



Harim Tok Tok

PAPUA NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES EX-MEMBERS ASSOCIATION Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

I write this update from Covid19 locked down Sydney having had my two Astra-Zeneca jabs. Wherever you are, I hope you are vaccinated and well.

Since 1994 our Association has held a memorial service on 1 July each year at the Brisbane Cenotaph to honour the men lost on the sinking of the Montevideo Maru in 1942. Our planned service for Thursday 1 July 2021 was cancelled due to the declared three days lock down which commenced 6pm 29 June until 6pm Friday 2 July. Next year will be the 80th Anniversary of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru and our Association will continue its tradition of holding a public Memorial Service for the 1053 Australian military and civilian men lost, including 36 serving NGVR soldiers.

It was arranged for the 1 July 2021 AWM Last Post Service would tell the story of Cpl George Spensley, NGVR who died on the Montevideo Maru. Due to Covid 19 lockdown many people who planned to be in Canberra for this event were unable to attend including George Spensley's daughter and family from Melbourne. Cpl G Spensley's story will be remembered at next years' service, the 80th Anniversary of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru.

At its weekly Last Post Service on Sunday 4 July 2021 at 4.45pm in the WW2 Forecourt at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, the sinking of the Montevideo Maru was remembered and those who served and died were honoured.

The Australian War Memorial's (AWM) expansion plan has commenced with the construction of a new research building being stage one of the projects. This has caused the removal and storage of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial because the site was required for the new building.

It is uncertain where and when the Memorial will again be erected. The new Director of AMW has assured the Rabaul and Memorial Group of the PNGAA, which was responsible for its installation and which I am a member, that it will be consulted about the Memorial's new placement position at the appropriate time.

A successful sausage sizzle and fund raising was held at Bunnings, Oxley on Saturday 22 May 2021, details are on page 14. I

thank Colin Gould, Paul Brown, Kieran Nelson, and Peter Rogers (the younger) for their work and time for its success.

Kieran has been successful in attaining a DVA grant to purchase an automated external defibrillator. When received, Kieran, a former St Johns Ambulance Officer, will familiarise himself with the device and train the remaining members of the committee. Thank you, Kieran, for arranging this important aid.

10am Saturday 23 October 2021. We will start with the AGM and follow with a two-course luncheon in the air-conditioned Everyman's Hut. This is an important Association event. There is easy parking and wheelchair access. Further details about this event, how to book, pay and get there are available in the attached flyer.

Phil Ainsworth, July 2021



Your Committee:

From left to right, rear row : Chaplain Ron McDonald, Mike Griffin, Peter Rogers (the younger), Tony Boulter, Kieran Nelson and Colin Gould,
Front row : Paul Brown, Bob Collins , Phil Ainsworth. (absent Peter Rogers DFC)

Max Hayes advises that L/Cpl Peter Albert Langman 258700 formerly of D Coy (Pt Moresby), PNGVR died 15 June 2021 aged 86 at Paradise Point, Queensland. Peter enlisted in PNGVR on 21 February 1961 and served his time in Lt Bill Kelly's rifle platoon, Captain Andy Anderson being the OC D Company. Peter was promoted to temporary corporal and transferred to RNSW Regiment on 19 July 1962. Later he joined the Australian Army Provost Corps and retired with the rank of Major. He was Mentioned in Despatches and received 2 medals for his service in Vietnam and his two National Service medals.

Before arriving in PNG to be appointed to the RPNGC on 4 January 1960, Peter was a NSW policeman from 28 October 1957 to 31 January 1960. The NSW Police awarded Peter a courageous conduct medal for rescuing two elderly women from a burning flat on 18 January 1958.

Please do not forget our AGM and our 70th Anniversary of the formation of PNGVR mixed luncheon to be held at

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During WWII: Mick, Bill, Jack and the Others

written by Jean Hart

Under the title, "Mick, Bill and the Others Remembered", Sydney Morning Herald columnist Alan Ramsay (26-01-07) wrote about Lark Force and the fall of Rabaul on 23 January 1942: "**Rabaul, you see, was a disaster. And like most countries, if we can't turn our battlefield defeats into heroic tragedies or someone else's fault, we try to ignore them** ...". Only 400 of the Lark Force garrison of 1,396 survived the Japanese invasion. I've respectfully adapted Ramsay's title to remember Jack Hart, one of 131 soldiers who escaped from Rabaul's east coast on the launch *Laura-bada*, 9 April 1942.



Hart's WWII story falls into three distinct phases. The first starts with enlistment in May 1941 and ends with his repatriation to Concord Military Hospital, 27 April 1942. The second covers his recuperation and reorientation while war came closer to Australia. The final phase begins in July 1943, with his self-initiated journey to Milne Bay, assignment to the 9th Division and participation in the fierce Huon Peninsula offensive and ends

with his return to Australia, and discharge on medical grounds on 4 February 1945, aged 21 years 7 months.

John Hart died in RNSH November 1998. With the aid of his Defence Service Records (DSR) from the National Archives of Australia, official and other WWII histories, family records and oral history, his biographical dots can, belatedly, be joined and the barebones of his idiosyncratic war service pieced together. His DSR contain conflicting data. In war-time's hurly burly, the dots were never joined, nor were questions asked about glaring inconsistencies in his records. On some forms he is N270038, on others NX27038. Although his active service during 1943-4 was with the AIF's 2/24th Battalion, 26th Brigade, 9th Division, his discharge is from the Citizens Military Force (CMF).

On one page of his DSR, 15 September 1943, he is "a deserter", but another page contradicts this, indicating that already on 9 August 1943 he was on active service out of Australia. He was honourably discharged to his parents' address, 30 Rangers Road Cremorne.

1. Enlistment and Rabaul Campaign 1941-1942

After attending North Sydney Boys High School, John Hart enlisted in May 1941, fabricating his age and occupation. He changed his birth date from 28 July 1923 to 1921; he falsely described himself as "Printer" and John soon became Jack. He was one of 52 youthful army volunteers posted to a CMF Antiaircraft (A/A) Battery, under the leadership of Lieutenants David Selby (later Major) and Peter Fisher. "The great majority, being under 19 years, they were ineligible for the AM" (Selby: 5). A/A Battery was eligible to serve in Australia's mandated territories and disembarked from MV *Neptuna* at Rabaul, New Britain in August 1941 to swell the Lark Force garrison at Malaguna camp.

The mainstay of this 'forward observation post' was the AIF's 2/22nd Infantry Battalion, recently excised from the 8th Division's 23rd Brigade. Arrangements were in train for the A/A men to transfer to the AIF but events overtook the protracted procedures. Selby speaks warmly of the A/A's "remarkable esprit de corps and its youthful enthusiasm". In letters to his family, Jack Hart an only son, enthused about the good times with his new found brotherhood. A/A operated two old three-inch guns and an obsolete right-sight telescope from conspicuous and precarious Frisbee Ridge, overlooking

Rabaul Harbour. "Always they kept to their gun drill until they reached the stage when every man could do automatically, the job of every other man". At leisure Lark Force garrison enjoyed sporting rivalry and Rabaul's tropical exotica, its lively Chinese markets, pubs and clubs. A column of black pumice dust ash poured intermittently from the nearby volcano, Matupi.

When Japan attacked Pearl Harbour, 8 December 1941, Lark Force numbered 1379 then which included the A/A Battery, 17th Antitank (A/T) Battery and 2/10th Ambulance Brigade. As Pacific war clouds gathered a War Cabinet memo of 12 December 1941, recovered in the 1990s, sealed its fate. "Lark Force should not be reinforced, could not be re-equipped, should not be withdrawn. Rabaul should not be abandoned ... the Japanese should be made to fight for Rabaul". "THERE SHALL BE NO WITHDRAWAL" was the order issued from Australia, 1 January 1942. Lark Force was unaware that it had been officially designated "a hostage to fortune", code for "expendable".

On 4 January 1942 A/A Battery eagerly fired its pitifully inadequate guns at 22 superior enemy aircraft which bombed Rabaul's airstrips, the first of many increasingly accurate air attacks. **A/A Battery's was the first WWII action against the Japanese on Australian Territory and as such attracted commendation from headquarters in Port Moresby.**

Intelligence about the impending Japanese thrust was unreliable; rumours abounded; tension mounted. An unforeseen debacle, of immense scale, was about to descend on ill prepared Rabaul. *The huge Japanese force which moved into Rabaul Harbour on 22 January stunned Lark Force. It included horses, vehicles, 5,500 army troops and marines supported by a strong naval force including the greater part of the Carrier Fleet with aircraft which had so recently attacked Pearl Harbour.* (Japan, it transpired, planned to make Rabaul a major base for the conquest of New Guinea.)

In the chaos of the overwhelming Japanese amphibious landing on 23 January, A/A Battery was ordered to destroy its guns. A gun-carrier collapsed crushing Hart's left shoulder but that dislocation scarcely registered as Selby's Battery was ordered to join Captain Shier's infantry unit. Selby protested, "My men had no infantry training — neither did I". Shortly, another explicit order, "EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF" signified that Rabaul was lost. Stragglers Lark Force survivors retreated, with few supplies, into the rugged, unmapped Baining Mountains jungle to the south east; others headed for the north coast.

Hazardous days and weeks followed as small wet hungry bands struggled directionless up and down jungle ravines, crossing innumerable slippery creeks, anxious to reach a settlement at Adler Bay on the east coast. "*Stragglers along the track in our torn clothes, with heads bent and eyes fixed on the ground, we were a typical remnant of a beaten army*".

Japanese aircraft made 24 leaflet drops warning, "SURRENDER AT ONCE, YOU WILL ONLY DIE ...", with details of the gruesome fate awaiting those who disobeyed. At Adler Bay Lark Force's commanding officer assessed the dire situation and advised his men "to remain where they were, throw away their arms, place white flags on the beach and give themselves up to the enemy". The majority did surrender. *Of these, 849 died later when the Montevideo Maru, transporting them to Hainan Island, China, was sunk by an American submarine off Luzon Island.* Selby, sobered by risks of enemy retaliation, disease and starvation, nevertheless, invited A/A Battery men present to join him and Fisher moving southwards, living off the land and chancing escape from New Britain. Selby was bitterly disappointed when "only Gunnery Martin, Hart and Bloomfield elected to come with me".

