



HARIM TOK TOK VOLUME 51 JUNE 2007: PRESIDENT'S UP-DATE

The main activities of the Association since the last issue of Harim Tok Tok include those during Anzac Week and the Canberra plaque dedication trip. This year the mixed dining night was held prior to Anzac Day at the Long Tan Sergeants Mess, Enoggera when 60 members partners and friends attended. Our Patron Major General John Pearn was in attendance and guest speaker Phillip Bradley spoke passionately about the 1942/1943 battle of Wau, the subject of his book to be available soon. It was a most enjoyable occasion.

Some of the committee members were invited to the Brisbane Consul-General's function at his office on the Tuesday to present 30th Independence Anniversary medals to Queensland Ambulance Officers who have assisted the Papua New Guinea St John's Ambulance. Our Patron and Vice-President John Mudge who is the Brigadier of PNG St John's Ambulance were there.

About 80 members of our Association and PIR Association marched on Anzac Day. Again, our unit was well turned out which was acknowledged by the large crowd. Immediately after the march, a short solemn memorial service to our NGVR comrades conducted by Paul Brown and Mal Zimmerman was held at the Hall of Memories, Brisbane Cenotaph.

The post-March reunion was again held at the Exchange Hotel which provided outstanding facilities for it. Well over 100 people attended and it was good to see everyone including ex-NGVR Bill Keenan. Well done Colin Gould.

A BYO barbeque luncheon was held at our Museum on Saturday after Anzac Day for members to get together and check out the Museum's exhibits. While attendance was limited, it was an enjoyable time to reminisce in casual circumstances. Thank you John Holland.

Over the past months much time and effort has been spent in organising the recent twin plaque dedication ceremony at the Australia War Memorial, Canberra. This was held on 15 May when over 150 people from the NGVR/PNGVR, PIR and NGVR/ANGAU Associations, including a large contingent from Queensland attended. Nine WW2 veterans from these units were present.

Harold Osbourne	NGVR
Jim Birrell MC	NGVR
Les Irvine	ANGAU
Mr James Snr	ANGAU
Roy Sheargold	PIB
Frank Wust	PIB
Alan Hooper	PIB
Ron Jager	PIB
Ed Jones	NGIB

[insert the photograph of as many as possible].

While little state press coverage was given, the Canberra press and TV channels covered it well. Ninety year old Harold Osbourne motorvanned up from Melbourne for the occasion and dominated press photos with his vitality and jauntily worn "hat, fur felt" with a Bird of Paradise stuck in the puggaree. Harold brought with him a photo of himself in Bulolo in 1939 wearing similar headgear which was the norm for the NGVR.

Our King & Co Property Consultants sponsored, 2 page coloured marketing brochure about NGVR, PNGVR, the Association and our Museum assisted greatly in furthering our Association's name and cause in Canberra.

If the success of the ceremony can be gauged by the attendance of VIP's, it was outstanding. The reflection speech was given by the Governor-General, the welcoming by the Director of the Australia War Memorial, the dedication by the Duntroon Padre, the ode by Keith Payne VC, music by Duntroon Band and Australian Rugby Choir and thank you and farewell by yours truly. Other attendees included Senator Bronwyn Bishop MP, Australian Army Chief Lieutenant General Leahy, his PNG counterpart representative Colonel Norrie, PNG High Commissioner Charles Lepani, Brisbane PNG

Consul General Paul Nerau and thirteen Papua New Guineans including several ranking officers attending Canberra staff college and cadets from Duntroon.

The ceremony was followed by a morning tea which was attended by all including the VIP's. This was followed by an official short tour of the Museum and a luncheon. This was an enjoyable part of the ceremony, meeting with many old friends and other veterans and ex-soldiers of the remembered units and their successors. We particularly thank Bruce Crawford and AWM organiser Martin Hanson for organising this excellent function. It could not have been better arranged.

Speaking with many at the various functions, I was constantly reminded by members including the ex-PIR Association members who are now the responsibility of our Association about the importance of the Harim Tok Tok in communicating with all. Many expressed that more editions should be produced. However, I am sure they are unaware of the effort that each edition entails and that this onerous duty falls mainly on our hardworking Secretary, Colin Gould.

Coming activities include the Reserve Forces March and our Association's Montevideo Maru commemoration service to be held on 1 July. Further details of these are contained elsewhere. One activity which we have had to cancel because of uncertainty created by the coming PNG elections is the proposed 14 day trip to Papua New Guinea at the end of July. It is proposed to arrange this trip around the same time in 2008.

It never ceases to amaze me just what our Association is capable of doing. Although we are not a financially wealthy Association, we are indeed rich in people and organising capacity. Well done Committee and members.