



Harim Tok Tok

PAPUA NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES EX-MEMBERS ASSOCIATION Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

About 20 members and friends marched and 4 with carers rode in the jeeps at Brisbane's Anzac Day March. Following the march all adjourned to the Stock Exchange Hotel for our Reunion where another 20 or so relatives and friends awaited the thirsty marchers.

It was wonderful to see those present enjoying themselves.



The marchers before the start

Prior to the Anzac March I attended PIB, NGIB & PIR Association's short annual memorial service to honour PNG and Australians who died in PNG during the Pacific War. It was held at the PNG stature in Anzac Square. General Jerry Singarok spoke and I read the Ode and placed a wreath on behalf of our Association. About 30 people attended.



General Jerry Singarok and Phil Ains-

The recent announcement of finding the MV Montevideo Maru was timely for Anzac Day. The find has received worldwide recognition, which surprised many Silent World Foundation and Department of Defence members and others directly involved in the search. While the find is exciting, those, of whom I am one, who have been involved with the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, the PNGAA and our Association were not - after fifteen years of work from Andrea William's 2008 urgings to PNGAA, the installation of a plaque on the Hell-ships Memorial in Subic Bay, Philippines, the formation of the Society, the 2010 recognition and resolutions of regret from both houses of Federal Parliament, the 2012 dedication of the National Memorial at AWM to the ongoing electronic media and printed publications, videos and events since, has maintained and grown the people connections with those affected by the Montevideo Maru disaster and its aftermath. The find will bring a sense of comfort to the many descendants of those who were lost- to know where their long deceased kin lie.



Rear- Max Uechtriz (documentary maker), Neale Maude (photographer), John Mullin (leader),

Front- Commodore Tim Brown, Captain Roger Turner and Andrea Williams (descendant).

The technical achievement is astounding – a programmed Automated Underwater Vehicle operating over 4000m underwater recording sonic data and bringing it to the surface for processing and analysis. The ship was found in two parts about 500m apart with a reasonably contained debris spread on a flat, sandy, featureless sea-floor. When found, the team had to wait many hours for the data to be refined into clear pictures from which measurements were made and compared with actual ship's measurements to prove the result.

Over 200 attended the unveiling of the Montevideo Maru mural and it's storyboards in Stanhope, Victoria on 15 April 2023. The Preston Salvation Band played at the service, which was followed by luncheon in the nearby Community Centre. The ladies of Bendigo RSL knitted a 7m long Poppy Banner in honour of those lost. A resurgence of tourism in the area has been reported due to the wide media coverage received.



Stanhope unveiling service

Our Association will hold the 81st Anniversary Montevideo Maru Commemorative Service underneath the Brisbane Cenotaph at 10am Saturday 1 July 2023. Morning Tea will follow the service. It is a public event so everyone is welcome.

Phil Ainsworth, May 2023

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REMEMBRANCE DAY 2021

Service, Sacrifice, Courage

The Wheeler family from Narrabri NSW

Article by: John Thurgar and Ian McPhedran

Growing up in the Hunter Valley in the 1950's on a farm, I still can clearly remember the conversations the shearers, roustabouts, classers and babbling brooks would engage in when not on the boards during smoko in the sheds about WW1. I was a kid working as a lounge-about and I was privileged to hear the candid comments by the WW1 veterans explaining what it was really like to be: 'at Gallipoli; Fromelles; Passchendaele; and on the Somme. The WW2 veterans would counter with tales of hardship on 'the Track' or on the Northern Beaches of TPNG. I think above anything else, it was through listening to these 'hard men' that inspired me to join up myself.

During my lifetime I visited all the key places and battlefields that these men mentioned, from the Salisbury Plains, to Belgium, France, Greece, Crete, Palestine, Egypt, Singapore, Borneo, PNG, and Darwin.

I had my own stint of operational service – which pales if one compares with what these men had been through.

In my twilight years I have time to reflect. One such reflection is upon the four pillars at the WW2 War Memorial placed at Isuarava on the Kokoda Track. Each pillar has one word engraved into it. These words collectively encapsulate the battle for the Kokoda Track. The four words are - **'Courage, Sacrifice, Mateship and Endurance'**

Whilst these words, taken literally, are ascribed to service personnel, I believe that, in reality they also rightfully belong to the families of service personnel. For the families are the ones who bear witness to, and suffer the consequences most, of their family members service to nation for the rest of their lives.

On Remembrance Day 2023, I ask you to pause and remember a most remarkable Australian family and in particular one woman, Helen Kirton, who passed away in 2021 aged 103 years and 10 months. Helen's story and that of her family's belief in country, demonstrate a life-time of courage, sacrifice, endurance and the true cost of 'service to Nation'.

Helen's father, Harold Charles Fearon Wheeler was born in May 1883. Harold had been admitted as a solicitor in 1905 having gained second class Honours in English from the University of Sydney in 1902. He joined in partnership with a friend to form the firm of Ryan and Wheeler, solicitors, Kiama, NSW.

Harold Wheeler married Thelma Edith Garrard youngest daughter of Mrs Garrard, Mosman in Sydney on 27 May 1913. In 1916 the family moved to Narrabri, about 500km NNW of Sydney, where Harold practised as a solicitor after purchasing the practice of Dale and Wilson Solicitors in that town.

Mrs Helen Kirton (nee Wheeler) was born on the 18th December 1917 in Narrabri NSW, the fourth of five Wheeler children. Right up to her passing, she had a remarkably clear memory of her early family life and especially of her beloved brothers, Bill and Jim. Bill was the eldest and Jim the younger brother.

Bill (Lieut. William Garrard Wheeler DSC MID) had joined the Royal Australian Navy as a cadet Midshipman at the age of 13 on 1st January 1929. He completed training at the RANC in 1936 and was appointed Acting Sub Lieutenant and loaned to the RN for sea training. He returned to Australia for a short period before returning on loan to the RN prior to the outbreak of WW2 as a Lieutenant. He was a specialist Torpedo Officer on British warships.

Lieut. Wheeler served in *H.M.S. Afridi*. *Afridi* was briefly in-

involved enforcing the arms blockade on the combatants in the Spanish Civil War. The ship returned home shortly after the start of the Second World War and was assigned convoy escort duties. She played an active role in the Norwegian Campaign of April–May 1940, escorting convoys to and from Norway. *Afridi* took part in the operations at Namsos. (Namsos is a town and the administrative centre of Namsos municipality in Trøndelag County, Norway. It is located on the north side of the mouth of the river Namsen, where it flows into Namsenfjorden). *Afridi* was sunk by German dive bombers on 3 May 1940 as she was escorting the evacuation convoy after the failure of the Namsos Campaign.

Lieut. Wheeler took a prominent part in rescuing the wounded from the burning ship, and was eventually picked up by another destroyer, and taken to Scarpa Flow, whence he made his way to London. For his services at Namsos, Lieut. Wheeler was Mentioned in Despatches - for courage and devotion to duty.

Bill then joined the British warship *HMS Cossack* in the Mediterranean Sea and later deployed to the Atlantic in search of the mighty German Battleship *Bismarck*. *Cossack*, ran down the *Bismarck* in Narvik fiord, was one of the first of a British flotilla which made contact with the German battleship. Bill, as Torpedo Officer, was responsible for laying and firing a torpedo which hit the *Bismarck's* rudder, thus severely impairing her steering which allowed the heavy cruisers to sink the *Bismarck*.

On 23 October 1941, *Cossack* was escorting a convoy from Gibraltar to the UK when she was struck by a single torpedo fired by the German submarine-563. She was taken in tow by a tug from Gibraltar on 25 October, but the weather worsened and the tow was slipped on 26 October. *Cossack* sank in the Atlantic west of Gibraltar on 27 October 1941. 159 of her crew were lost including Bill. His remains rest with his shipmates and were never recovered.

On Friday, 22nd January 1943, His Excellency the Governor General, Lord Gowrie, held an Investiture Ceremony at Admiralty House, Sydney, in the course of which he presented to Mr. Harold Wheeler, of Narrabri, the Distinguished Service Cross awarded to his late son, Lieut. W. G. Wheeler, D.S.C., R.A.N.

An excerpt from Narrabri's The North Western Courier on Thursday the 28th January 1943 reads: His Excellency said, "By command of His Majesty the King, I present you with the Distinguished Service Cross awarded to your son, Lieut. William Garrard Wheeler, of the Royal Australian Navy, for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. I congratulate you upon the honour so well and worthily earned by your son, and I offer you my condolences upon the great loss you have suffered in the death of so gallant and distinguished an officer."

Helen's younger brother Jim Wheeler, had joined the 6th Division of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force in October 1939 and he departed for the Middle East in January 1940 with the 2/1st Field Regiment RAA, (2 Battery), arriving in Palestine the following month. Helen clearly recalled seeing her brother off in Sydney on board a troop ship bound for North Africa.

At Helwan, in September 1940, the Regiment was re-rolled once again as a field Regiment, and re-equipped. The following month, the 6th Division began large scale exercises in preparation for its commitment to the Western Desert campaign. In January 1941, the Australians went into action against the Italians for the first time, attacking Bardia. He stayed in touch with his family by letter and she remembered one in which he told them about the taking of Italian prisoners.

The Regiment remained in the Middle East until February 1942 when the 6th Division was recalled back to Australia in response to the growing threat posed by Japan's entry into the war.

Jim returned from the Middle East with the 6th Division in August 1942 and he was granted two weeks leave before being deployed to New Guinea and the desperate Kokoda campaign. He took his leave time in Sydney where he was able to spend time

with Helen and her baby son Derek, who was his god son.

Their parents came down from Narrabri to see him and Jim also used the down time to catch up with a good friend of Helen's from university called Bet, of whom he was very fond.