True to their warning Japanese troops landed on 3 February at Tol Plantation and mercilessly massacred 160 Australian soldiers and civilians sheltering there. Hart and Selby escaped this fate because they had been delayed by dysentery as they were approaching Tol. Hearing gunshot and screams they covered nearby in the roots of an erima tree scarcely daring to breathe.

Bill Cook of 2/10 Field Ambulance, bayoneted 11 times, feigned death and survived as did five others. Tol was just the first of the sudden landings of ruthless Japanese who ended other Australian lives and sharpened the wits of escapees as they raided native gardens, dealt with the ravages of festering sores, malaria, black water fever and dysentery, and tried desperately to communicate their whereabouts to one another, Christian mission stations, and Port Moresby.

At Draak a memorable example of 'mateship', occurred. When Jack Hart, fleeing with Archie Taylor and Bob Hannah of the A/T Battery along a crumbling cliff top, fell 60 dizzying feet on to a coral bed, he injured his back, broke his right leg and suffered



Draak Hut at war's end 1945

severe lacerations. Taylor set off and found mission natives who lumbered Hart on to a crude stretcher and carried him to a native hut at Draak. Other survivors continued southwards in small groups towards Palmalmal and Drina. A mission native set Hart's fractured right femur in a mud cast, thus staving off gan-

grene. Taylor and Hannah, for six isolated weeks, loyally kept him alive in a rat infested grass hut through bouts of delirium, dengue, malaria and infected bed sores which scarred his back forever. If suddenly threatened by marauding Japanese, his two mates carried Hart roughly into the shelter of surrounding bush. From the hut's twine stretcher he remembered the air black with mosquitoes and Taylor forcing unpalatable taro root down his throat to keep him alive when he'd all but ceased to care.

Major Owen, the most senior Lark Force officer with east coast survivors, got heartening news from a heroic missionary. Padre Harris had used his crude radio to lifesaving affect and sent mission boys to inform Owen that a rescue vessel would arrive and depart on 9 April. Time and place were of the essence; there could be no delay. Scattered survivors were summoned.

Stormy weather, helped them avoid Japanese surveillance and rendezvous at Palmalmal. Owen sent natives to Draak instructing Taylor and Hannah to "bring Hart to Wurung". Carried by natives to the shore, Hart was put aboard a canoe which perilously crossed Jacquinot Bay on a squally night. The Draak trio arrived at Palmalmal in time to board the rescue launch *Laurahada*. On



The *Laurabada* with survivors enters Port Moresby, April 1942

12 April 1942, thoroughly weighed down by lucky survivors, *Laurabada* safely delivered 131 Lark Force (one died at sea), four RAN and 21 civilians to Port Moresby. Here the rescued were transferred to the *Macdhui* which sailed for Sydney arriving

on 27 April 1942. MISSING IN ACTION no longer, the repatriated were welcomed, unconditionally, by their overjoyed families. Hart was transferred from the ship to 113 Military Hospital, Concord. Years later David Selby QC confided that he scarcely believed John Hart could live, so wasted was his body when they parted in Sydney in April 1942.

2. Steady Recuperation and Reorientation during the Japanese Thrust, 1942-3

Hart's right leg which had shrunk by three inches was skilfully reset. A DSR entry, 6 May, states, "Fractured right femur caused from fall down cliff during escape. Likely to cause permanent ill effects .Z. Post-operative care, involving pulleys to stretch the leg, took months. He was eventually transferred to Lady Gowrie Convalescent Home, 1 Jan 1943, only to be returned to Concord on 23 March for an "Operation for cure of recurrent dislocation of left shoulder ..." (DSR). (This surgery proved unsatisfactory. Dislocations persisted until October 1952, when, again in Concord, a steel pin permanently secured the damaged shoulder.) Malaria also recurred. A medical classification 'unfit for active service', was recorded, 22 July 1943. During his lengthy recuperation Hart reflected on the critical turn the war had taken and felt he should be there.

Rabaul's fall, 23 January 1942 had been swiftly followed by the disastrous bombing of Darwin and Broome. Singapore fell, 15 February and General MacArthur soon fled the Philippines. General Blamey, appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Army April 1942, urgently set about its reorganisation, addressing the need to improve morale, equipment, supplies and training and to more effectively integrate the militia and AIF. The Coral Sea Battle, May 1942 ended the Japanese plan to invade Port Moresby from the sea. Japanese submarine attacks in Sydney and Newcastle Harbours exacerbated widespread fears that Australia would be invaded. At Kokoda in September 1942 Japan's unrelenting overland thrust towards Port Moresby was decisively halted. Although Buna, Gona and Sanananda were in Allied hands by January 1943, the Japanese held fast to the Huon Peninsula.

Only when Milne Bay was established as a major Allied base, could Generals MacArthur and Blamey concentrate on secretive planning for a major offensive to drive the Japanese from New Guinea's east coast. Seasoned troops appropriately trained and equipped for beach landings and jungle warfare were essential. The AIF's 6th and 7th Divisions, returned from the Middle East in 1942, undertook rigorous jungle warfare training on Queensland's Atherton Tableland. The 9th Division, which had so recently earned General Montgomery's generous praise at El Alamein, arrived back in Australia early in April 1943. The 9th also trained on the Tableland and with US amphibious units, on beaches near Cairns. The battle-hardened 7th and 9th were destined to play crucial roles in the coming offensive.

Hart, bitter about defeat at Rabaul and the loss of so many comrades, felt powerfully driven to get back into the fighting as he chaffed at the bit in a base camp in mid-1943. Despite his injuries and with all the bravado of youth, he plotted his return. Confiding his foolhardy plan only to his older sister, Rosemary, on his 20th birthday he forged a leave pass, and the following day boarded a troop train at Central Station and headed north.

A DSR entry of 20 August 1943 reads, "He [Hart] absented himself without leave at 0730 hours on 29 July 1943 and he is still so absent. Deficiencies unknown". On 22 September, "warrant for arrest issued on charge of desertion" was added. With the warrant in hand, Military Police (MP) duly interviewed Hart's father who was the Stipendiary Magistrate at North Sydney Court House. He produced recent letters from his son, NX27038 with the AIF in New Guinea. The charge of "Desertion" was never again raised but the record with a line drawn beneath it remains extant. Other pages confirm that Hart served with the 2/24th Battalion in New Guinea from 9 August 1943.

3. Towards Milne Bay and the Huon Peninsula campaign

On the troop train Hart, fortuitously met a 9th Divvy soldier

who was also AWL. They shared a similar mission. Following the 9th Division's intensive training for the coming offensive, this Victorian soldier, whose name is unfortunately lost, had overstayed his pre-embarkation leave. Meantime his unit, the 2/24th Battalion, which he was anxious to rejoin without the intervention of MPs, had already shipped for Milne Bay. These two AWL soldiers henceforth stuck together until months later tragedy struck.

By devious means, the furtive duo arrived in Townsville, where they observed a troopship loading personnel and tanks, rumoured to be bound for Milne Bay. Daringly they scurried up the gangplank during a meal break when boarding pass checks were suspended. Shortly, the ship departed for Milne Bay. During the voyage, as stowaways, they were paraded before the senior officer of the Tank Corps, Major Sam Hordern. He demanded to know what they thought they were doing. Each told his story. Hordern, bemused, responded drily, "They'll be glad to have anybody for what lies ahead," or words to that affect. The Victorian was directed to rejoin his Unit accompanied by Hart who metamorphosed into NX27038 of the 9th Division's 26th Brigade, 2/24th Battalion on 9 August 1943 (DSR). Hart must have been the least trained infantryman in the 9th Division but he held his own for the next four months in the celebrated campaign which drove the Japanese from New Guinea's east coast and he was promoted, albeit to Lance Corporal, in December 1943 (DSR).

Milne Bay, when Hart and his mate arrived in August 1943, was a hub of pre-embarkation activity. The esteemed General Wootten who commanded the 9th Division was tasked, initially, to capture Lae and Finschhafen in conjunction with the 7th Division which was to be airlifted to the Markham Valley. His 26th Brigade's 23rd, 24th and 48th Battalions were part of a force of 7800 men loaded into the US 2nd Amphibious Brigade's LSTs and moved along the coast in a 'shore to shore' operation. Dexter describes, "ships formed in a formidable but inspiring sight, giving a feeling of confidence. ...Heading north from Buna the troops, seasoned but excited, cleaned their weapons and replaced their gear, while maps of the area east of Lae were issued to officers and sergeants".



Embarking after the fall of Lae for Scarlett Beach and Finschhafen (Hart on right)

On landing east of Lae the 9th was engaged in a series of desperate battles with tenacious Japanese Divisions. Dexter's official history of the New Guinea Offensive details each bloody encounter citing Brigade and Battalion. The 2/24th Battalion played its part in the capture of Lae which fell on 16 September. Wootten determinedly maintained the momentum stretching his troops to their limits.

The 26th Brigade, left the Lae area in amphibious craft, and stormed ashore again at Scarlet Beach on 21 September. Japanese snipers were ready for them. October was the Brigade's bloodiest month. With Finschhafen occupied on the 2 October, General Wootten instructions were to: "protect Finschhafen Harbour ... clear the remaining enemy

from the general Finschhafen area and gain the coast as far as Sio." . On 16 October, the heaviest Japanese assault against the precariously held beachhead was launched. Days of desperate offensive and defensive fighting followed. The AIF held Finschhafen. By 7 November scouts of the 2/24th and a Papuan Battalion set out on patrol to seek intelligence about the Sattelberg area. Heavily fortified by the Japanese, Sattelberg dominated the heights five miles inland from Scarlet Beach. The 26th Brigade, with reinforcements, was subsequently ordered to capture Sattelberg.



Hart with Papuan Scout, Sattelberg.

diers in such circumstances were accustomed to do. He stripped his enemy of information and possessions and duly reported the incident. The wallet, a trophy of war, contained a photo of a Japanese woman with a toddler. Hart never forgot that grim reminder of war's tragedies.

