

## President's Report.

Good morning and welcome to our 2020 AGM .

I thank those who travelled some distance to be here today, from the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and hinterland , your attendance is appreciated.

Many people have said much about the coronavirus. I believe many positives will derive from it. The pause in our hectic lives has given us time to reflect about the direction of our lives and the country. The few bad stories we have heard have been greatly outweighed by the good. We and Australia will see through this pandemic and come out better and stronger .

Our membership remains strong with new members occasionally coming out of the woodwork. Since the last AGM , to our knowledge, seven members have died, two less than last year. These losses included : Allan Tronson; Jack Lewis; Kenneth Connelly; John Thomson ; Russell Ames and Ivan Old - Lest we Forget.

Although restricted our Association has had an active year. Formed in 1989 , incorporated in 1991 the Association is 31 years old. Most of the present office holders have held their positions for 16 years, half the life of the Association, providing a continuity of service and dedication.

The following outlines the Association's activities since our 2019 AGM:

- 1 the Qld State Montevideo Maru memorial service at the Brisbane Cenotaph and this AGM were the major functions held ;
- 2 publication and distribution of 6 issues of Harim Tok Tok the association's 16 page newsletter was maintained;
- 3 our website was maintained and updated and our face book administered with regular postings;
- 4 whilst closed for some of the time, our military museum , when allowed , was open on the first Saturday of the month as well when group visits were organised;
- 5 six committee meetings were held;
- 6 one fund raising Bunnings sausage sizzle was held ;
- 7 attendance at and support to many kindred organisation's events and commemorations continued;
- 8 when allowed, regular welfare visits to aged and frail members were made;
- 9 attendance and when requested, arranging poppy parades at former members funerals organised;
- 10 attendance and presentation of medals of excellence at the 2019 9 RQR Steel Tuff exercise was a great success;
- 11 and several projects being undertaken by individuals continued .

Our 2019-20 association activities were reported in our Harim Tok Tok and social media.

These details are also posted in our Website [www.pngvr.weebly.com](http://www.pngvr.weebly.com) and our face book page. Please take the time and look up our Website and Face book, you may be surprised at the content!

There will be no 2020 9 RQR Steel Tuff Exercise and presentation of Medallions for Excellence this year due to the heavy work load of the Battalion during the year caused by call outs for the fires and virus quarantining and border duties.

Our final committee meeting and BYO luncheon for the year will be held in the Wacol Museum at 10am, Saturday 21 November to which all who are interested are welcome to attend.

Besides articles written for the HTT and other purposes by members , Michael White who works part-time at the AWM, has several on-going projects in which you may be interested:

- 1 he has prepared a list of the 1 400 military who served in the AN & AMEF during WW1 and so far has written biographies for over 400 from this list, up from 100 last year;
- 2 he has confirmed all NGVR soldiers killed during WW2, of whom we are aware, are on AWM's honour board;
- 3 has instigated an investigation towards AWM changing its criteria to recognise enlisted NGVR who were not called up for full time service, but were killed during the war as civilians, to be placed on AWM's Commemorative Roll. The new Director of the AWM confirmed that this will continue after employment restrictions are lifted.

John Winterbotham has for years and continues to research NAA documents relating to PNG, particularly to the military. An example is his complete list of NGVR , PIB and NGIBs men who served during the Pacific War.

If you are working on a project which may be of interest or use to the Association, please advise us and do not hesitate if you require information, contacts or assistance .

Through our many and varied activities, NGVR's and PNGVR's regimental histories are becoming better known and respected. Our Association has developed an enhanced network with kindred organisations with which we

share activities , mostly commemorative in nature.

Our newsletter Harim Tok Tok remains our main means of communicating with our wide-flung membership and continues to grow in popularity amongst members and others. Editor Bob Collins has produced 66 issues over the past 11 years. We are most appreciative of this outstanding work, thank you Bob.

Our Face book ,which is managed by Kieran Nelson, is also increasing its popularity, thank you Kieran.

I thank Trevor Connell, our web master, and his assistant Richard Muir, who have upgraded our website [www.pngvr.weebly.com](http://www.pngvr.weebly.com) over the past year – I commend our website to you as it holds our historical records, photographs and current information. Contact Trevor if you wish to add a pertinent story.

Our Sydney member Ross Johnson, who is also a prominent member of PNGAA, recently produced an unsolicited computer searchable list of all Harim Tok Tok articles. Instead of looking through all the issues to find what you want, Ross's work provides easy access by word of phrase. This will be incorporated into our website soon. Thank you Ross.

We are grateful to the NSAAQ for its ongoing co-operation and assistance between our respective Associations . Our relationship started in 2005 when we were asked to establish a Museum here. It is a good and healthy relationship and it will prosper as this military heritage precinct is developed to its full potential. I would like to personally thank President Alex Garlin, NSAAQ office bearers and its members for their friendship and assistance.

Our Military Museum officially opened in February 2006 under the tutelage of Curator, John Holland. Since John's death a couple of years ago, the Museum is managed by Curator Paul Brown and his assistant Colin Gould. Paul and Colin have restructured the displays to streamline the flow of guests through the Museum. The Museum also serves as our home base and meeting area . We are indebted to Paul and Colin for their ongoing work and time devoted to the Museum which has become a focus for all our activities. Our legacy to the community is our military museum which will ensure the histories of our two unique units and their part in contributing to the enduring relationship between Australia and PNG are not forgotten

Our most pressing issues for the Museum are its tenure and succession - without tenure succession cannot be resolved. Although negotiations between the BCC and NSAAQ have been on the table for several years , progress has recently been made; the title of the land is in BCC'S name and presently the land category is being changed to appropriately meet the use of the site. Once this is completed long term leases will be finally negotiated . Our honorary solicitor Craig Ray has been asked to assist In finalising this for the association.

Despite limited fund raising opportunities this year, our financial position is sound with thanks to Treasurers Doug Ng and Kieran Nelson. Doug retired from the position after he had a severe fall and long hospitalisation earlier this year. We thank Doug Ng for his sterling work over many years safeguarding and nurturing our finances, without which we would not be in the position we are now. Thank you Doug and we all wish you a full recovery and early return to the Association's committee.

We were fortunate for Kieran Nelson offering his services to fill the gap created by Doug's mishap, thank you Kieran. A recent change is our move from a manual cheque transaction system of book-keeping to an electronics system which will help streamline our operation.

On behalf of our members, I thank the outgoing committee members, Vice President and Harim Tok Tok editor Bob Collins, Secretary and Assistant Museum Curator Colin Gould, Treasurers Doug Ng and Kieran Nelson, Museum Curator and Welfare Officer Paul Brown, Webmaster Trevor Connell, Grants Officer and Face book Administrator Kieran Nelson and committee members Peter Rogers DFC, Mike Griffin, Tony Boulter and Peter Rogers ( the younger). We are appreciative for our Honorary Padre Ron McDonald and Honorary Solicitor Craig Ray who are always available when needed. Our Patron Major General John Pearn graciously continues to provide engaged support and encouragement to us through his high standing in the community, his many connections with kindred organisations and individuals and his presence at our events, for which we are extremely grateful.

As an association, we have met and exceeded the stated objectives of our constitution and the expectations of the community.

**Phil Ainsworth, 24 October 2020**