'I think they wanted to get married but I mean he was so young, he was just 20 when he joined up and he was just 23 when he was killed. So, it was very short,' Helen said.

The siblings saw a lot of each other but she could see that Jim's focus was on Bet. 'I think he spent all the time he could with her but I did certainly saw him many times. I can remember going over to Manly and sitting on the beach with him.'

The 2/1 Field Regiment was reconstituted upon returning to Australia. It was soon deployed north to face the Japanese threat in PNG. They were assigned to the defence of Port Moresby. But in November, detached elements were assigned to support the US 32nd Infantry Division's attack on Buna, Gona and Sanananda.

Whilst in Port Moresby, the Regiment began exploring the option of 'breaking the guns down' so that they could be loaded into Dakota DC 3 aircraft and air transported right to the front. Further, they experimented in consultation with the Engineers how to construct corduroy airstrips, well forward of other support troops in order to bring effective artillery support where it was needed most, that is, to the front line. Such a concept was new and experimental and it worked. Major Black was to form '*Blackforce*' of which Jim and LT Daniels were assigned as a two-man Forward Observation Team.

In November 1942 *Blackforce* was deployed to Sanananda. In one day, the field guns were landed at Doburdura airstrip and the Forward Observation Team were attached to the US 126th Regiment in the attack on Sanananda Mission.

The 126th Regiment was a National Guard unit and were untried. They had no battle experience and found the atrocious conditions most difficult and unsettling. The ground surrounding Sanananda was an enormous swamp, with small islands of land just above the water table. It was nigh on impossible to dig-in, to seek shelter from hostile fire. The Japanese had filled empty 44 gallon drums with sand and laid timber beams across the top as reinforcing and then covered the whole show with packed down soil then camouflaged the bunkers. They had a significant advantage to say the least.

Any ground above the water table was considered key terrain. The fork in the road to Sanananda and Gona became known as Huggins Roadblock. It was key terrain.

Jim and LT Daniels moved to join the US force occupying the roadblock on the Sanananda Track consisted of infantry troops of the 126th Regiment and their Regimental Anti-tank Company, under command of Captain John Shirley.

The forward Japanese positions had been enveloped on both sides of Huggins Roadblock but not isolated by the Allies. They remained strong on the key terrain at Huggins and just to its North. For the Japanese the situation was dire and for the Allies it was desperate given the terrible conditions in which they found themselves.

The 126th Regiment needed to hold Huggins, and on the 1st December 1942 they lost the central position after a Japanese surprise attack. Captain Shirley was killed and the US infantry were rattled. When the Japanese attack commenced two important events took place on that day. The first was that Captain Meredith 'Hug' Huggins had just moved onto the position with a resupply party and he took command when Captain Shirley was killed by a sniper. The second was that LT Daniels saw the dilemma and steadied the men around him and ordered and led a bayonet charge counter-attack. He took Jim's .303 and fixed bayonet. He inspired those around him to 'go forward'. Jim operated the wireless set calling in artillery support. Just as the position was recaptured, Jim saw LT Daniels falter, struck by a snipers' bullet and about to be set upon by Japanese infantrymen with bayonets. Jim

immediately ran forward to his friends' aid. He died trying to save his mate. Both men died at Huggins Roadblock. Captain Huggins gave high praise to both men and buried their bodies on the side of the track along with his own men.

Jim was reported as Killed in Action on 1st December, 1942 at Huggins Road Block on New Guinea's north coast during the battle for Sanananda. The battle of Sanananda cost Australian forces some 1400 casualties including 600 killed or missing.

Helen has a vivid memory of the day she heard the terrible news that Jim too was missing in action and presumed killed (1 December 1942). At that time she was living in Mildura on the Murray River with son Derek and it took her several days to get home to her parents in Narrabri by bus and by train.

Mr and Mrs Wheeler never stopped mourning the loss of their only two sons and she is convinced that the stress of their deaths contributed to her father Harold's early passing on the 25 August 1945, more likely from a broken heart than anything else. The fact that neither boy's body had been found also played a part.

Helen's mother Thelma lived until she was 89 and while the family never really spoke about the terrible loss, she does remember her mother in her later years saying that she was glad that her boys had 'done the right thing.'

'She felt it was the right thing to go off to war even if you got killed. I think she was very philosophical, but she was also, I'm sure, utterly devastated because she was terribly fond of us all and a very good mother.'

Jim and Helen were the family's youngest children and the nearest in age and were very close growing up in their small, isolated country community. At age 12 Helen was sent to boarding school at SCEGGS in Moss Vale in southern NSW and afterwards she studied for an Arts Degree at the University of Sydney.

After leaving his boarding school, The Armidale School (TAS), Jim joined the Bank of NSW as a clerk and was posted to the country town of Mungindi on the NSW-Queensland border not far from his home town of Narrabri.

When war broke out in 1939 he joined the army and Helen continued working with the book publisher the Bookstall Company in Sydney. After a whirlwind wartime romance she married her first husband, Spitfire pilot Peter Birch, who survived the war and the couple went on to have four children, Derek, Ric, Nicola and Michelle.

During this time Helen and her baby Derek were living in an old mansion close to the harbour at Darling Point while her husband Peter was away at war. He was at home on leave in May 1942 when on the night of the 31st three Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour to attack shipping around Garden Island.

'I remember that night cleaning my teeth and saying to Peter, "God, the floor is moving!"' she said. 'He said, "Oh it's Garden Island, they're doing something. There's a fearful racket going on. Of course, the subs had got in and they were shooting at them, but we went to bed just thinking it was a 'wild-night' at Garden Island. We had to read about it in the paper next day to say the subs had got in and of course the *USS Chicago* was one they were after, but they missed that, and they got the *Kuttabul*.'

The heavy cruiser *USS Chicago* was the primary target of the raid but the Japanese torpedoes missed her and instead sunk the depot vessel *HMAS Kuttabul* killing 21 sailors.

Helen also remembered Sydney being shelled late on the night of June 8, 1942 when the Japanese submarine the I-

24 fired 10 shells at the city from a distance of some 14km out to sea. 'We must have got an air raid warning I think because Peter, who'd been in the thing in London said, "Well I think it probably is a raid". There was another couple staying there and a woman on her own and he said, "I think probably under the stairs is the safest place," so he herded us all under the stairs and the shells went over us and landed at Bondi somewhere. No one was killed but there was a certain amount of damage and then the all-clear went and we got out.'

As the years passed Helen became convinced that the remains of her beloved little brother would never be found. Apart from one or two leads by historians or researchers over the years, there was barely a clue as to the whereabouts of the remains of Lance Sergeant Jim Wheeler.

It was a very long journey for Lance Sergeant Jim Wheeler to his final resting place at the Bomana War Cemetery on the outskirts of Port Moresby on December 1, 2009 – the 77th anniversary of his death.

It was a local man called Nathaniel Joseph, from the village of Kupro Hembro, who uncovered three sets of human remains whilst clearing the jungle to build a new garden near Huggins Roadblock in 1996. Mr Joseph handed the remains to a visiting RAAF officer who was posted to the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby in 1997. It was these unidentified remains that, due to a bureaucratic mix up, were kept with others deep in the High Commission building for the next decade.

When Army History Unit was notified of the remains being located within the High Commission in 2008 they conducted an historical document record search and arranged for forensic examination of the remains. Two sets were identified as Americans from the 126th Infantry Regiment and returned to the United States while the third set was found to be Australian but was unable to be initially identified.

Then one day in 2009 Helen received a phone call she will never forget from Army History Unit Senior Investigator John Thurgar who told her that he was positive that they had found Jim's remains. 'He said, "I'll be in touch but don't say anything yet". So, I immediately rang Derek and rang Michelle in Perth and I said, "Don't say any more".

'Of course, I was absolutely amazed. Then, they came down to see us with John and the Padre who was a nice chap, they came down one day to see us and tell us how they had identified Jim and that they were going to arrange a ceremonial military funeral in Bomana War cemetery and they asked if we would like to go up for the service.'

Helen Kirton was 92-years-old when she travelled to Papua New Guinea in November 2009 to finally witness her brother being laid to rest and to place a flower on his grave.

The Bomana War Cemetery is a beautifully manicured, lush green military burial ground planted with large tropical trees and framed by the foothills of the Owen Stanley Mountain Range and the Kokoda track beyond. The Commonwealth War Cemetery is the final resting place for 3821 Commonwealth soldiers including 3108 known and 239 unknown Australians killed during the New Guinea campaign.

Despite the oppressive heat and humidity, Mrs. Kirton gave an eloquent eulogy on the day of Jim's burial speaking with a deep love about her brother and their early years together. She also gave thanks on behalf of her family to everyone involved in the recovery and identification of her brother including the relatives of Nathaniel Joseph and the Army History Unit investigators who finally solved the mystery of the remains in the High Commission vault.

'Jim would have been 90 at the end of August but I can't imagine him as an old man, white-haired and wrinkly like me, so for me he will be forever young,' she said.

Mrs. Kirton recalled the carefree days of her childhood with him in Narrabri where they could ride their pushbikes anywhere they wanted and swim in the river.

'There were no swimming pools then and we weren't allowed to dive because of hidden rocks or logs. We always had lots of pets, dogs, cats, a fox cub and even a wallaby that disgraced himself when he hopped into church to say hello to the minister and hopped out again. Jim's main interest was always sport and he excelled at them all although I don't recall his academic record.'

Every year the family travelled to Sydney by car for a summer holiday on Manly beach and the children spent their time swimming and surfing and buying fish and chips for sixpence.

'Jim was a good surfer but he had to look after me because brothers looked after their sisters. I hope they still do' she said.