Worse was to come. When the roadblock at Jivevaneng had been stormed with the aid of Major Hordern's 1st Tank Battalion, the 2/48th with the 2/23rd and 2/24th on either flank, advanced towards Sattelberg, fighting every inch of the way. One morning just before Sattelberg's capture on 25 November, Hart's mate — they'd been together since teaming up on the troop train from Sydney - confided, "I've got a feeling I'm for it today". Sadly, he was right. Later in the day, he was hit by a sniper's well aimed bullet. He died in Hart's arms before nightfall. Sattelberg, where Sgt. Derrick of the Brigade's 2/48th Battalion won his VC, is regarded by historians as a turning point (Maitland: 81). Although there was plenty more stiff fighting ahead as the Japanese made determined attempts to regain the offensive, they were steadily forced into retreating at Sattelberg, thereafter fighting a rearguard action all the way through the formidable Cromwell Mountains and the swamps of the Mongi River Valley.



A 2/24th Briefing for the next stage of the campaign.

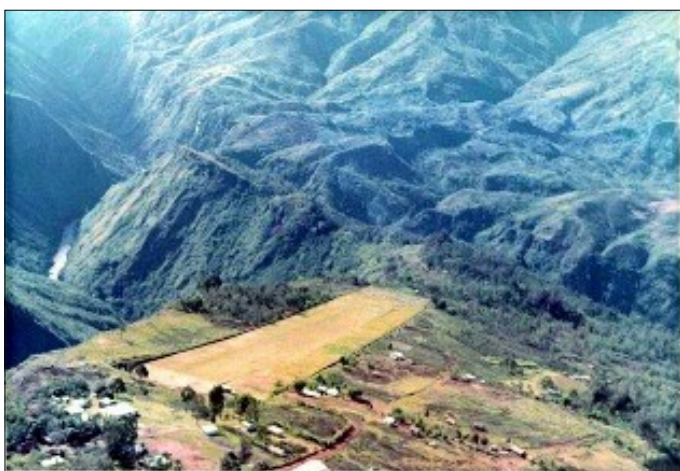
9th Division entered Sio on 15 January 1944 having suffered 1,000 casualties, including dead. "This marked the end of the 9th Division's war in New Guinea, and the end of its four month campaign — a campaign which, by its determined defences, aggressive attacks, and remorse pursuits had inflicted a severe defeat and approximately 7,000 casualties" .

Sio also marked the end of Hart's active service. He'd reversed the ignominy of the Rabaul defeat. With determination and good fortune he'd served creditably with a distinguished Battalion the

Australian army's successful offensive in New Guinea. but at a price. He was struck down with malaria on 3 February 1944 but able to return to the 2/24th two weeks later. With his Battalion he embarked at Moresby for home leave and recuperation on 2 Mar 1944.

At sea he was seized by severe kidney stones and evacuated to 112 Military Hospital when the ship reached Brisbane. He rejoined the 2/24th on 15nd June 1944. Soon his troublesome left shoulder resulted in him being Class B2. He was transferred to a Works Company, an inglorious end to his war service. His discharge of 4 February 1945 reads "By reason of his standard of medical fitness he cannot be suitably posted ..." (DSR). Not yet aged 22 years and 7 months he returned to his family at Cremorne and "civvv street".

The above was put together by John's wife, Jean, from Defence service Records, The National Archives and a number of different sources.



Omkalai Airstrip PNG, near Kundiawa, Chimbu District.
Approx 5,000 ft (1,500 m)
A really steep airstrip, with a 13.3% slope

In Flanders Fields

In most ceremonies of remembrance there is a reading of an appropriate poem designed to help the listener understand the experiences of service people and their relatives in war-time.

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*

The poem was written by a Canadian Medical Corps doctor, Major John McCrae, who was serving with a Field Artillery Brigade in Ypres. The death of one of his friends in May 1915, buried in the cemetery outside his dressing station, affected him severely and he wrote his poem as a way of expressing his anguish at the loss. He was dissatisfied with the poem when he finished it and threw it away, but one of his fellow officers retrieved it and was so moved that he sent it to the media in London, where it was published by Punch on 8 De-



ember 1915. Its simple but evocative encapsulation of the horror of the trenches has made it the most famous of the war poems. Col. McCrae died on 28 Jan 1918 of Pneumonia and Cerebral Meningitis.

Army Website—Our History.

While stitching a cut on the hand of a 75 year old farmer, whose hand was caught in the squeeze gate while working cattle, the doctor struck up a conversation with the old man.

Eventually the topic got around to politicians and their role as our leaders.

The old farmer said, "Well, as I see it, most politicians are 'Post Turtles'."

Not being familiar with the term, the doctor asked him what a 'post turtle' was.

The old rancher said, "When you're driving down a country road and you come across a fence post with a turtle balanced on top, that's a post turtle."

The old farmer saw the puzzled look on the doctor's face so he continued to explain. "You know he didn't get up there by himself, he doesn't belong up there, he doesn't know what to do while he's up there, he's elevated beyond his ability to function, and you just wonder what kind of dumb arse put him up there to begin with."

Best explanation of a politician I've ever heard

AMBUSH & OPERATION PERTH

By Sam Bush – ACA QLD

This is a story of how we survived the night our Platoon of 30 from Delta Cdo Coy, 4 Cdo was ambushed by approx 300 Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. This is from my own recollections on what happened.

In July 2006, I was the lead driver in a vehicle patrol tasked with covering the withdrawal of a Canadian Special Operations Forces (CANSOF) team by CH47 Chinook during a village raid to capture a top Taliban leader. The mission was supposed to be simple for us, with intelligence reports suggesting there would be only a couple of Taliban bodyguards in the area. But as the Canadians left via the Chinook, our platoon came under heavy fire. We found ourselves hunkered down in a compound fighting for our lives like James Bowie, Davey Crockett and the Texans at the Alamo.

Unbeknown to us, every Taliban Commander in the district was meeting in the village that night, each bringing their own fighters and bodyguards for protection#. Surrounded on all sides in the compound, a US Air Force AC-130 gunship also commonly known as "Spooky or Spectre" was monitoring the situation above, counting as many as 300 heat signatures converging on our Platoon's location. The Gunship crew were relaying information to our Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) of group after group after group of fighters, they were all coming together and coming for us. The AC130 unleashed its powerful 25mm Cannon, 40mm Bofors Gun and 105mm Howitzer until it ran out of ammunition+, raining hell on the Taliban below as we tried to fight our way out. With the Gunship being forced back to base as dawn broke and an F-16 fighter jet at least 15 minutes away, we were in a serious situation and we were left with no close air support (CAS). Getting pounded on all sides



Sam, 2nd from right, with other members of his team with their SRV in Afghanistan in 2006. An MK-19 is mounted on the vehicle.

by AK-47 fire and rocket propelled grenades (RPG), we slugged it out for the next eight to 10 hours.

We were lucky we had our cut down and modified Land Rovers with us, which had extra ammunition on board as well having .50cal Machine Guns, 40mm Mk19 Automatic Grenade Launchers, 66mm SRAAW and 84mm Carl Gustav's, which I fired as many as 20 rounds and used up all of my frag grenades in what was now the fight of our lives. We eventually were able to get out of the compound but we got bunched into a little circle where I tried to punch out in my car through the gap.

As I got on to the road, I could see off to my right there were two men set up with a machine gun and they basically opened fire on our vehicle. Spotting a tree nearby, I veered left, pulling up behind it. Exposing my own side directly to enemy fire, my co-driver and passengers were able to leap out and take cover behind the vehicle. I dived out and took cover behind a tree in a ditch. I rolled out of the side with my weapon. I could see tracer going across and ping the side of the vehicle, and I remember sitting there thinking, one of these guys is just going to walk up over the top and kill me. I thought, 'this is some serious shit'.

When they stopped firing, I neutralised those threats at which point we made sure that we were all good, jumped back in our seats and kept moving firing our 50 Cals and Mk19s until we made a break for it back to base. It's relatively easy to remain focused in situations like that. We trained to such levels and repeat it hundreds if not thousands of times that when it occurs for real it becomes almost automatic, muscle memory. Because I had a head wound, I was bleeding profusely but I didn't realise at the time how bad it was. The wound was from a bullet fragment, a telling reminder of just how lucky I was to survive. We only suffered minor injuries, and we survived without taking a single serious casualty requiring AME. An estimated 100 Taliban fighters were killed that night.

I broke my back in the middle of Operation Perth but remained with the Platoon until the end of the Operation dosed up on pain meds. When I got back to our Base at Tarin Kowt and the meds wore off, I couldn't walk, so I had an MRI and they revealed the damage to my vertebrae and sent me back home to Australia. I spent the next 6-12 months training to get back to Med Class 2 so I could deploy again, I got to Med Class 2 in about Feb/Mar 2007. It was a conversation with my now wife that led me to put my discharge papers in for June 2007 and eventually made my way to Tropical North Queensland.

Most if not all Taliban Commanders moved around with a bodyguard team 24/7. Depending on the importance of the Commander (or the more money he had) the bigger the team became. It was not uncommon for them to have 5-6 man teams and sometimes up 15-20.

**This is known as going "Winchester". An AC130 running out of ammunition is a serious situation as this means there is more enemy fighters fighting you than the AC130 can carry ammunition.*

COMMANDO NEWS~ Edition 17, 2019

Battle of Fromelles, 19th/20th July 1916

The 19th July 2021 was the 105th Anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles on the Western Front. Fromelles is situated in France near the Belgian Border just south of Ypres.

It was the First battle undertaken by Australian Troops on the Western Front – WW1.

It was carried out by the, 8th - 14th & 15th Bde's of the Aust 5th Div & on their Right, the British 61st Div. – (raw Territorial troops)

Fromelles was planned by the British as a Diversionary Attack to convince the Germans not to move troops south to the Somme where the British & French had started a major push on the 1st July.

By the 19th July the cream of the British Army had sustained massive Casualties of 80,000, on the Somme around the Pozieres area with little to show for it.

A British General, LTGEN Richard Hacking planned the attack at Fromelles. This was unfortunate for the Australians, as he had planned a previous attack at Fromelles with British troops the year before with disastrous results & very heavy casualties.

After the attack the year before, the Germans spent the period improving & fortifying their Defences with underground Bunkers, with O/Head protective cover from Artillery. They had a clear view of the Australian Front line and an excellent observation of the battlefield from the Church Spire in the Village of Fromelles. The Germans also had the Australian Front line & supporting areas well ranged by their Artillery & Mortars. They had about 9 months practice.

