militia (CMF) Battalion which was:

- formed, served and disbanded overseas
- never served in Australia
- always on the Australia’s Order of Battle
- always commanded by a regular army officer
- from 1964 actively enlisting Papua New Guineans (non-Australians)
- from 1964 a fully-integrated unit comprising Australians and non- Australians in all ranks

The colourful story of this unique Australian Militia Battalion unfolds in this detailed telling by Major Bob Harvey-Hall RFD ED (Ret), the second-longest serving PNGVR soldier/officer/Company Commander and Battalion 2/1C, from the unit’s earliest days until near when it was disbanded.

The story reveals how expatriates thought and lived in PNG from the early 1950s just after the war; how the battalion provided the initial defence of the country and assisted to re-establish the Pacific Island Regiment. As the country’s development process increased, the battalion’s role was expanded and Papua New Guineans were welcomed enlistments into the PNGVR military community.

The battalion played an important role during the anxious time the governing of West Papua was transferred to Indonesia from the Dutch. As the country rapidly moved towards its own independence there was no need for an Australian CMF unit in PNG and the unit was disbanded. Many of the expatriate Australians remained in PNG after independence and further assisted the country in its development.

Read how the bonding created by the unique shared experiences within PNGVR remains strong today and is exemplified whenever a group of former PNGVR soldiers meet.

**PURCHASE ORDER:**

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 **PNGVR: A HISTORY** 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: 1001126**

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**If transferring funds electronically, please be sure to include your name with your transfer, then either post this form or email details of your order**

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

## An Invitation to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of PNGVR's Disbandment

You and your wife/partner are invited to join us at the 50th Anniversary luncheon to mark the disbandment of the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (PNGVR) on 31st December 1973.

This luncheon will be held in Everyman's Hut, Wacol Military Precinct, 97 Boundary Road, Wacol, Brisbane, 4076 on Saturday 21st October 2023.



The luncheon will be preceded by the Association's Annual General Meeting commencing 10am sharp which will be held in the NGVR Memorial Museum. The AGM will last no longer than one hour and you are welcome to attend.

If you do not wish to attend the AGM, come along about 11 am for a pre-luncheon drink and a chat. The two course, sit down, buffet luncheon will be held in the adjacent Everyman's Hut and will commence at 12:30 pm.

A brief informative discussion about PNGVR will accompany the luncheon. There will be plenty of time to chat with your friends before, during and after and still be home before dark. There is easy parking on site for the Museum and Everyman's Hut. Both facilities and in between are wheelchair accessible.

There is a charge of \$40 per person for the luncheon: drinks will be available at a cash bar.



Everyman's Hut

Please contact either:

Paul Brown at 0402 644181 or [paulbrown475@gmail.com](mailto:paulbrown475@gmail.com) or  
Colin Gould at 0424 562 030 or [pngvr@optus.com.au](mailto:pngvr@optus.com.au)  
by 10 October 2023 if you are interested in attending,

Payment is by electronic transfer directly to NGVR & PNGVR Association

BSB: 064 006

Account number: 10001126

*ensuring an adequate reference is used so the transaction may be traced*

Please also send a confirmatory email to [kierannelson@bigpond.com](mailto:kierannelson@bigpond.com).

Dress for the occasion is Anzac Day Dress with full medals for members and smart casual for partners and friends.



NGVR Memorial Museum

***PNGVR was a militia (Citizens Military Force) battalion formed in 1951 and disbanded in December 1973, prior to PNG Independence. PNGVR's parent unit was the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR), the militia battalion which faced the Japanese at Rabaul and did valuable front line work on the New Guinea mainland during the first six months of the Pacific War.***

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