Before departing for New Guinea Jim Wheeler had told his sister that even though he had served in the iconic battles at Bardia, Tobruk and Benghazi, soldiering was mostly about boredom.

'He wrote to us about a great celebration when news came through that Derek had been born,' she recalled.

In New Guinea the troops spent a lot of time digging holes and placing camouflage netting across them. That was a coincidence because his mother had spent most of the war stitching together camouflage nets for the troops. Jim told her 'that they worked very well.'

Mrs Kirton finished her eulogy with a quote from Governor General Field Marshal Sir William Slim. In 1953 at Bomana he had paid a great tribute to the Australian troops in New Guinea whose victory, he said, gave great heart to the British fighting in Burma.

"Eight years ago, in the hills of Kohima where so many of their comrades lay on the field they had won, the second British Division set up a great stone,' he said. 'On it they carved this inscription [from British poet John Maxwell Edmonds] which I give you as a thought to carry away this day, "When you go home tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today".'

Helen passed away peacefully on the 14 October 2021, at Bunyip VIC.

On Remembrance Day 2023, I again ask you to pause and remember this most remarkable Australian family whose belief in country, demonstrate a life-time of courage, sacrifice, endurance and the true cost of 'service to Nation'.

May the Wheeler family all now rest in Peace. You are not forgotten.

Thank you MAJ. John Thurgar SC. MBE. OAM. RFD. for this story and also for your work with the Unrecovered War Casualties Unit.

The Parade Ground

"Within the Australian Army, the Parade Ground holds a special symbolic representation of a sanctuary of a unit's fallen soldiers and in line with this symbolism it is deemed "hallowed ground" and is respected as such.

There are many stories and myths associated with the significance and development of Parade Grounds, the truth can often be the simpler.

In Britain, the military practice in 17th and 18th Century has it that when a Regiment marched into a town or any location where they were going to be quartered, a place of assembly was decided upon which may have been a market square, the street outside the senior officer's lodgings or any convenient open patch of ground. If the unit was on active operations and camping in the field, the Regiment would form up in front of their tents. This area would be used to draw everyone together in a "parade", but it would not necessarily be used as a Drill Square.

Once barracks became common in the United Kingdom, which was not until the very late 18th to early 19th Century, the buildings were normally arranged around a square. This open space, which was conveniently situated in the middle of the dwellings, would be used for parades of all sorts, for instance, fatigues, drill, pay, punishment, and the assembly of the guards.

Within the Australian Army, the Parade Ground holds a symbolic representation of a sanctuary of a unit's fallen soldiers and in line with this symbolism it is deemed "hallowed ground" and is respected as such.

A term used in line with the Parade Ground is "holding ground" and by definition is "troops keeping the ground" On selected unit ceremonial occasions troops are positioned at the corners of a parade ground to "hold ground"; these troops are equipped with weapons which range from lances to mortars through to guns. This symbolism is to afford protection to the unit parading in order to permit it to carry out its ceremonial duties safely.

Holding ground should not be confused with the placement of old Artillery pieces at the corners of a parade ground. These pieces are placed in these positions more as a decoration than as some historic symbol; therefore their position has no meaning either historically or by tradition.

Army web site—Traditions



Oksapmin Patrol Post and Airstrip (2,044m abs) 1960's—since upgraded. (Photo UQ Anthropology Museum)

Lawrence Dominic McCarthy VC by W. H. Connell

Lawrence Dominic McCarthy (1892?-1975), named at birth Florence Joseph, soldier, commercial traveller and building superintendent, was born probably on 21 January 1892 at York, Western Australia, son of Florence McCarthy of Cork, Ireland, and his wife Anne, née Sherry. His parents died when he was very young and he was brought up in Clontarf Orphanage, Perth, and educated in Catholic schools.

McCarthy was working as a contractor when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 16 October 1914; he was posted as a private to the 16th Battalion and sailed for Egypt in December. On 26 April 1915 'Fat'—the appropriate and affectionate nickname earned by his 'ample frame'—landed at Gallipoli with 'C' Company. Appointed Lance Corporal on 13 May, he was promoted Corporal on 19 July and Sergeant on 1 September. That month he was evacuated because of illness, returning to duty in November. On 20 December he left Gallipoli with the last party of his battalion.

The 16th Battalion reached France in June 1916 and took part in heavy fighting around Pozières and Mouquet Farm in August. On 8 March 1917 McCarthy was appointed Company Sergeant Major and on 10 April was commissioned Second Lieutenant. Next day he was wounded at Bullecourt and evacuated to England, rejoining his unit on 9 July. A Lieutenant

from 1 November, he received the French Croix de Guerre at Beaumetz two days later. From 31 January 1918 he was posted to the 13th Training Battalion, Tidworth, England, returning to the 16th in time for the offensive of 8 August.

Near Madam Wood, east of Vermandovillers, France, on 23 August McCarthy performed what the **official war historian rated as 'perhaps the most effective feat of individual fighting in the history of the A.I.F., next to Jacka's at Pozières'**. The 16th Battalion, with McCarthy commanding 'D' Company, had attained its objectives but the battalion on the



left was unable to make headway. Accompanied by Sergeant F. J. Robbins, D.C.M., M.M., McCarthy attacked the German machine-gun posts which were preventing its advance. They raced into the enemy trench system, shooting and bombing as they went, destroying three machine-gun positions. When his mate fell wounded, McCarthy pressed on, picking up German bombs as he continued to fight down the trench 'inflicting heavy casualties'. Coming upon another enemy pocket, he shot two officers and bombed the

post until a blood-stained handkerchief signalled the surrender of the forty occupants.

This feat of bravery, which resulted in the award of the Victoria Cross, had an extraordinary conclusion. As the battalion historian records, 'the prisoners closed in on him from all sides ... and patted him on the back!' In twenty minutes he had killed twenty Germans, taken fifty prisoners and seized 500 yards (460 m) of the German front. This jovial hero believed that there was 'a V.C. in everybody if given a chance'.

On 21 November 1918 McCarthy was again evacuated, ill, to England. He returned home on 20 December 1919 and his A.I.F. appointment ended on 6 August 1920. In England, on 25 January 1919, he had married Florence (Flossie) Minnie Norville, at Weston-super-Mare, Somerset. **Their only child Lawrence Norville was killed in action on Bougainville in 1945.**

'Mac' moved from Western Australia to Victoria in 1926 where he joined the staff of the Sunshine Harvester Works. He remained with the company, mostly as a traveller in the Mallee, until the Depression forced staff reductions in 1934. From 1935 until his retirement in 1969 he was superintendent of the Trustees, Executors & Agency Co. Ltd building, Melbourne.

He attended the V.C. centenary celebrations in London in 1956 and was present at the opening of V.C. Corner at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, in 1964. A most popular, generous and unassuming man, he took a keen interest in community affairs.

Laurie McCarthy died at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, Melbourne, on 25 May 1975 and was cremated with full military honours. He was survived by his wife who donated his V.C. and medals to the Australian War Memorial, which also holds his portrait by Charles Wheeler.

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Get your relatives speaking to one another again by sending a heartfelt Christmas card with a picture of your family with an extra child nobody knows.

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Tragedy, 1942

The Japanese saw Rabaul as a strategic position in its defensive perimeter encompassing its expanding empire. With its fine harbour and sites for airfields, Rabaul's position on the

north-eastern tip of New Britain provided a path for its fleet and aircraft to command the extended island chain running south-east to isolate Australia from the US, the New Guinea mainland, and protect its central Pacific base at Truk from Allied attacks.

On 23 January 1942, the Japanese invaded Rabaul which was the start of the occupation of the New Guinea Islands, the first attack on an Australian Territory.

Rabaul was the capital of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea administered by Australia. The then Australian government had been scrupulous in observing the demands of the League of Nations in regard to the Mandated Territory. Up to 1939 it had refrained from making any defence preparations whatever. On 4 September 1939, on the outbreak of war in Europe, the Australian Army issued authority to form the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR). It was an unpaid militia force of about 500 expatriate residents from the provincial towns, principally from Rabaul and mainland Goldfield towns of Lae, Salamaua, Wau and Bulolo. About 100 residents formed a Company of NGVR in Rabaul.

The Australian Government decided not to train PNG people to fight or to join NGVR on the premises it was Australia's duty to protect them and ensure the Japanese would not take stronger action against them should an occupation occur.

Australia had been at war for over two years when the Pacific War commenced and most of its military resources were in the Middle East.

The first bombs fell on Rabaul on 4 January 1942. This initial attack concentrated on Lakunai Airstrip. Several bombs landed in a local compound killing 12 local people. On 8 January 1942 the last evacuation took place when MV *Malaita* left Rabaul embarking all Japanese internees from the territory and a few remaining European women and children who had arrived late for previous sailings.

The softening-up of Rabaul continued for three weeks prior to the invasion. On the 20th the obsolete Australian Wirraway aircraft were shot from the sky and a day later carrier-based dive-bomber destroyed the only two coastal guns. Many more casualties would have resulted during these bombings had it not been for early warning from several strategically positioned 'Coastwatchers'. The stage was set for the invasion.

The Japanese landing and carrier forces chosen to take Rabaul were the same that had taken Guam and, previously attacked, Pearl Harbour. The invasion forces assembled in the Marianas and the Carolines Islands between 5 and 13 January 1942; those for Rabaul at Guam, those for Kavieng at Truk. The South-Seas Detachment (Nankai-Shitai) left Guam for Rabaul on 16 January.

When the invasion came on 23 January the small Australian garrison, Lark Force, of about 1,400 men included 2/22nd Battalion and detached supporting units of, et al, anti-tank, engineers, anti-aircraft, signallers and ambulance and a company of NGVR. 1 Independent Company of about 225 men with headquarters in Kavieng, was a screening force spread throughout the Islands from Manus to New Caledonia.