The attack started with Artillery Bombardments at 11.00 AM & at 6.00 PM the troops advanced, with 8th Bde 31st & 32nd Bn's leading the attack on the left with the 54th & 53rd Bn's of 14th Bde on their right. These two Brigades had to cross about 100 yds in front, of the 31st & 32nd Bns, & up to 250 yds in front of the 54th & 53rd Bns. But, the 15th Bde on the extreme Right had to cross about 400 yds of clear open ground to reach the German Front Lines. The 15th Brigade's two leading Battalions were almost wiped out in "No Mans Land" by heavy machine gun fire, & were unable to penetrate the German Front Line.

The 31st & 32nd - & 54th & 53rd Bns although, taking heavy casualties, over-ran the German front line & managed to hold it against Heavy German Artillery Barrages, & Counter Attacks by the Germans until about 6.30 AM on the following

morning when they were forced to retire due to lack of ammunition & reinforcements.

The attack was over in 18 hours but wounded were still trying to crawl back & diggers going out to try to rescue them for many hours after.

Roll call after the Battle recorded a total of 5,533 casualties by the 5th Division. This was the highest casualties sustained by any Div. within a 24 hour period in the British army during WW1 & the highest in Aust Military History. (The dead bodies of Australians lay in "No Man's Land" Fromelles for the duration of the war & the unidentified buried in



Men of the 53rd Battalion waiting to don their equipment for the attack at Fromelles. Only three of the men shown here came out of the action alive, and those three were wounded

groups of 10 at VC Corner Cemetery after 1918).

However due to the high casualties, the Battle was basically kept a secret, and as the Aust. 1st – 2nd & 4th Divisions entered the Battle of the Somme on the 23rd July capturing Poziers & the high ground of the “Windmill” behind it, with a Casualty high of 23,000, the Battle of Fromelles was forgotten, & became part of the British Somme offensive. The British never ever regarded Fromelles as a Battle & is not recognised as such to this Day. We Australians regard it as a Battle, & 31st Bn being the only Unit of the WW1 – 5th Div still operational & on strength in the ADF, will continue to recognise it & commemorate the Diggers who died there.

Lambis Englezos AM

In the late 1990’s a Greek born, Arts Teacher & amateur War Historian from Melbourne started taking an interest in the Battle of Fromelles as he had interviewed old WW1 Diggers of the Victorian 15th Brigade living nearby in Melbourne. He became convinced after reading Corfield’s Book on Fromelles “Don’t forget me Cobber” that there were approx. 250 missing Diggers unaccounted for. Lambis was on a mission. After research of German Aerial Photographs & a visit to Germany to inspect German War records, he identified that a probable Burial site was an area astride “Pheasant Wood” & he requested authorities to investigate the site, but they weren’t interested. However, due to his drive & persistence, it wasn’t until 2007, that an Archaeological team found evidence of Australian & British Badges on the site. This proved to be enough evidence to make a dig. It wasn’t until 2009 that the dig was made & bodies recovered.

Due to modern DNA, bodies were identified and a new cemetery named Pheasant Wood Cemetery was established. More bodies are being identified and their graves noted, last year 6 were identified, (2 being 31st Bn men). There will be further bodies identified and graves noted.

Since Lambis’s discovery, new books have been written, a new cemetery established, and a new museum built in Fromelles. In 2009, Lambis was recognised for his outstanding service and exceptional achievement, and awarded a member of the Order of Australia, AM. Lambis is continuing his search for burial grounds of unaccounted missing soldiers, in various WW1 battle fields. Australia owes a great deal to this man.

TONY WADESON (Secretary 31st Bn Association – Brisbane)

[My luck is like a bald guy who just won a comb.](#)

WW2 GERMAN MINE WASHED UP ON BEACH AT SURFERS PARADISE, QLD

In March 1966, a WW2 German Mine washed up on the beach at Surfers Paradise in south east Queensland.



RAN Lieutenant Commander B. Hamill chipping barnacles from the mine with a screw driver

Houses in the Elkhorn Ave and Cavill Avenue areas were evacuated. About 20,000 spectators watched bomb disposal experts hoist the mine up onto a sled. The mine was packed with 340 kgs of explosives. The sled was then

towed to the northern end of the Southport Spit where the explosives were removed from the mine and burnt on the spot .

Peter Dunn Australia @ War.

The untold story of the daring NZ SAS mission to rescue UN personnel in West Timor

Rob Hitchings, 6 Sep 2020

It was 20 years ago today that a small SAS detachment from the New Zealand Defence Force took part in a daring mission to safely remove dozens of United Nations personnel from hostile territory in West Timor. And their reward? Coca-Cola and chocolate bars. In his own words, Lieutenant Colonel Rob Hitchings, New Zealand’s Chief of Staff on the Brigade HQ in East Timor at the time, recalls the planning and execution of the risky mission.

Background

The tracking team used had been brought in from New Zealand a month earlier to help the battalion that was operating on the border with West Timor, Indonesia, as part of the UN intervention, following the 1999 independence referendum.

The SAS were there to help find militia elements that had been infiltrating across the border into East Timor (now Timor-Leste). The same militia that had been responsible for the death of New Zealand soldier Private Leonard Manning on July 24, 2000. A Nepalese soldier, Private Devi Ram Jaisi, was also killed and three other Nepalese soldiers were wounded by the militia on August 10.

Militia groups were responsible for violence and intimidation in East Timor leading up to, and immediately after, the vote for independence on August 30, 1999. The results were announced five days later. The militia rejected the results and were violently opposed to the subsequent democratic processes taking place in East Timor, as well as the presence of UN forces.

The militia groups were East Timorese who maintained links with the Indonesian security forces and authorities in West Timor, and exercised significant control over the East Timorese refugees in camps there. They saw the UN as an international military force that had stolen East Timor from Indonesia, not an impartial humanitarian organisation.

The tensions

In the days leading up to 6 Sep, tension had been mounting in West Timor, including with the militia, those East Timorese refugees who wanted to be repatriated back to East Timor, and the international agencies there to support refugees.

Retribution continued on 6 Sep when three UNHCR staff in Atambua were killed by the Laksaur militia group. A number of others were wounded. A later UN investigation revealed that the militia mob broke into the UN compound and “shot the three UN workers to death, bundled the bodies into a car and then the car was set on fire”.

Conditions were deteriorating quickly across the border, and the lives of UN staff and local workers in Atambua were at significant risk.

Brigadier Lewis asked for Australian forces to be used but authorisation was only to come later the next day. Disappointed that modern military equipment and military forces closer to the hostage scene could not be used, but with pragmatic leadership instincts and recognising the urgency of the situation, Lewis called upon the Kiwis of his brigade to tackle the risky rescue.

In optimistic anticipation of New Zealand Government approval, relevant Kiwi forces (the tracking team, the three RNZAF helicopters and Acting Battalion Commander Major Lyndon Blanchard) were told to prepare for the rescue.

Approvals took about two hours to achieve; something extraordinary in the usually hierarchical political-military environment.



SAS tracking team commander, Captain Steve Guiney, making UN staff collection arrangements with Indonesian officers

The rescue

Blanchard and his battalion staff planned to start the rescue on the morning of 6 Sep.

The SAS tracking team received a hurried briefing from Guiney, as they were driving to the helicopters.

Going into the unknown, Guiney ordered they go fully combat-kitted with all gear, including rocket launchers.

At 5.02pm the rescue started, with the liftoff of the three Iroquois from Suai, under the command of Squadron Leader Mark Cook. They carried the 10-strong tracking team.

At 5.17pm the rescue team crossed the border into Indonesian airspace and West Timor.

In the spirit of Anzac mateship, Commanding Officer of the Australian Battalion Lieutenant Colonel Mick Moon advised Blanchard that in the event of a life-threatening emergency on the ground in Atambua then he would be ready to send in one of his companies of mechanised infantry (in ASLAVs with 25mm cannons) to help.

That simple gesture highlighted the "will do" attitude of the Aussies, and the enormously strong relationship built between the Australian 6 RAR Battalion and the Kiwis.

On landing, the SAS team found that the TNI had set up a small perimeter where the UN staff and workers were being held. Some militia mingled with the crowds, observing.

Aiming not to stoke tensions, Guiney instructed his team to place their weapons to their sides, an unthreatening posture – but at full alert in case of aggression. The SAS formed a triangular defence.

Guiney approached a knot of TNI officers.

The Indonesian officers were not angry with the Kiwis but were very stressed with the general situation and the uncertainty of militia actions.

Guiney insisted on seeing the hostages and discovered some walking wounded.

"They were petrified and still in shock at the loss of their colleagues."

With the help of cautious Indonesian soldiers, the SAS assembled the hostages into helicopter "packets" ready for loading. One worker was badly wounded.

A pre-determined codeword was relayed back to the helicopters to return for extraction.

The helicopters returned, evacuating 43 hostages in two "taps", or lifts, with one tracking team member as security in each helicopter.

Just before 6pm all personnel, including the trackers were heading back to Fort Balibo and the Australian casualty

evacuation point. By last light all were safely back on the East Timor side of the border.

On return to Suai the rescue force was met by Brigadier Duncan Lewis who congratulated them on a job well done.

As the deployment area was an alcohol-dry mission, Lewis presented them with an uncharacteristic tray of Coca-Cola and chocolate bars.

The following day the TNI delivered the bodies of the three UN staff, plus another 49 other UN staff and NGOs by road to the border with the Australians.

The courage and high standards shown by New Zealand personnel involved in the operation were highly praised. The acting Chief of the Australian Defence Force, Lieutenant General Mueller, paid tribute to "the rapid response and concise execution of this sensitive and difficult task".

It was hastily planned, executed against the odds, literally into enemy territory (they had no real out if the Iroquois had broken down or the SAS were captured), with the ADF unable to do it, yet closer and better equipped; approved at the highest level in next to no time and with typically the NZ "give it a go" approach.

Newzealandonlinenews.co.nz

I found that I have been happier since I changed from coffee to orange juice. My doctor advised that it is the vitamin C and natural sugars..... but I really think that it is the Vodka.

Richard Kelliher VC

Richard Kelliher (1910-1963), soldier and gardener, was born on 1 September 1910 at Ballybranagh, near Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland, son of Michael Kelliher, labourer, and his wife Mary Anne, née Talbot. Dick attended technical college at Tralee and worked as a mechanic in his brother's garage. In 1929 he emigrated to Brisbane with his 15-year-old sister Norah. She later said that, although he was good natured and 'not a very big fellow', he 'wouldn't take it if anyone were nasty'. During the Depression he worked at a variety of jobs: he was sacristan at St Stephen's Cathedral before moving to the country where he was employed as a farmhand. Sickness dogged him, and he contracted typhoid and meningitis.

Enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force on 21 February 1941, Kelliher sailed for the Middle East and was assigned to the 2/25th Battalion in October. He performed garrison duties in Syria and returned to Australia in March 1942. Six months later he was with his unit in Papua, helping to drive the Japanese from Ioribaiwa to Gona. Back home from January 1943, he was admitted to hospital with malaria in June. He was again sent to Papua in August. Next month he was based at Nadzab, New Guinea, whence the 2/25th advanced towards Lae.



On 13 September, near Heath's plantation, Kelliher's platoon came under heavy fire from a concealed Japanese machine-gun post. Five men were killed and three wounded, among them the section leader Corporal Billy Richards. On his own initiative, Kelliher dashed towards the post, hurled two grenades at the enemy and killed some of them, but was forced back to his

own lines. Seizing a Bren-gun, he ran to within 30 yards (27 m) of the machine-gun nest and silenced it with accurate shooting. He then crawled out under enemy rifle-fire and dragged Richards to safety, probably saving his life. Kelliher was awarded the Victoria Cross.

After further spells in hospital with malaria, he was sent to Brisbane in November and posted to the 11th Australian Advanced Workshop next month. He took part in his old battalion's march through the city on 8 August 1944 and was discharged from the A.I.F. on 20 August 1945. In 1946 he was selected in the Australian contingent for the victory parade in London. King George VI presented him with his V.C.; the Kelliher family from County Kerry attended the investiture. Kelliher returned to London in 1953 for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and in 1956 for the V.C. centenary celebrations. On each occasion he visited Tralee.

At Epworth Lodge, Bowen Hills, Brisbane, on 30 August 1949 Kelliher married Olive Margaret Hearn, a 19-year-old machinist. They moved to Melbourne where he worked as a gardener. He died of cerebral thrombosis on 28 January 1963 in the Repatriation General Hospital, Heidelberg, and was buried in Springvale cemetery with Catholic rites and military honours; his wife, son and two daughters survived him. Olive remarried. In 1966 she sold Kelliher's V.C. and campaign medals to his Battalion Association which donated them to the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

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Ed Note. In 1965 the site where Kelliher won his VC was used by PNGVR to test NCO's in tactical subjects for appointment as Lieutenants and for Lieutenants being examined for the rank of Captain. I was one of those doing Subject B for First Appointment and as a Platoon Commander had to carry out a Platoon attack on the very same small overgrown feature. Given the dense vegetation and fields of fire covering the approaches over which Kelliher attacked the position on three separate occasions he certainly deserved his VC.

At a wedding party recently someone yelled
"All married people please stand next to the one who has
made your life worth living."
The bartender was almost crushed to death.....

Lest we forget 12 CE Works

By Dr KEVIN PAMBA

By the time the Royal Australian Engineers (RAE) team of the Australian Army left Mendi, Southern Highlands in 1999 most parts of the former SHP (before Hela was created out of its western end in 2012) were connected by basic roads and outlying areas had airstrips.

The RAE is an engineering corps of the Australian Army. Its (RAE) members were deployed as a unit of engineers to Mendi in 1970 to run the Provincial Works Division. They were previously based in Popondetta, Northern Province and had been in various parts of PNG since 1963. The unit moved to Mendi under the leadership of Officer Commanding, Major IM Wells.

The RAE Association of Victoria noted the following about the contingent in Mendi in its December 2017 magazine: "Nation building tasks continued at an impressive rate and more name changes occurred (when they moved to Mendi): District (District Engineers Office (1972-76), Provincial Engineers Office – Mendi (1976 – 78) and finally 12 CE Works (1978 – 2003). PNG's Independence occurred in 1975. 12 CE Works celebrated its silver jubilee between Sept 15 and 20, 1988. 12 CE Works (of Mendi) was awarded an Institute of Engineers Australia Excellence Award."

The Australian colonial administration deployed the 12 CE Works team to Mendi under its defence cooperation to help

open up the frontier province through an elaborate public works programme – build roads, bridges, airstrips, schools, health centres and aid posts, government offices and public service housing, provide electricity supply and manage and service government vehicle fleet.

Among the landmark infrastructure that the 12 CE team built was the Mendi School of Nursing and the provincial government headquarters which was burnt down in the wake of the 1997 national election disputes over the position of provincial governor. The seven-storey Agiru Centre was built by the provincial government afterwards to replace the one that was burnt down.

Mark Dando, an RAE officer who served in Mendi from August 1978 to December 1980 posted online the following recollection of his time with the 12 CE: "The unit built schools, government buildings and built and maintained roads.

"The transport and vehicle workshops were managed by five (Australian) army personnel with a local staff of approximately 70. The unit numbered 21 (RAE officers) and controlled a staff of up to 200 full time and casual locals.

"Our families came with us with the exception of children above grade five who had to attend boarding school in Australia. There were no supermarkets or little shops in the town of Mendi. The nearest supermarket was 155 km away at Mt Hagen (gravel road). "The RAAF (planes) would bring in supplies from time to time.

"Power was intermittent and most of us purchased 2.5 KVA generators to ensure refrigeration and lighting," wrote RAE veteran Dando.

He continued: "As a Transport Corps Officer (Captain), I was responsible to a major (senior officer) for two workshops and a fleet of vehicles ranging from motor cycles to bulldozers and this included the government vehicles (PTB) for the province. "The major (senior officer) was responsible for millions of dollars.

"Probably the most challenging army posting for the majority of those who served in 12 CE Works. The officer commanding (two in my term) of the 12 CE in Mendi both received an MBE and deservedly so, however the rest of us did our job and it would be nice to receive the same recognition as those who came before us," said veteran Dando.

Ross Eastgate in a column published in the Townsville Bulletin last year made the following remarks about the 12 CE in Mendi:

"The sappers built and maintained roads and bridges throughout the province (SHP) as well as providing essential town services like power and water they and their families required to survive in this remote locality. "Initially they built their own married quarters as well as the offices and buildings from which they worked.

"They also built and maintained provincial facilities such as health clinics. "Road access to Mt Hagen and the nearest port Lae was limited so they often required RAAF heavy airlift support to deliver essential supplies. "The army provided family medical kits so health needs were self-diagnosed and treated. "Serious health issues required aero-medical evacuation. "Wives too, particularly those who were nurses and teachers performed vital community functions. "An important role was training locals to be able to assume 12 CE Works roles when inevitably the unit would be returned to Australia in 1999."

In January this year my father, Simon Papu who worked under the leadership of the 12 CE team building and maintaining roads in SHP from 1971 to 1983, spoke of how disciplined and work-conscious the Australian soldiers were.

On Jan 4 I drove from Ialibu to Kagua, a road initially built by the 12 CE in the 1970s. Upon my return, I asked my Dad when he and his 12 CE superiors along with the PNG contingent



Eastern command band marching up the Main Street of Mendi in the mid 1980s at the ceremony to celebrate granting of the keys to the town of Mendi to 12 CE Works.

finished constructing this road in the 1970s. "We worked hard through mud and rain and reached Kagua station in 1976," Dad replied. "We worked long hours trying to get the road to Kagua from lalibu and completed it in 1976.

"When we reached Kagua station, my boss Dougie Fadden (an RAE officer) promoted me to Mendi in 1977 so I was not involved in building the rest of the road from Kagua to Erave," said my Dad. Dad started out with the 12 CE in Mendi as a plant operator driving dump trucks, bulldozers, graders and front-end loaders belonging to

the Department of Works that were managed by the 12 CE team. He was recruited by the 12 CE after he left employment with pioneer kiap and politician-turned-businessman Ronald Neville.

He was promoted as a roads foreman and posted to the construction site of the Mendi to Tari section of the Highlands Highway when construction was near Det in Poroma in 1977. His stint on the Mendi-Tari road construction was short-lived as he was transferred to lalibu in 1978 to be maintenance foreman looking after the Kaguel River to Kirene section of the Highlands Highway. The Highlands Highway construction though reached Tari in 1983.

What the RAE team in Mendi achieved in SHP between 1970 and 1999 was a least heralded civic work programme involving hundreds of millions of kina achieved by members of the Australian service personnel on PNG soil during peacetime.

In its own right, the RAE posting in SHP was a major engagement of members of the Australian Army anywhere in PNG outside of the World War 2 years.

Everything we need to know, we can learn from Noah's Ark:

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
4. Stay fit. When you're 60 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to critics...just get on with the job that needs to be done.
6. Build your future on high ground.
7. For safety sake, travel in pairs
8. Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
9. When you're stressed, float awhile.
10. Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs...the Titanic was built by professionals.
11. No matter the storm, there's always a rainbow waiting.

As ANZAC Day was commemorated in parts of Papua New Guinea yesterday, some of us remembered the many generations of RAE officers who served in SHP with their PNG civilian compatriots to build and maintain critical public infrastructure from 1970 to 1999.

The Battle of Finschhafen

The initial attack on Finschhafen was carried out at very short notice by the Australian 20th Brigade, which had taken part in the amphibious landings east of Lae.

A beach north of Finschhafen, but south of the Song River was chosen for the landing site. It was given the codename Scarlet Beach.

The plan was for the 2/17th Battalion to land on the right and the 2/13th on the left, with all troops close to the main beach. The actual landing, early on 22 September was somewhat chaotic, with the two battalions intermingled and the troops spread out from the northern part of Scarlet Beach down almost to Arndt Point on the southern end.