The Lark Force men held their positions, fought, and withdrew to the jungle and mountains as the Japanese outflanked and pursued them. Many were caught and some massacred, but about 400 managed to elude the Japanese and, after a harrowing march that tested their endurance, reached the south and north coasts of New Britain. Australians from the New Guinea mainland formed a small fleet of boats, reached the scene, searched them out and took them to safety.

A disgusted Commander Mitsuo Fuchida of the Japanese attacking force said after the invasion: *"If ever a sledgehammer had been used to crack an egg, this was the time."*

One of the Rabaul hospital nurses described the scene she saw in the early morning light of 23rd January 1942: *'The sight that met our eyes was mind-boggling. Stretched as far as the eye could see were ships of every size and description: frigates, freighters, tankers, transports and barges. The fleet was moving slowly and silently around Praed Point at the tip of the Peninsula to join others already anchored at the foot of Rabaul and on the horizon two huge aircraft carriers stood like sentinels. ...the watchers stood mesmerised in stunned disbelief by this terrible spectacle.'*

Lark Force equipped with WW1 weapons and unsupported by either the Navy or Airforce was defeated by a superior force. It had no withdrawal plan.

The first few months of 1942 saw many atrocities by the invaders to soldiers and those living in Rabaul and nearby islands. Many captured Australian military and civilian internees were summarily murdered. On 3 and 4 February 1942, 160 Australians were massacred at Tol and Waitavalo Plantations after surrendering. Other Australian civilians and soldiers surrendered believing their families would know where they were. Over 1,100 spent five months in a prisoner camp in Rabaul working as forced labour on the wharves. On 22 June 1942 the officers were separated from the soldiers and civilians; the latter embarked *MV Montevideo Maru* in Rabaul, bound for Hainan Island, off the coast of China.

Nine days out from Rabaul in the early morning of 1 July 1942, after rounding the northern tip of Luzon Island, Philippines, the unmarked *MV Montevideo Maru* was torpedoed by the American submarine *USS Sturgeon*. The ship sank swiftly, and all 1,053 Australian soldiers and civilians went down with the ship. The sinking of *Montevideo Maru* remains Australia's greatest maritime disaster.

Although most of the Japanese seamen and marines reached Luzon Island, only a handful arrived in Manila, the others were killed enroute by Philippine guerrilla fighters.

The separated 80 or so officers and nurses boarded the *Naruto Maru* two weeks later bound for Japan, arrived safely and remained there until War's end.

The first Australians who arrived in Rabaul after the cease fire early September 1945, discovered over 93,000 occupying Japanese but only 26 European prisoners, four of the original civilians, one Australian soldier, 16 British soldiers transported from Singapore, four US airman and one NZ airman.

The Japanese forces in Rabaul, under *General Hitoshi Imamura, Commander in Chief of the Japanese Imperial South-eastern Army*, formally surrendered to the Australian 1st Army under the command of Lieutenant General Sturdee on 6 September 1945. Imamura was *later* found guilty of committing war crimes in violation of the Geneva and Hague.

The Rabaul and *Montevideo Maru* tragedy has not received the public awareness it warrants. Over 17 percent of all Australians who died as prisoners and internees of the Japanese died on the *Montevideo Maru*. Not knowing the fate of Rabaul families were left to wonder what had become of their men; the last letters being received early January 1942. It was not until early October 1945, over three years after the sinking that the families discovered their men's fate.

No formal investigation was ever made about this huge single loss. In 2010 both houses of the Australian Parliament belatedly expressed regret for the loss. On 1 July 2012, the 70th Anniversary of the sinking, a national Rabaul and *Montevideo Maru* Memorial was dedicated in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

Phillip Ainsworth 4 February 2023

Since this article was written the site of the Montevideo Maru has been located 4000m below the surface of the South China Sea
—see Page 1

Wilfred Stanley Arthur, DSO, DFC

Born to Stan and Betty Arthur in 1919, Wilfred Stanley Arthur grew up in the Queensland farming community of Yelarbon. His father, originally from Inverell, had served with the Australian Army Veterinary Corps in Egypt and France during World War I. At the time of his son's birth, Stan ran a small farm called 'Keetah' and was the local cattle tick inspector.

Arthur was most often called 'Stanley' like his dad, although he acquired many nicknames throughout life, such as 'Bandy', 'Wilf', 'Wolf' and 'Woof'. Arthur achieved good marks at the Yelarbon State School. In 1935, he boarded at Scots College, Warwick, where he excelled academically, at many sports and in the college cadets corps. He graduated from school in 1938.

Busy wartime service

Arthur enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) on 4 September 1939, the day after Australia declared war on Germany.

Arthur earned his wings on 3 March 1940 and served briefly with No. 22 (City of Sydney) Squadron RAAF. Then he was posted to No. 3 Squadron RAAF and embarked for the Middle East in July 1940, arriving in Egypt in August.



On 12 December 1940, Arthur shot down his first enemy aircraft. On 30 November 1941, he shot down another 4 in a single sortie over eastern Libya. For this action, Arthur was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

While recovering from burns in hospital, Arthur met an American-Armenian girl, Lucille 'Lucie' Petraki. They married on Christmas Eve 1941 in Alexandria and returned to Australia in March 1942. One report said that Lucie was disguised as a soldier on the troopship.

Arthur joined No. 76 Squadron RAAF in Townsville in April 1942. In October, he was promoted to squadron leader.

Then in January 1943, he took command of No. 75 Squadron RAAF at Milne Bay.

In April 1943, despite his failing guns, Arthur led the squadron against a large Japanese formation at Milne Bay. He survived to receive the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

In June 1943, Arthur became Wing Leader of No. 71 Wing, moving to Goodenough Island off Papua. Then in August, aged 24, he was promoted to group captain, a considerable achievement for an officer his age.

Arthur was injured in an aircraft accident in November 1943. After recovering, he commanded an operational training unit at Mildura, Victoria, before being posted to command No. 81 Wing at Noemfoor off West Papua.

In 1944, Arthur served in Australia as Commanding Officer of No. 2 Operational Training Unit. A son, Haig, was born to Arthur and Lucie on 5 February 1945. (In 1967, Haig served a tour in Vietnam with the Australian Army.)

In April 1945, Arthur took command of No. 78 Wing operating from Morotai Island in the Netherlands East Indies and was involved in the 'Morotai Mutiny'. This event was a protest by senior pilots against using RAAF fighters in a ground-attack role.

Arthur commanded 78 Wing in operations over Tarakan in May 1945. In July 1945, Group Captain Wilfred Arthur was on the island of Tarakan off Borneo's west coast. Australian troops

had captured Tarakan in May, the first of 3 major operations on Borneo. Arthur's Wing had flown in support of the invasion.

Arthur was on Tarakan when Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945. He was discharged from the RAAF in February 1946.

Life after the war

After the war, Arthur tried dairy farming in East Gippsland, worked in administration roles in Melbourne and Sydney, and then a government project role in South Vietnam.

Arthur finally settled in Darwin in 1967 and remained there until he died in 2000. He is buried in the Adelaide River War Cemetery.

Dept of Veterans Affairs—ANZAC Portal

Blonde city girl named Amy marries a Queensland rancher. One morning, on his way out to check on the cows, the rancher says to Amy, "The insemination man is coming over to impregnate one of our cows, so I drove a nail into the 2x4 just above where the cow's stall is in the barn. Please show him where the cow is when he gets here, OK?"

The rancher leaves for the fields. After a while, the artificial insemination man arrives and knocks on the front door. "I came to inseminate the cow," he said.

Amy takes him down to the barn. They walk along the row of cows, and when Amy sees the nail, she tells him, "This is the one right here."

The man, assuming he is dealing with an airhead blonde, asks, "Tell me, lady, 'cause I'm dying to know. How would YOU know that this is the right cow to be bred?"

"That's simple," she said. "By the nail that's over its stall," she explains very confidently.

Laughing rudely at her, the man says, "And what, pray tell, is the nail for?"

The blonde turns to walk away and says sweetly over her shoulder, "I guess it's to hang your pants on," she replied.

The PNG Independence Medal Award to Association Patron

On the eve of Anzac Day, 24 April 2023, the former Commander of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, Major General Jerry Singirok, presented the PNG Independence Medal to the Patron of the Association, Major General Professor John Pearn. Major General Singirok presented the Medal representing the Governor General of Papua New Guinea and "On Behalf of the People of Papua and New Guinea, for long and enduring service to Papua new Guinea, prior to Independence 1975".



Major General Jerry Singirok, former Chief of the PNG Defence Force, presenting the PNG Independence Medal to Major General Professor John Pearn

Major General Pearn had served in 2 Battalion, The Pacific Islands Regiment, in 1966 during Confrontation, based in the Sepik District in both Wewak and Vanimo, then on the border of Irian Jaya. He served again in 1967, based in both Port Moresby and in Lae and in the Morobe Peninsula. In 1969, John Pearn established the University Paediatric Unit in the Goroka Hospital, to whose opening he was also an official invited Guest. For almost five months he was the sole paediatrician caring for children in the Eastern Highlands, with a population exceeding 1 million



Major General John Pearn, Patron of the NGVR/PNGVR Ex-Members' Association; Mr Craig Ray, Legal Consultant to the Association; and Major General Jerry Singirok.