The landing was preceded by an 11 minute bombardment from five destroyers, Japanese resistance to the landings was limited, with most resistance coming from the area of the Song River to the north of the landing area. There were still Japanese troops on the main beach when the second wave landed. The assault was aided by heavy machine gun fire from the L.C.'s carrying the second wave, and this meant that the beach defences had largely been abandoned when the third wave finally landed on the correct beach. The beach area was soon secured. The Japanese put up more of a fight just to the south, but retreated before the final Australian attack at 3.15pm. By the end of the day the Australians had successfully captured all of their objectives, and had reached as far south as Heldsbach, about a mile to the south. By the end of the day 5,300 troops, 180 vehicles, 32 guns and 850 tons of stores had been landed. Captured documents showed that there had been 300-400 Japanese troops around Scarlet Beach.

The Australians found key documents in the town that revealed the Japanese order of battle, and their determination to hold the area. This convinced Barbey to change his mind (presumably there was also pressure from further up the chain of command).

The Australian 24th Brigade was shipped to Finschhafen, followed by the HQ of the Australian 9th Division (General Wooten). At the same time General Herring's 1st Corps was replaced by General Morshead's 2nd Corps (although the fighting units remained the same). More Australian troops, from the 22nd Battalion, were approaching Finschhafen along the coast from Lae.

The Japanese Counterattack by the 79th and 80th regiments began on 16 October with an amphibious assault on Scarlet Beach aided by Naval bombardment and air assaults.

Approximately 7 Japanese landing barges loaded with infantry attempted the landing. Only about 4 Japanese soldiers got past the Australians. The Japanese naval attack was a total failure. At 3.15 am on that same morning the Japanese had launched an air assault that did little damage.



A machine team from the 2/2nd Bn at Scarlet Beach Oct 1943.

The 79th Japanese Regiment (1,500 men) pushed from west of the beach and was able to force its way past the a small contingent of the 2/3rd Australian Pioneer Battalion, from there they began to threaten the southern end of scarlet beach. They were met by the Australian 20th Brigade who repulsed the first attack.

After a brief pause the Japanese second counter at-

tack was launched on 17 October, the 79th actually reached the coast at Siki Cove, at the southern end of Scarlet Beach. The 79th Regiment, also held the high ground only a couple of miles from the beach.

On 19 October the Australians were able to force the Japanese off the high ground west of the beach around Katika, attacking from the north and catching the Japanese force by surprise. This forced the troops at Siki Cove to retreat, enabling Australian units to reunite on the Australian beachhead. On 23 October an American engineer battalion landed at Langemak Bay to begin work on new airfields. By 28 October the main Japanese forces had been driven back to Sattelberg and Wareo, although they maintained a presence around Jivevaneng.

The failure of the Japanese counterattack meant that Finschhafen was now secure. The Australian 26th Brigade arrived in time to take part in the next part of the campaign, the attack on the Japanese positions at Sattelberg.

It took three Australian brigades another two months of heavy fighting to clear the area around Finschhafen, Sattelberg and Wareo. Their next major advance around the coast didn't come until January 1945, when US troops landed at Saidor, west of the Japanese base at Sio. In the aftermath of this landing the Japanese decided to retreat west, and the Australians were able to advance along the coast, eventually joining up with the American beachhead.

The casualties during the campaign. The Japanese suffered about 10,300 casualties, of which 2,722 were dead. The Australians bore the brunt of the fighting on the Allied side, with 500 dead and 1,300 wounded, while the Americans lost 81 dead and 396 wounded.

Laurence Tilley, Australian Military History.

Ed. Note. Lt Frank Wilson, formerly NGVR, took part in this landing and was wounded attacking a hill over the Song River



A9-700 flying over Sydney harbour. It was the last Aussie built Beaufort ahead of production schedule in 1944,

A new and easy self-test for COVID-19 . . . it's simple, quick and positive (or negative, if you know what I mean). Take a glass and pour a decent dram of your favourite alcohol beverage into it; then see if you can smell it. If you can, then you are halfway there.
Then drink it. If you can taste it, then it is reasonable to assume you are currently free of the virus because the loss of the sense of smell and taste are common symptoms. I tested myself 7 times last night and was virus free every time - thank goodness!
I will have to test myself again today because I have developed a throbbing headache, which can also be one of the symptoms

Only air to air victory achieved by a Wirraway

During WWII, the CAC CA-5 Wirraway was employed by the RAAF as a training aircraft. On the 26th of December 1942, one Australian pilot achieved the remarkable feat of shooting down another aircraft – making it the only known air to air victory in a CAC Wirraway. This was an amazing feat as the Wirraway advanced trainer was not intended to be a frontline combat aircraft.

On the 26th of December 1942, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Pilot Officer John S. (Jack) Archer with crewman Sergeant J.L. (Les) Coulston of No. 4 Army Co-Operation Squadron were flying this CAC CA-5 Wirraway Mk.II (serial number A20-103) on a reconnaissance flight over a Japanese ship wreck near Buna, New Guinea, when they spotted and dived on what was reported as a Japanese Zero/Zeke fighter 1,000 feet below. With machine guns blazing and against all odds he shot it down!

His five second burst of machine gun fire saw the Japanese aircraft plummet into the water and burst into flames – the victory was confirmed by 3 sources that day (the crew along with personnel from Australian Army 2/14th and 2/16th Battalions). Archer and Coulston completed their reconnaissance mission after this incident, and the body of the Japanese pilot was later recovered – it was discovered that he had been shot through the head when his fighter came under attack.

Archer achieved the only known air to air victory in a CAC Wirraway. A post war investigation revealed that the aircraft shot down was actually a Nakajima Ki-43-II Hayabusa (“Peregrine Falcon”) or Oscar as the Allies called it, of the Imperial Japanese Army Air Force 11th Sentai, rather than an Imperial Japanese Navy Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero/Zeke. The mistake is understandable as back then everything was probably reported as a Zero!

David Joe Barnett. Australian Military History



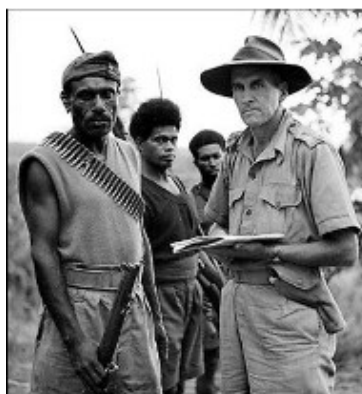
Pilot Officer John S (Jack) Archer and Sergeant J L (Les) Coulston seated in No. 4 Squadron, RAAF, Wirraway A20-103 8 Jan., 1943

**Sgt-Major Katue
Regt No. PN 4, Papuan Infantry Battalion**

Sgt Katue had been wounded and left behind during the initial withdrawal from the coast after the Japanese landed at Buna in Papua to commence their thrust across what would be known as the Kokoda Trail.

Weeks later, to rejoin his old unit, he began quietly shadowing the fighting Japanese over the Kokoda Track.

He emerged from the bush months after he'd last been seen & presented souvenirs to his officer: insignia and badges of over 26 Japanese officers and NCOs he had killed on the way.



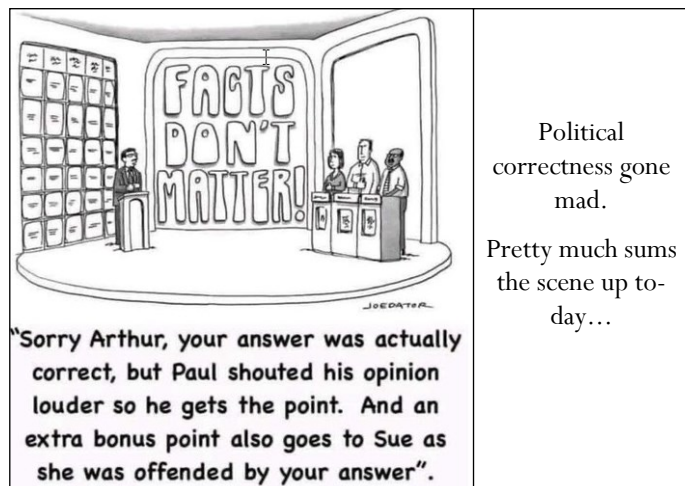
Capt. Tom Grahamslaw, ANGAU, with Sgt-Major Katue, PIB.

He was later awarded the Military Medal. His citation reads “During the night of 22-23 July, 1942, at great personal risk and alone, this native non-commissioned officer penetrated to the rear of the enemy lines for a distance of several miles and returned to his Headquarters with valuable information of the enemy strength and

dispositions, thereby enabling his unit to take up a strategic position and greatly retard the enemy advance. This non-commissioned officer repeated his feat again on 26 July and 27 July. 1942."

His actions on 22-23 July, were at Sangara Plantation, near Buna, and resulted in an ambush of Japanese forces on 23 July, after which the ambushing forces slipped across the Kumusi River at Wairopi. His actions on 26 and 27 July were at Oivi and Deniki.

Source. *To Find a Path.*



Canberra Association member Michael White has commenced a website www.anmef.com.au on which many individuals histories are told.. Many of these men had interesting histories and this is one of them.

WILLIAM MARTIN WILKIN, 426

William Wilkin was born in Witchford, Isle of Eley, England On 17 July 1885. The son of Martin and Sarah Jane, nee Langford. He had two older sisters, Emily and Matilda and an older brother Thomas Edward.

William, his sister Matilda, her husband and their son all migrated to Australia in 1911, aboard the *Geelong* which sailed from London on 28/12/1911.

He enlisted in the AN&MEF on 11th August 1914 and on his attestation papers he listed himself as a farmer and that he had previously served in the Bedfordshire Imperial Yeomanry and served for 4 years. (The B I Y had been re-raised in 1901 for the Second Boer War.). He is listed as being 6 foot in height, weighing 180 lbs, of dark complexion, hazel eyes and dark hair. He listed his mother, Jane Wilkin of Stirtloe Farm, Hants, England, as his next of kin.

William Wilkin was attached to C Coy and served from 11/8/1914 to 4/3/1915 a total of 206 days in the AN&MEF.

On 25 June 1915 he enlisted in the AIF was assigned a new service number, 1115, and attached to 12 company, 3rd AN-ZAC Battalion, Imperial Camel Corp. He was later transferred to the 15th Light Horse on the disbandment of the Camel Corps.

He served in the Middle East for the duration of the war, rising through the ranks. On 25 February 1918 he was appointed Company Sergeant Major (CSM) (Warrant Officer Class 2) and on 30th June of the same year promoted to Staff Sergeant Major (SSM). SSM was a fairly unusual rank used where a NCO was promoted to a Warrant Officer Class 1, but was not a Regimental Sergeant Major, as was usual for a person with this rank.