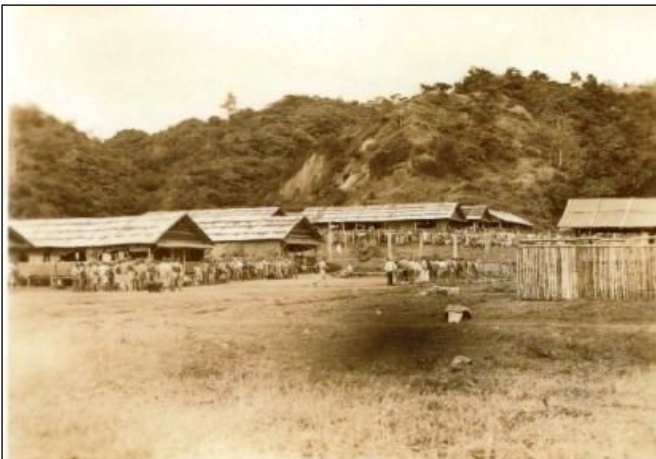
people. It established the weekly Hospital "Grand Rounds", the postgraduate teaching session which endured for many years thereafter. For every third night and every third weekend he was the sole doctor in charge of the accident and emergency department of that major referral Hospital.

During this period he was also the Training Major for C Company of the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, serving on weekly drill nights, on weekend bivouacs and annual camp.

During this period also, as a senior St John Ambulance doctor, he taught first aid classes and issued many St John First Aid Certificates.

Since that era, he has served in Papua New Guinea both (as Surgeon General of the Australian Defence Force) in the Australian response to the devastating Sepik tsunami of July 1998, which witnessed the death by drowning of tens of thousands of Papua New Guineans and the total destruction of some 18 villages along the Sepik littoral. On several occasions he served also as the External Examiner to the Faculty of Medicine based in Port Moresby.

In receipt of the Independence Medal, Major General Pearn joins many other colleagues of the NGVR/PNGVR Ex-Members' Association who have proudly worn this decoration in recent decades.



Above. Japanese POW Compound Rabaul 1944
Below. Chinatown, Rabaul 1944. Photos Ross Eastgate



The Worst Single day in Australia's Military History

While there are other more famous WWI battles - such as Fromelles or the ANZAC Cove landing - we rarely hear about a battle that accounted for the deadliest day in Australia's history. The battle for Broodseinde Ridge in Belgium on 4 October 1917 saw 1,279 Australian troops die in just one day of fighting.

Broodseinde Offensive - a 'bite and hold' strategy employed by the Allies after three years of fighting on the Western Front. The attack consisted of 12 Allied divisions (three Australian, one New Zealand and eight British) against 10 German divisions.

It was a chilly 16 degrees Celsius that morning, with a misty drizzle falling from the grey sky. It had been raining for several days and the ground was a sodden, muddy quagmire. Another 5mm of rain would fall on the day of the battle. The Germans had the high ground and had prepared and planned an attack for the same time and place as the Allies. Charles Bean and Keith Murdoch were also present to watch the attack. Using the cover of darkness, the Australians moved to their hop-off trench and were in position in no man's land by about midnight. Here they waited.

The German artillery barrage began at about 5.20am and by 5.30am it had intensified to become a heavy bombardment. What the Allied army did not know was that the Germans were about to attack Zonnebeke, where the Australian 2nd Division were from. Most of the German barrage fell onto the 1st and 2nd Divisions. At this point, Bean guessed they lost a seventh of the men, including those killed or wounded. The barrage lasted about 15 minutes.

By 5.45am there were lines of Germans advancing towards the Allied positions. One Australian officer wrote that the Australian losses were so great from the German artillery that they were glad they could get going.



Supporting troops of the 1st Aust Div. walking on a duckboard track move up to relieve their comrades.

When the sun rose at 6am, the Allies followed behind their artillery - slipping and sliding in the mud and bomb craters - as the barrage crept forward towards the German

lines. They walked about 90 metres before lines of Germans emerged out of the chilly mist walking towards them with fixed bayonets. The Germans shot and then retreated, with the Allies in hot pursuit, following them back to their positions.

They reached the first objective - called the red line positions on the battle map - between 6.45am and 7.20am. They were supposed to wait there until 8.10am, but they kept up the momentum and moved forward to the final blue line objective, not wanting to give the Germans time to set up their defensive positions.

As the Australians approached, the Germans opened fire with their whizzbang 77mm artillery rounds. They did so from atop defensive positions on multiple pill boxes, machine gun posts and barbed wired entanglements still in place from the Allied bombardment.

With the cover of darkness now gone, it was about teamwork, brains, speed and probably some bloody mindedness. The Lewis machine gunners fired at the German machine gunners to make them duck their heads down, allowing other men to get close enough to put grenades into the German pillboxes and flush them out.



Members of the 5th Aust Field Ambulance bringing in wounded.

The Australians achieved their final objectives by mid-morning, when they consolidated their new positions. During the day, the Germans counter attacked fiercely with men and artillery, but the Australians held on.

Later that day, Bean came across a German officer POW who said, "Your men are funny, they rob while they fight." His comment referred to the souvenir hunting conducted by uniformed Australian 'tourists'. In April 1918, the positions would unfortunately be re-taken by the Germans, only to return to the Allies in September 1918. Such is the ebb and flow of the tides of war.

As a result of the battle, two Australians were awarded Victoria Cross medals - Lewis McGee (buried in Tyne Cot Cemetery) of the 40th Battalion and Walter Peeler of the 3rd Battalion. Seven British soldiers were also awarded VCs for their actions on that day.

Australia suffered a total of 6,432 casualties - 1,279 killed and 5,153 wounded.

German history refers to the battle as 'the black day of October 4', while Australian history on the other hand tells us it was an overwhelming success because it achieved all its military objectives.

What is not widely known, however, is that numerically the battle for Broodseinde Ridge is the single worst day in Australia's military history.

To compare it to other notable battles, 751 people died at ANZAC Cove and almost 2,000 died as a result of the battle of Fromelles - both on the day and as a result of the battle in the days that followed - making Fromelles the deadliest battle in Australian history.

Qld RSL News 01/21



My new neighbour

**She is single,
She lives right across the road.
I can see her house from my study.
I watched as she arrived home from
work this evening.**

**I was surprised when she walked across
the street, up my drive and knocked on
the door.**

**I rushed to open it, she looked at me and said,
"I just arrived home and I am so horny! I have this strong urge
to have a good time, get drunk and make love all night! Are
you busy tonight?"**

**I quickly replied, "No, I am free and have no plans!"
She said, "Great! Could you mind my dog?" **Being a senior
citizen really sucks!****

Delivering on a promise

The Office of Australian War Graves continues to honour a pledge made more than 100 years ago.

Director of Australian War Graves Brig Paul Nothard has a deeply rooted connection to Australia's military history, with

many members of his family having served in the military at various times.

Serving on multiple operational deployments taught Brig Nothard what sacrifice means, and he remains deeply passionate about the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) focus on the respect and recognition of those who died serving their country.

"For those who made the ultimate sacrifice, the program of official commemorations delivers on a solemn promise made in 1917, with the formation of the Imperial War Graves Commission, now the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), to mark the graves of the fallen and to care for them in perpetuity," Brig Nothard said.

"On November 11, 1949, Adm Sir Martin Dunbar-Nasmith VC KCB delivered the CWGC Vice-Chairman's Remembrance Day Broadcast. Sir Dunbar-Nasmith provided an update on the work of the CWGC in constructing new war cemeteries and rebuilding WWI cemeteries that were damaged in battles during WWII.

"Sir Dunbar-Nasmith wrote of the enormity of the challenge in marking the graves of our war dead 'from above the Arctic Circle, in the deserts and swamps, in tropical jungles and among the more familiar surroundings of orchard, field and woodland'."

The CWGC went about its work diligently in France, Germany, Norway, Greece, Africa, Italy, Burma and Malaya (and many other places), taking the view that it was a privilege to mark every grave with a headstone, arrange for its care and upkeep and ensure it would never be disturbed.

Sir Dunbar-Nasmith went on to highlight the behind-the-scenes work in ensuring that:

- details engraved on headstones or cast into bronze were checked for accuracy with the next-of-kin (wherever possible);

- the headstone was transported, often over long distances, to the rightful grave;

- trees, border plants and homely flowers painted a befitting picture among green lawns;

these places were cared for and maintained by ex-service members. Commission staff or local labour, in perpetuity.

Today, in Australia, in almost every cemetery in the country, the work of caring for and maintaining war graves is carried out by the Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG) within DVA.

In total, the OAWG cares for and maintains 75 CWGC war cemeteries and war plots throughout Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The largest is the Bomana War Cemetery in Port Moresby. It contains the burials of 3824 Commonwealth service personnel from WW1 and records the



Sydney War Cemetery. Part of Rookwood General Cemetery.



Bomana War Cemetery, Port Moresby, PNG.

names of a further 750 on the Port Moresby Memorial to the Missing, for those who have no known graves. Bomana contains more Australian graves than any other cemetery in the world.

Sydney War Cemetery, the largest in Australia, contains the graves of 732 Commonwealth service personnel who died in Australia during both world wars, and records the names of a further 750 on the Sydney Memorial to the Missing.

One of the most remote sites is the Geraldton War Cemetery, containing 84 graves from WW11. This cemetery includes the final resting place of an unknown serviceman, whose body washed ashore on Christmas Island some days after the sinking of 11MAS Sydney on November 19, 1941.



Bita Paka War Cemetery, Rabaul, PNG.

In total, OAWG cares for the graves and official commemorations of 13,480 service personnel from Commonwealth nations who served, died and were commemorated in Australia during both world wars. Additionally, OAWG cares for the official commemoration of more than 323,000 Australian service personnel from all wars and conflicts who died during or as a result of their war service, in more than 2330 locations throughout Australia.

When asked why it was important to build memorials to our fallen veterans, Brig Nothard reflected on Sir Dunbar-Nasmith's words of 1949: "I can only ask in reply: Is it thinkable that our [veterans'] graves, lying scattered over the face of the Earth, should be left unmarked and neglected? And if we believe the sacrifice of all was equal, is it right that those whose graves are lost, should remain unhonoured and uncommemorated?"

He also explained the higher purpose of maintaining memorials: "When we do something for the living, we provide for a material need. When we build in honour of the dead, we

enshrine for all time their unconquerable spirit."

Brig Nothard said these words were as relevant now as they were in 1949, and in 1917, and it remained a great privilege for the staff of the OAWG to continue to deliver this work.

Army Newspaper 1486

Lemon Pickers Needed - ad in the Gayndah Times paper.

Ms. Sally Mulligan of, Launceston, Tasmania, read it, and decided to apply for one of the jobs that most Tasmanians are not willing to do. She submitted her application for a job as a Lemon Fruit Picker, but seemed far too qualified for the job. She has a liberal arts degree from the University of Tasmania (Sandy Bay) and a master's degree from Monash University (Melbourne). For a number of years she had worked as a social worker and also as a school teacher. The citrus farm owner studied her application, frowned, and said, "I see that you are well educated, and have an impressive resume. However, I have to ask you, have you had any actual experience in picking lemons?" "Well, as a matter of fact, I have." She continued, "I've been divorced three times, owned two Holdens, voted twice for Kevin Rudd and once for Julia Gillard." She started work yesterday!

Remembering Kokoda

Several events have been organised to mark the 80th year since the Kokoda Track Campaign in Papua New Guinea during World War Two.

On one of them, after starting from opposite ends of the track, soldiers from 16th Battalion, Royal Western Australia Regiment (16RWAR) and 39th Operational Support Battalion (39OSB) came together for a dawn service at a site on Brigade Hill on September 6 to commemorate the 62 Australian soldiers killed in fighting there.

The sounds of insects and the occasional bird that could be heard during the ceremony were a far cry from those of gunfire, grenades and shouted orders that rang out across the battle site 80 years ago.

Over two days' fighting in September 1942, Japanese forces engaged the forward Australian elements at Mission Ridge, before flanking and sending an attack force up Brigade Hill.

Despite fierce resistance, the Japanese exploited gaps in the line and forced the Aussies off the high ground and into the jungle.

16RWAR is a successor unit to 2/16 Battalion, which fought in the battle, while 39OSB carries lineage of militia unit 39 Battalion, one of the first committed to fight in the Kokoda campaign.

Commanding Officer 16RWAR Lieutenant Colonel Leigh Partridge said the mud, mountains and vegetation would have made the area difficult to fight in.

"During this battle there were bayonet attacks, brutal close combat. There was encirclement, there were counter-attacks and then Australian elements broke contact and moved to the rear to establish subsequent defensive positions," he said.

Just before the battle, 39 Battalion – who'd been fighting without rest for weeks – were relieved by the 2/27 Battalion on nearby Mission Ridge.

They moved past 2/14 and 2/16 Battalions on their way back.

"We are re-enacting what was a rear passage of lines with the 39th withdrawing from the north and the 2/16 Bn reinforcing from the south," Lieutenant Colonel Partridge said.

The Japanese flanking attack up Brigade Hill cut off the three infantry battalions from their HQ.

Counter-attacks from the 2/14 and 2/16 overran several Japanese positions but they were forced back by enemy reinforcements.

HQ troops later withdrew down the track, while the infantry battalions were forced down a steep jungle-covered mountain.

The 2/14 and 2/16 made it to HQ shortly after, but the 2/27 was stuck in the jungle for about two weeks, trying to reach retreating friendly forces.

Following the service, commanding officer 39OSB Lieutenant Colonel David Ready paid tribute to the link between his unit and the Papuan people.

"The Papuan Infantry Battalion and the 39th were the first two units committed to battle. There's 80 years of shared fighting history," he said.

"A lot of people remember the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, not the fact that the Papuans fought as well.

"Without them, there's no way you could fight effectively in this environment."

Army Newsletter 1521



Contingents from 16RWAR and 39OSB stand at attention during a dawn service commemorating 80 years since the start of the Battle of Brigade Hill, along the Kokoda Trail.

2/4th Field Regiment WW1 Laurence Tilley

My Father John E Tilley was a bombardier in the 2/4th Field Regiment part of the Australian 7th Division. He completed three international combat tours. Enlisting 27 May 1940 and discharged on the 5th December 1945. A total effective period of 1973 days. 789 active service in Australia, and 919 days of active service over seas. In early September 1943 these guys made Australian Military Artillery history when the 54th Battery deployed a detachment of 31 artillerymen and two Short 25-pound artillery pieces to support the US 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment's airborne landing at Nadzab.

Following the formation of the 6th Division, in early 1940 it was decided that the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF) would be expanded. The decision to raise the 7th Division was made in February 1940 and, following the appointment of its first commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Barker, the 2/4th Field Regiment began recruiting at Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne, on 7 May. Many of its first officers and men came from the 4th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, of the pre-war Militia, based at St Kilda, Melbourne. The Regiment was formed and trained at Puckapunyal, Victoria, where it had two batteries - 7th and 8th - each consisting of three troops and four 18-pounder guns.

The Regiment embarked for overseas service in October, leaving Port Melbourne on 21 October and arriving in Egypt in November. Disembarking at El Kantara, Suez, the Regiment trav-

elled by train to Deir Suneid, Palestine. However, the Regiment did not receive its first guns until January 1941 and it was not until mid-April, when the unit was at Ikingi Maryut, that it received its full compliment of 25-pounders, 18-pounders, and 4.5 inch howitzers.

With Australian and British troops besieged at Tobruk, the 7th Division, less a brigade that was part of the Tobruk garrison, moved to help defend the Mersa Matruh fortress, in Egypt. While there, four of the Regiment's guns went forward in an anti-tank role. In May the 9th Division's artillery, which had not accompanied the infantry forward to Tobruk because of a lack of transport, replaced the 7th Division's artillery at Matruh, as the 7th Division was preparing for the Allies invasion of Vichy Syria. As part of the preparations for the new offensive, when the 2/4th was at Tel el Kebir, it received 12 new 25-pounder guns and moved to Affula by the end of May.

The invasion of Syria was to occur on three axes, with the 2/4th supporting the 7th Division's 21st Brigade as it advanced along the coast. The Regiment crossed the borders on 8 June and its 7th Battery, part of the advance guard overlooking the Litani River, fired the first shots. Thereafter, single guns and sections were continually used forward to anti-tank and direct-fire tasks. The Regiment also experienced counter battery fire and came under enemy air attack.

On 9 June the Regiment came under fire from a French sloop, which came close to shore, and shelled and machine-gunned the Regiment's positions near Sidon. In accordance with orders not to reveal their position, the gunners took cover but, when the sloop began to move out to sea, the Regiment's guns opened fire, at a range of 4,000 yards, until the ship was out of range. The next day, 10 June, the Regiment fired 1,440 rounds as it supported the attack on Aldoun. There was heavy fighting for the next ten days, as the Regiment's gunners helped repel French tank attacks, although members of a forward gun were killed and wounded when they sustained direct hits while engaging a French gun over open sights. My father was Wounded In Action for the first time on the 16/6/1941. One of the guns had to be abandoned but was later recovered. Before Saida fell on 20 June, a French sloop came in close to shore, shelling the 21st Brigade, but it was driven off by the Regiment's artillery fire. The final major operation of the campaign was the battle for Damour, which began on 5 July and during which the Regiment fired thousands of rounds to support the attack. Fighting lasted until 12 July when an armistice was signed, bringing an end to the campaign with the surrender of Vichy French forces. During the Syrian campaign, Australian artillery had fired 147,399 rounds, 40,152 of which were fired by the 2/4th.

The Regiment spent the rest of the year in Syria as part of the garrison force and were based at Jdaide. In September artillery Regiments were reorganised and the Regiment formed a third battery - the 54th. In December the 7th Division was relieved by the 9th Division in Syria, as the 6th and 7th Division were to return to Australia. The last members of the 2/4th left the Middle East at the end of January and the Regiment arrived in Australia, at Port Adelaide, on 23 March.

The unit reformed in the Nambour area, in Queensland, in May. The Regiment exercised with the 25th Brigade on the Caloundra Range, and provided personnel for X and Y Batteries. X Battery made up part of Lilliput Force, which was sent to New Guinea, while Y Battery went to Papua to help provide some of the defences for Milne Bay.

The 2/4th spent the first months of 1943 in manoeuvres throughout south-east Queensland. In March the Regiment received the first of the new 25-pounder Mk II short guns, which were better suited to jungle warfare. In April the unit conducted amphibious training east of Caboolture, at Toorbul Point, before moving to the Atherton Tablelands, Queensland, in May, where it rejoined the 7th Division.

By 1943 the fighting had moved from Papua to New Guinea.

The 9th Division, having recently returned from the Middle East, was to make an amphibious landing on New Guinea's coast near the Japanese base at Lae, while the 7th Division would be flown to the Markham Valley and advance towards Lae both overland and in an air operation. The 25th Brigade was to lead the 7th Division's advance but, in order to facilitate this, the American 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment had to first secure the airfield at Nadzab. In what was a first for Australian artillery, the part of a section from the 2/4th made the drop with the American paratroops. This was done in great secrecy and with only one practice jump but the 31 gunners from 54 Battery, led by Lieutenant John Pearson, and two 25-pounder shorts, safely made the drop into Nadzab on 5 September. Thereafter, the 25th Brigade was flown in and went on to capture Lae, just ahead of the 9th Division. The 2/4th remained in New Guinea for the next four months and supported the 7th Division's campaign through the Ramu Valley, the assault on Shaggy Ridge, and in the Finisterres.