In 1918 he was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM). The recommendation for the DCM reads:

"No. 1115 Sergeant (acting Company Sergeant-Major) William Martin Wilkin, 3rd (Anzac Battalion, Imperial Camel Brigade.

This non-commissioned officer, since the formation of this unit has never failed both in the Field and in Camp to show great devotion to duty and quiet bravery on all occasions. His example at the actions of MAGHARA, MAGDABA, RAFA, GAZA and KHUWEILFEH, (November 6th and 7th) of bravery and devotion to duty was of the highest order. His loyalty in action and under fire in backing up his company Commander has always been very valuable."

He returned to Australia aboard the *Port Sydney* and was discharged on 13 June 1919.

On 24 September 1920 he re-enlisted in the AN&MEF, service number 1449, and sailed for Rabaul aboard the *MELUSIA*, departing Sydney on 6 October 1920. He was given the rank of Honorary Corporal and appointed Policemaster in Rabaul.

On 9 May 1921, the Military transferred control to the Civil Administration where upon William was discharged from the Army and became a Patrol Officer within the Civil Administration.

His time with the Civil Administration was colourful. In 1924, whilst at Aitape in the Sepik he was charged with having been guilty of disgraceful and improper conduct, in that he did,

- "(1) during the month of September 1923, ordered certain native women to be brought to him for immoral purposes,
- (2) between the 9th May 1921 and the 31st July 1923, trafficked in Birds of Paradise, well knowing same to be contrary to the Birds and Animal Protection Ordinance 1922-23,
- (3) inflict corporal punishment on the native police boys Nari and Tigon, well knowing same to be contrary to Section 72 of the Native Labour Ordinance 1922-23."

He was found guilty of charges (2) and (3) and dismissed from the Public Service.

After the war, William Wilkin had purchased *Lungatan* Plantation, New Hanover, from the Custodian of Expropriated Properties. Property belonging to the German Government was expropriated under the terms of the Mandate granted by the League of Nations to Australia in respect of the Administration of New Guinea. Such properties were offered for sale under very reasonable terms and William Wilkin took advantage of this to purchase *Lungatan*.

On 1 Jan 1928, the Commonwealth Government listed all the properties in New Guinea sold by The Custodian of Expropriated Properties. *Lungatan* was sold to William Wilkin for 5,000 pounds and was listed as having 52 hectares unplanted, 150 hectares planted with some 18,00 Palms with an official valuation of 1,600 pounds. Australian soldiers who purchased expropriated properties were able to pay 15% deposit with the remainder at 5% pa over 80 months.

After his dismissal from the Public Service, William set up camp on *Lungatan* to develop the property. He was never far away from controversy. In 1924 he applied for a licence to recruit labour for a mining operation on his plantation. In order "...not to debar Wikin from an opportunity of earning a livelihood the Commissioner of Native Affairs authorised the issue of a recruiting licence to him, but intended it should be operative only for a period of six weeks ending on 30th June 1924".

However, the licence was mistakenly issued to cover the period up to 30th June 1925. The issue was raised in the Federal Parliament when Mr Forde, M.P, asked the Prime Minister

"(1) Is it a fact that ex-Patrol Officers W. M. Wilkin and Walter John Hook, who were dismissed from the New Guinea Public Service, have been granted recruiting licences.

(2) Why were these men dismissed from the service

(3) Is it usual practice to grant recruiting licences to such ex-

officers who have been dismissed for serious offences.”

As an aside, his co-accused, Walter John Hook also served in the AN&MEF, arriving in New Guinea in November 1919 and remaining until the AN&MEF was disbanded. Like William he became a Patrol Officer and was dismissed for trafficking Birds of Paradise. He set up a trading post in Aitape and in 1942 was recruited into ANGAU. In 1943 he was murdered by a group of locals in the Musemgilem Urat area, Aitape. He was originally buried in Wewak but exhumed after the war and reburied at Lae.

It was not long after this that William Wilkin was again in trouble with the law.

On 27th August 1929, William Wilkin was found guilty in the Rabaul Central Court of having murdered "...a native, one MALAY, who died at the accused's plantation in the District of New Ireland on 23rd June 1929." William Wilkin's Counsel at the trial in mitigation of punishment "...informed the Court of the prisoner's meritorious war service." Because of this a lenient sentence of 2 years imprisonment with hard labour was imposed.

He served the majority of this sentence in Goulburn Goal and returned to Rabaul at the completion of the sentence aboard the "Montoro", departing Sydney 22 November 1930.

Earlier in 1930, William Wilkins applied to the Premier of New South Wales for special remission of his sentence on the grounds that "His property, *Lungatan* Plantation, was subject to waste owing to lack of personal supervision and work.

Indentured labour contracts were maturing without means of replenishment, and he was innocent of the charges on which he was convicted."

The matter was referred to the Administrator of the Territory of New Guinea. He sought advice from the Stipendiary Magistrate in Rabaul, Mr S J Shillington, who, acting as a Judge, originally tried and sentenced William Wilkin. Shillington advised that that "...there was abundant proof of the prisoner's guilt and that the crime of which he was convicted was committed callously and brutally. He went on to advise that the "...prisoner was liable to imprisonment with hard labour for life, with or without solitary confinement, and with or without whipping"

The request for remission was declined.

In December 1930, by notice in the New Guinea Gazette, the Administrator at the time, Evan Wisdom, ordered that William Martin Wilkin "be prohibited from taking charge of or employing native labourers." This prohibition was cancelled in early 1931.

William Wilkin died on 1 July 1942 aboard the *Montevideo Maru*, a freighter requisitioned by the Japanese navy, to carry New Guinea Prisoners of War, both military and civilian, which sailed for Hainan, off the southern coast of China. On 1 July this vessel, which was not marked as a POW carrier, was torpedoed and sunk by the submarine *USS Sturgeon* close to Luzon, resulting in the deaths of all prisoners and internees on board.

William Wilkin died intestate and by notice in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea Gazette, dated 4 October 1951, the Curator of Intestate Properties was ordered to administer his estate. In the Gazette of 25/10/1951 tenders were called for the sale of *Lungatan* Plantation as part of Williams Wilkin's estate.

Thank you Michael.



Previous column and below. C-130 Hercules bogged at Koroba Airstrip PNG, 1971.



Five fire trucks sail for PNG

Five fire trucks are on the way to Papua New Guinea (PNG) on board *HMAS Choules* after being donated by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES).

The trucks will be delivered to the PNG Fire Service to assist with local firefighting efforts.

Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds said Australia welcomed this opportunity to acknowledge and thank PNG for their support 12 months ago.

"A year ago Australia was thanking the 100 members of the PNG Defence Force who came to our aid during the Black Summer Bushfires, assisting with reconnecting isolated communities in the Gippsland region by clearing roads and debris, as well as boosting local morale by sharing songs and culture," Minister Reynolds said.

"It is fitting that we are delivering this capability to our PNG wantoks one year later, in the spirit of ongoing support, gratitude and cooperation.

"Australia and PNG share a deep friendship based on shared values of security, peace and prosperity for all nations in the Pacific.

"Through shared capabilities we are better equipped to work together and respond to challenges in times of need."

The refurbished Type 2 urban fire trucks carry 1,800 litres of water and a full complement of road-crash-rescue equipment, along with a comprehensive inventory of firefighting equipment.

The fire trucks have also been fitted out with updated breathing apparatus funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which ensures they are compliant with existing systems in PNG.

QFES Commissioner Greg Leach said quality firefighting equipment played a crucial role in quick and effective emergency responses.

"It is a pleasure for QFES to gift these five trucks to the Papua New Guinea Fire Service, to assist it to build capability and capacity in their mission to protect the community and save lives," Commissioner Leach said.

"This project would not have been possible without the support of the Australian Defence Force to transport the trucks to Port Moresby."



Contact Newsletter 139

All-Robot Russian Military Unit to be Established soon

The Russian Ministry of Defence announced Friday it will establish the first unit armed with strike robots soon, in what could define the future of the battlefield.

"As Chief of the Army Main Staff Vasily Tonkoshurov reported to the defence minister, the first unit with strike robots will be set up in the Russian Armed Forces to operate five Uran-9 robotic systems or 20 combat vehicles," the ministry said.

Russia says it is already setting up an experimental unit in one of the MoD's scientific research centres. "This centre will subsequently train personnel that will operate Uran-9 strike robotic vehicles in operational military units."

Uran-9 has reportedly been tested in Syria. "Shortcomings were identified during the tests in Syria. In particular, the issues of control, reduced mobility, and unsatisfactory military intelligence and surveillance functions had been considered by engineers and were rectified," Vladimir Dmitriev, General Director of Kalashnikov Concern, had commented earlier.



Uran-9 Combat robot

The robotic vehicle was earlier employed only as a separate system. Produced by the 766th Production and Technological Enterprise, it is armed with 2A72 30mm automatic cannon,

7.62mm PKT machine gun, Ataka anti-tank guided missiles and Shmel flamethrowers.

Uran-9 was created to protect personnel from enemy's fire. Its powerful weapons can hit not only live force and lightly armored vehicles, but also tanks, as well as other highly protected objects. The system is built into the Unified Control System at the tactical level, and has protection from unauthorized access and electronic warfare means.

As recently as in December, Russia tested Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered mobile target robots that dodge shooters' bullets for the first time. The AI-based robots are dressed as soldiers and carry dummy guns. Mounted on wheeled vehicles, they have cross-country ability and can manoeuvre their way around obstacles and away from the direction of bullets.

RIA Novosti wrote over a year ago that the Russian Armed Forces would receive multifunctional combat robots by 2025. Dubbed "Marker," the experimental platform was developed by Russian Scientific and Technology Association, Android Technology. It is capable of guiding five unmanned machines, and can solve various combat tasks, simultaneously.

Defenceworld.net Newsletter 4/4/2021

Did some financial planning. It looks as though I can retire at 63 and live comfortably for 11 minutes.

RAAF takes Vietnamese peacekeepers to Africa

Australia has supported Vietnam's contribution to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) by airlifting Vietnamese military personnel and equipment.