On 1 February 1944 the 2/4th was relieved by the 4th Field Regiment, and the former was flown back to Port Moresby and then sailed back to Australia. It participated in the 7th Division march through the streets of Melbourne and, after leave, reformed at Strathpine, near Brisbane, before moving to Kairi, on the Atherton Tablelands, in late August. The war was nearly over before the 2/4th went into action again.

In early June 1945 the Regiment moved to Morotai, which was being used as a staging area for the Australian operations on Borneo. The 9th Division made amphibious landings at Taranak and north Borneo in May and June, while the 7th Division landed at Balikpapan on 1 July. 8th Battery was the Regiment's first unit ashore and the first to report "ready". Although there had been a massive pre-invasion air and naval bombardment of the landing beaches, the Division still experienced heavy fighting as it pushed inland. In the first four days of the campaign the 2/4th fired more than 10,000 rounds. After about two weeks the campaign was all but over and on 15 August Japan announced its surrender.

Following the end of the war, 54th Battery was disbanded and, over time, the Regiment's ranks reduced as men volunteered for the occupation of Japan or were discharged. Those left in the Regiment returned to Australia and the final elements of its headquarters went into camp at Chermside, Brisbane. The 2/4th Field Regiment was disbanded on 7 February 1946.

Australian Military History

Ed. Note. One of my now deceased friends in Sydney, WO John Lane, jumped with the 2/4th at Nadzab. He made the parachute jump and told me, when I was going to a Parachute Course at Williamtown, NSW, that he was not given any practice jump as it was considered that someone could get injured in the practice jump.

Longest Reconnaissance Trip by an Australian Land Based Aircraft during WW11

On 9 January 1942, two new and specially adapted long-range Mark IV Hudsons from 6 Squadron RAAF took off from their base in Richmond, New South Wales, and headed north to Townsville. After a brief stop, it was on to Kavieng on New Ireland. Here, one aircraft developed mechanical trouble, leaving the pilot of the other Hudson, 26-year-old Flight Lieutenant Bob Yeowart, a former accountant from Brisbane, and his co-pilot, Flying Officer William Green, to press on alone. Their highly secret mission would be daring, dangerous and almost certainly the only useful Allied air operation of the entire Rabaul campaign.

The flight had been ordered a week earlier from the highest level of the RAAF, upon the instigation of Lieutenant-Commander Long, in order to ascertain exactly what kind of force the Japanese had planned to use against Rabaul. The crews' briefing, in which both Long and the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, had participated, had lasted four days. Yeowart and Green were under no delusions that their mission was of the utmost importance, and their chances of returning slim.

At dawn the next morning, 10 January, Yeowart received the final prearranged signal, 'North wind', directing him to proceed from Kavieng to the final leg of the mission. Opening the throttles of his heavily laden aircraft, which had been fitted with extra fuel tanks and cameras. Yeowart bumped along the rough runway, slowly gathering speed. With flaps lowered a few degrees for extra lift, the Hudson pulled itself into the air, its underside brushing through a tall patch of kunai grass at the end of the strip before gaining height and turning its nose to the north.

Four and a half hours later, Yeowart arrived over the Japanese stronghold of Truk in Micronesia where, protected in part by a severe rainsquall, he switched on his cameras and began photographing the main island, Tol, and its large harbour. From 13,000 feet, in grim silence, he and his crew of four took in the sight of an awesome armada of warships lying at anchor below.

In a remarkable twenty-five minutes, Yeowart completed his first camera run, photographing cruisers, destroyers, merchant vessels - as well as one mammoth vessel which looked like an aircraft carrier - before making another pass over an island in the harbour which had been excavated to form a runway. Here, twenty-seven bombers and other aircraft had been parked wingtip to wingtip. Eventually, after attracting increasingly accurate groundfire and enduring worsening weather, he pulled away and headed south.

Hours later, and without further incident, he landed back at Rabaul, picking his way through recently formed bomb craters. Greeted by 24 Squadron commander John Lerew, Yeowart informed him that, from what he had seen over Truk, far worse was on its way. Lerew advised Yeowart to depart immediately after refuelling for his own safety. When he eventually reached Townsville, though exhausted, Yeowart and his crew could not rest until word had come through that their cameras had worked and the photographs had been successfully processed.

Yeowart's epic flight was eventually recorded as the longest reconnaissance trip undertaken by any land-based RAAF for the entire war, and the first active air mission ever conducted against an enemy from Australian territory. More importantly, it gave clear indication of exactly what would soon be headed towards Rabaul. Despite his skill and gallantry. Yeowart received no award of any kind.

Extract from "Australia's Secret Army" by Michael Vietch..



Raggia Bird of Paradise. Found only in PNG, Eastern Indonesia and Eastern Australia.

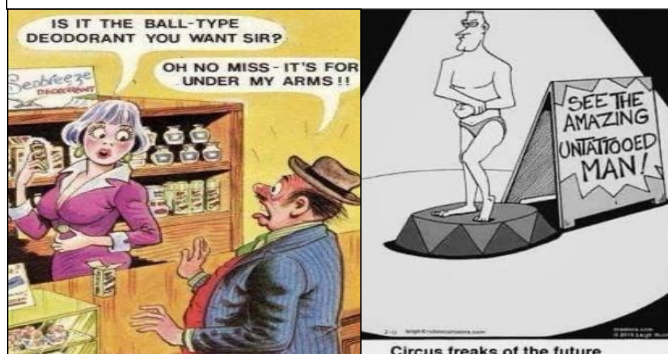
There are 41 species and 39 of them are found in PNG



1942. Fully loaded US Supply Ship in Pacific.



1942, Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels carrying wounded.
Photo Peter Tate.



Royal Australian Engineers Sgt Robert Burrowes V50814

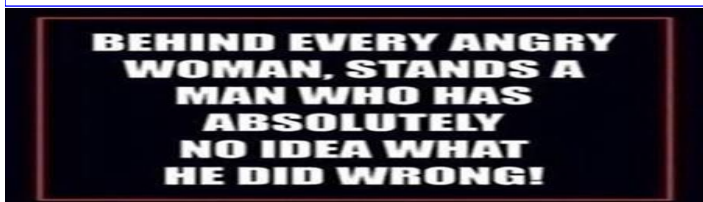
As an up-date of the article in the October issue of the 'Harim Tok Tok'. my older brother Robert was originally one of the 37 soldiers in the 34th Fortress Engineers based at the Point Nepean Fortress in Victoria. They were then deployed to Rabaul in mid-1941 as part of the military "Lark Force", and Robert was one of the soldiers responsible for the emplacement of two cannons at Praed Point, the entrance to Simpson Harbour, Rabaul. These cannon never fired a shot.

Ironically, after the many months of training at Rabaul, with its inevitable boredom prior to the outbreak of the Pacific war on 7 December 1941, and who had not been trained to live off any jungle conditions, the whole of the 37 men of the



34th Fortress Engineers were captured at Praed Point northeast of Rabaul. They had been disparagingly referred to as 'chocos', (that is 'chocolate soldiers') of the pre-war Militia, and who had at last been allowed to join the AIF with the coveted 'X' added to a new 'dog-tag' service number, and the grey edging round their uniform patches. They had then been organised for repatriation back to Australia, to be retrained for desert conditions

Fresh from my shower, I stand in front of the mirror, complaining to my husband that my breasts are too small. Instead of characteristically telling me it's not so, he uncharacteristically comes up with a suggestion.
"If you want your breasts to grow, then every day take a piece of toilet paper and rub it between your breast for a few seconds." Willing to try anything, I fetch a piece of toilet paper and I stand in front of the mirror, rubbing it between my breasts.
"How long will this take?" I ask.
"They will grow larger over a period of years," he replies. I stop and ask "Do you really think rubbing a piece of toilet paper between my breasts every day will make my breasts larger over the years?"
Without missing a beat he says, "Worked for your butt, didn't it?" He is still alive, and with a great deal of physical therapy, he may even walk again. Stupid, stupid man.



before redeployment to the Middle East war-front. Alas, too late! The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7 1941 and invaded Rabaul six weeks later, which sealed their fate.

Robert, who by this time was a Sergeant and had been recommended for officer training, was captured during the fall of Rabaul on 23 January 1942 and held prisoner and half-starved at the 2/22nd Battalion Malaguna Road camp. The POWs were employed as slaves to load and unload shipping and dig tunnels until they were put on the Japanese prisoner-of-war ship *Montevideo Maru* on 23rd June 1942.

On 1 July 1942, the unmarked and unescorted *Montevideo Maru* was torpedoed off Luzon by the *USS Sturgeon*. The ship sank in 11 minutes, with all 1,053 Australian prisoners of war killed. It was Australia's largest single loss of life in a maritime incident during the war; larger than the loss of 645 men on the HMAS Sydney. Robert's name is on the *Montevideo Maru nominal roll* and his final letter is below.

The letter below is from Robert who was held prisoner in the Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in Rabaul. It has been written to meet strict guidelines issued by the Japanese and it



Robert on bike mentioned in his letter, prior to the War.

has been censored. The letter was in a bag of mail that was air-dropped over Port Moresby by the Japanese.

The sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*, with Robert aboard, was not confirmed until after the war ended. The family received no news about Robert after his

capture, apart from this letter, which had been directed by the Japanese to write that they were okay and in "their care". This was false as the prisoners were ill-treated, killed if defiant, half starved with no medical supplies, and put to hard labour as slaves to unload ships and dig tunnels. Over 180 prisoners of Lark Force were massacred and even the majority of the surviving 400 escapees (including the officers who had been transferred to Tokyo) reached Australia but were deemed unfit to carry out their ongoing service duty.

The letter from Sgt Robert Burrowes was received 22 September 1942 - 7 weeks after he had drowned.