A Royal Australian Air Force C-17A Globemaster provided the airlifts during late March and late April, allowing Vietnam



to rotate its UNMISS Level Two Field Hospital contingent.

Chief of Joint Operations Command Lieutenant General Greg Bilton said the Australian Defence Force's work alongside Vietnam

demonstrates the close ties between our two countries.

"Vietnam is an important partner for Australia in the Indo-Pacific, and I am proud the ADF has supported their deployment to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan," Lieutenant General Bilton said. "The peacekeeping partnership between our two countries is a key element of our defence relationship.

"It highlights our shared vision of a peaceful, inclusive and resilient region actively supporting global security."

Over the last two months the airlift transported more than 120 passengers and more than 55,000kg of cargo between Vietnam and South Sudan.

The cargo included medical and dental equipment, pharmaceuticals, electrical equipment, and food stores.

Australia has now provided airlift support to three rotations of Vietnam's UNMISS contingent, the first in October 2018 and the second in November 2019.

All Australian Defence Force personnel involved in the airlift complied with Australia's and Vietnam's COVID-19 protocols and control measures.

Contact Newsletter 145. 16 May 2021.



Mike Griffin, Paul Brown, Colin Gould, Peter Rogers (the younger)

Bunnings BBQ

On Sat 22 May another Bunnings BBQ was successfully held to raise funds for the Museum. Those participating were Colin Gould, Paul Brown, Kieran Nelson, Peter Rogers (the younger), Mike Griffin and Phil Ainsworth.

These BBQs are a major fund raiser for the ongoing costs associated with the Museum and during Covid-19 the Association was prevented from this funding source due to Bunnings cancellation of their BBQs.

A lot of effort goes into these events—purchase of supplies, setting up and cleaning up after the event, and of course, the effort put into the day itself. It is pleasing to note that profit for the day amounted to \$743. Well done chaps.

History is often just one person's side of the story.

An Historical Curio at the Museum

On Sat 10th April John Batze came to the museum where a committee meeting was being held, with a magnificent model of the Junkers G31 aircraft which played a major role in the development of the Goldfields towns of Wau and Bulolo.

Junkers G31 in New Guinea

The Junkers G 31 was an advanced tri-motor airliner produced in small numbers in Germany in the 1920s. Like other Junkers types, it was an all-metal, low-wing cantilever monoplane. In the mid-1920s, the all-metal construction and an aerodynamically 'clean' configuration were remarkable.

Originally, the G 31 had been intended to equip Junkers' own airline, Junkers Luftverkehr, but this venture was merged into Deutsche Luft Hansa in 1926, and the new airline purchased only eight G 31s, beginning operations in May 1928. They were used on the long-range routes of Luft Hansa, particularly to Scandinavia. They continued in this role until 1935, when replaced by the Junkers Ju 52.

Four other G 31s were sold for freighting cargo in New Guinea. Operated by Guinea Airways, one was owned by the airline itself, while the other three were owned by the Bulolo Gold

Dredging Company. Powered by Pratt & Whitney Hornets, these differed from the G 31 airliners in having open cockpits, and a large hatch in the fuselage roof to accommodate the loading of bulky cargo via crane. In one particular operation, the G 31s were used to airlift eight 3,000 tonne (3,310 ton) dredges in parts from Lae to Bulolo. Three of the aircraft were destroyed in a Japanese air raid on Bulolo on 21 January 1942, and the remaining aircraft was pressed into RAAF service ten days later.

One of the aircraft destroyed in Bulolo was flying a load of cargo, which included a large quantity of beer, from Lae to Bulolo. Pilot Bertie Heath and his Junkers G31 were followed by several Zeros who shot up the aircraft as it came to a stop. Bertie Heath leaped to safety but the cargo of beer was largely destroyed. Several of the NGVR members told stories of sifting through the

wreckage of the aircraft for some days later trying to salvage any undamaged beer bottles.

Arrival in New Guinea. The aircraft were shipped in pieces to Salamaua from Germany. At Salamaua the crates were collected by the "Gnair" the Guinea Airways schooner crewed by John Cooke and Adolph Batze (both of whom joined the NGVR when it was formed in 1939) and carried over to Lae.

At the time the small wharf at Voco Point in Lae had a 1.6km standard (1,435mm) gauge line opened in 1931 from the wharf at Voco Point to Lae airstrip, transporting materials which were then airlifted to the mine site at Bulolo. The line was operated by a self-propelled steam crane. It remained in operation until destroyed by Japanese bombing in 1942.

A German engineer and a German aircraft mechanic had arrived on the ship with the aircraft crates. The crates contained enough timber to build a 'donga' beside the airstrip where the workers lived.

Adolph Batze, whose family had arrived in New Guinea from Germany in 1908 (see HTT Vol 106) spoke German and was seconded by his employers Guinea Airways to the aircraft

assembly unit because of his ability to speak German, which assisted with communication with the Engineer and Mechani

The model of the Junkers G31. A limited number, possibly 10 or 12, of Duralumin (strong lightweight aluminium alloy) models were sent out with the aircraft and Adolph Batze was given one by Guinea Airways in recognition of his efforts in the assembling of the aircraft.

John's father gave it to him and it will be kept in the Batze family mementos.



The first CO of the NGVR, Lt Col John Walstab DSO. VD. Relaxing in Rabaul harbour circa 1939.

Due to Covid-19 lockdown in Brisbane City at the time, the 'Montevideo Maru' Memorial Service scheduled to be held at the Hall of Memories, Anzac Square, Brisbane, had to be cancelled.

Next year will be the 80th Anniversary of the sinking of the unmarked POW vessel "Montevideo Maru" with 1053 soldiers and civilians aboard, and a special ceremony will be held at Anzac Square, Brisbane, at 10am Friday, 1st July 2022.



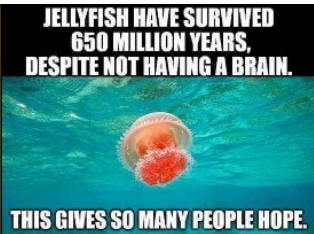
Above. Junkers G31

Below. 1. A car being loaded into a Junkers G31 at Lae. Note the steam rail track.

- 2. A cow being unloaded from a Junkers G31
- 3. A horse being loaded into a Junkers G31



I STARTED OUT WITH NOTHING AND I STILL HAVE MOST OF IT.



VALE: Capt. Brian Edward John JONES ED
2/42645 & 860437, 23 Jan 1936—24 May 2021



Brian was born in Wagga Wagga, NSW, and when his father served in WW11 (a POW of the Japanese) the family moved quite a number of times around the Sydney area.

At age 15 he enlisted in the ARA as an apprentice plumber and attended the Australian Army Apprentice School at Balcombe, Vic. On graduation he was posted to 21 Const Sqn, RAE (The Red Roosters), at Puckapunyal, Vic. After that his postings were—17 Const Squadron, 21 Const Squadron, 24 Const Squadron, 1 Indept Constr Tp RAE (TPNG), 24 Const Squadron, Eastern Comd Allotted List, 7 Indept Field Squadron RAE, School of Military Engineering (Clerk of Works Crs), 7 Field Squadron.

He discharged from the ARA in 1963 and joined PNGVR in 1964, serving until its disbandment in 1973. In his time in PNGVR he served in Admin Coy, 8 PI C Coy, 9 PI C Coy and A Coy.



In 1979 he re-joined the CMF and served in HQ 1 Div (Army Agent North T.I.), 49 RQR "Bushman's Rifles", 31 IRC RQR "The Kennedy's" and 31 RQR "The Kennedy Regiment" until he went on the Reserve of Officers in 1986.

Brian's son Richard also served in the ARA and while stationed at Igam Barracks, Lae, compiled a booklet on the Lae War Cemetery for the information of visitors to Igam Barracks and Lae.

Brian was a strong supporter of the Association from its formation, but living at Beachmere, near Bribie Island, Qld., was too far away to become actively involved. He contracted Leukaemia in the late 1990's and towards the end was in high care in Townsville. His wife Nancy died before his move to Townsville.

A photo of Brian taken recently appeared in HTT Vol 127, P15.

LEST WE FORGET

Brian at the ceremony in Charters Towers for the granting of the "Keys to the City of Charters Towers" to the United States 5th Air Force for their service to Australia in WW11.

The Association would like to thank King & Co Property Consultants for its continuing support, including the printing of this issue, together with the past 71 issues of Harim Tok Tok.



REPLICA MEDALS OR MOUNTING OF MEDALS

A reliable source for medal work is National Medals, natmedals@bigpond.com, Ph 07 3871 0600 Ask for Greg Faux, mobile 0419 196 172. Located at 13/200 Moggill Road, Taringa, Brisbane, 4066

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

Includes former members of the PIR, PIB and NGIB.

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

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

(NGVR/PNGVR Military Museum, Corner Boundary Road & Fulcrum Street, Wacol, Qld, 4076)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chaplain. Rev Ron MacDonald. Phone 0407 008 624 email ron.macdonald@aue.salvationarmy.org

NGVR/PNGVR service recollections are copyright.

FUNCTION DATES

Sat 8 Aug & Sat 4 Sep 2021
Museum open 10am-1pm.
Book sales are being conducted from the Museum's extensive holding as a result of generous donations of books.

Sat 23 Oct 2021
10am Association AGM at Museum followed by
12.30 Mixed Luncheon in Everyman's Hut to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the PNGVR in 1951.
Dress Anzac Day Dress
Cost \$40p.p. for meal - Cash Bar
Contact Colin Gould or Paul Brown for bookings.

An Invitation to the 70th Anniversary of PNGVR's formation



You and your wife/partner are invited to join us at the 70th Anniversary commemorative luncheon to celebrate the formation of the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (PNGVR).

This luncheon will be held in Everyman's Hut, Wacol Military Precinct, 97 Boundary Road, Wacol, Brisbane, 4076 on Saturday 23rd October, 2021.

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 and both the Museum and Everyman's

Hut 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.

Please contact either:

Paul Brown at 0402 644181 or paulbrown475@gmail.com or

Colin Gould at 0424 562 030 or pngvr@optus.com.au

by 18 October 2021 if you are interested in attending,

Payment is by electronic transfer directly to NGVR & PNGVR Association

BSB: 064006

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.

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

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.



Everyman's Hut



NGVR Memorial Museum