R. Burrowes
Rabaul

Dear Folks

Just a short note to let you know I'm alright. I am a prisoner under the care of the Japanese.

I can only write one letter so will you let Heather know. Also Sgt. Ellis Queenscliff and anyone else.

I hope you are all O.K. and haven't been worrying too much. Get Jim out if you possibly can.

Keep the old bike in good nick as I will need it again. I'll sign off now.

Don't worry. Cheerio.

Keep collecting allotment.

Love
Bob
Robert Burrowes

Thank you Jim Burrowes OAM, Coastwatcher WW11.

NEVER MAKE A WOMAN MAD.
THEY CAN REMEMBER STUFF
THAT HASN'T EVEN
HAPPENED YET.

Cairncross Dockyard

The Cairncross Dockyard was a shipyard beside the Brisbane River at Morningside, City of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. It included one of Australia's largest graving docks with an 8.5 metre deep water access, capable of taking Panamax vessels of up to 85,000 dwt, up to 263 metres long x 33.5 metres wide. It is second in size only to the Royal Australian Navy's Captain Cook Graving Dock in Sydney.

Construction of the dockyard began in 1942, and its graving dock opened in 1944. The dockyard closed in 2014, and the land on which it stands is to be sold for residential and commercial redevelopment.

History

The bombing of Darwin in February 1942 during World War II created an urgent need to increase Australia's capacity to service large naval and merchant ships. The South Brisbane dockyards (built in the 1880s) were too small to accommodate many modern ships plus the construction of the Story Bridge impacted on the access to that dockyard. A larger dockyard downstream of the Story Bridge was needed and an area near Thynne Road, Morningside on the Hamilton Reach was chosen. Although the name was to be the Brisbane Graving Dock, the site of the dockyards was on top of the riverside feature, the Cairncross Rocks, and so it acquired the name Cairncross. Cairncross Rocks in turn were named after one of Brisbane's pioneer businessmen William Cairncross who built Colmslie House in Bulimba.

The Queensland Government commenced a project to construct what became the Cairncross Dockyard in August 1942. The Commonwealth Government provided funding for the project shortly afterwards, and it became one of the Allied Works Council's highest-priority projects. The total cost of the dockyard was £1,070,470, of which the Commonwealth Government contributed £425,000 and the Queensland Government the remainder.

Construction of the Brisbane Graving Dock commenced in September 1942 with workers and equipment redeployed from the Somerset Dam project. The project was led by the Queensland Government's Main Roads Commission and Department of Harbours and Marine Works on behalf of the Allied Works Council. A total of 800 workers were employed on the site, with the workforce being organised into three eight hour shifts to accelerate construction.

The first ship entered the dockyard on 22 June 1944. The official history of Australia in World War II states that while the dockyard was "constructed at a remarkable rate", by the time it was ready the peak demand for ship repair facilities had passed. Nevertheless, by 31 May 1946 the graving dock had been used by 128 ships, including the British aircraft carriers *HMS Slinger* and *Ulicorn* as well as large numbers of other warships and merchant vessels. The opening of the Cairncross Dockyard led to a decline in use of the smaller South Brisbane Dry Dock, which eventually closed in 1972 and became part of the Queensland Maritime Museum.

Although owned by the Queensland Government, the Australian Government controlled its use until after World War II. A major refurbishment of the dockyard occurred in the 1970s. However, frequent industrial action at the dockyard caused many large ships to be out of service far longer than needed and large ship owners became reluctant to use the dockyard. This was a major factor in the dockyard being unprofitable, leading to its closure in

1987.

In August 1995, the dock was re-opened by a private consortium, the Keppel Cairncross Shipyard Limited, who undertook a major refurbishment. In 2000 it was purchased by Forgacs Groups. However, the dockyard closed again on 4 July 2014, saying there was not enough work as ship owners were deterred from using it due to the high Australian dollar and a reputation for industrial unrest and government over-regulation.

In April 2016, Forgacs announced that the 14-hectare (35-acre) site with 700 metres (2,300 ft) of river frontage would be sold for residential housing, although it would need to be rezoned first. Forgacs attributed the sale to their contract to build destroyers coming to an end.

Engineering heritage

The graving dock received a Historic Engineering Marker from Engineers Australia as part of its Engineering Heritage Recognition Program.

Wikipedia.

Announcement by ABC 21 Oct 2022

A group of Brisbane residents is making an 11th hour attempt to save an historic World War II dry dock from development by one of the state's biggest construction companies.

Key points:

The Cairncross naval graving dry dock was built in 1942

Some Brisbane residents want the Morningside site preserved

Lendlease has applied to Brisbane City Council to fill in the site

Architectural historian and owner of historic research service The House Detective, Marianne Taylor, has submitted a request to Brisbane City Council to add Morningside's Cairncross naval graving dry dock to its heritage register.

Ms Taylor also wants to nominate it to be added to the Queensland Heritage Register.

Lendlease owns the site at 405 Thynne Road, which was built to service and repair navy ships and submarines during WWII.

An application has been lodged with BCC to fill in the site but a Lendlease spokesperson said it would "continue to work with relevant stakeholders on a number of potential options for the site".



Plaque at the AWM dedicated to the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles & Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit

The plaque commemorates the personnel that served in the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR) and the Australian New Guinea Administrative (ANGAU) during World War Two.

The plaque location is indicated by the red poppy in the second image.

The New Guinea Volunteer Rifles was initially raised as a unit of the Militia from white Australian and European expatriates in



New Guinea upon the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, before being activated for full-time service prior to the Japa-

nese landings in early 1942. NGVR personnel then helped rescue survivors of Lark Force from Rabaul in February and March 1942. Between March and May, the NGVR monitored the Japanese bases which had been established in the Huon Gulf region, being the only Allied force in the area until the arrival of Kanga Force at Wau in May. The battalion subsequently established observation posts overlooking the main approaches and reported on Japanese movements.

Later, it inflicted significant casualties on the Japanese in a series of raids, and led them to believe that they faced a much larger opposing force. On 29 June, the NGVR and the newly arrived 2/5th Independent Company carried out a highly successful attack on the Japanese garrison in Salamaua, killing at least 113 men. When the focus shifted to the Milne Bay and Kokoda Track battles of August and September, the NGVR continued to man its posts overlooking the Japanese base areas. The Japanese were subsequently defeated in the Battle of Wau in January and February 1943, relieving the pressure on the NGVR. The battalion was disbanded in April 1943 due to attrition.

The Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) was a civil administration of Territory of Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea formed on 21 March 1942 during World War Two. The civil administration of both Papua and



the Mandated Territory of New Guinea were replaced by an Australian Army military government and came under the control of ANGAU from February 1942 until the end of World War Two.

Monument Australia.

Editor comment. In 1997 it was realised that the plaque had never been dedicated and a group of Association members travelled to Canberra for the Dedication of the plaque as well as the nearby PIR plaque. The Governor General attended the dedication ceremony as did Tom Lega MM and Harold Osborne, both NGVR/ANGAU during WW11.

Because the plaque is in the sunlight the colour has faded from the Colour Patches of the NGVR (L) and ANGAU (R).

When I get a headache I take two aspirin and keep away from children just like the bottle says

Vietnam War Commemorative Medallion and Certificate

To acknowledge the 50th anniversary of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will produce a Commemorative Medallion and Certificate of Commemoration.



The medallion and certificate will be made available to every living veteran, widows of veterans and other family members of veterans of the Vietnam War. Please note that only one medallion is available per Vietnam War veteran. While Australia can never repay the debt we owe to the 60,000 who served in Vietnam, this medallion and certificate are a small but meaningful way to honour their service and to recognise the sacrifice of those who never returned home.

The obverse design will feature the Commonwealth Coat of Arms with 'Vietnam War' inscribed at the top and 'Australia remembers' at the bottom. The medallion reverse design will feature words of thanks at the bottom with the years 1962-73 inscribed at the top to represent the years in which Australia was involved in the Vietnam War. The medallion also features a UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" Helicopter, a depiction of HMAS Sydney (III) "Vung Tau Ferry" and an Australian soldier holding an SLR.

The medallion will be presented in a display case and will include a card that explains the design and contains a brief expression of thanks.

The design of the commemorative certificate will complement the medallion. The design includes the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, 'Australia Remembers' wording and includes the signature of both the Governor-General and the Prime Minister.

The certificate will be contained within its own folder that will allow for independent display, framing and mounting.

Applications can be made online or by phone 1800 838 372 between 9am and 5pm AEST Monday to Friday and when prompted say the word 'medallions'.

Dept of Veterans Affairs



School of Infantry marks 50th year

With bayonets fixed, drums beating and band playing, the School of Infantry marked its 50th year in Singleton with a freedom-of-entry parade on March 17.

Singleton's population turned out in droves to witness and cheer on more than 300 soldiers as they paraded through the town centre.

School of Infantry Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Richard Thapthimthong led the parade before being stopped by the senior district police officer and two police on horseback.

The police granted the soldiers passage after Lieutenant Colonel Thapthimthong announced the school's right to enter.

"Freedom of entry is a recognition and reaffirmation of the connection that a garrison's community has with its garrison

soldiers," Lieutenant Colonel Thapthimthong said.

The Mayor of Singleton, after an inspection of the troops, handed the ceremonial scroll that detailed the right to freedom of entry to Lieutenant Colonel Thapthimthong.

The first freedom of entry in Singleton was held in 1966, seven years before the School of Infantry was moved there. This year's parade was the sixth to be held since then.

Tens of thousands of infantry soldiers have leopard-crawled, pack-marched, defended and assaulted through the school's training in its 50-year history.

Lieutenant Colonel Thapthimthong said the school was the hub of the infantry wheel, with every soldier and officer having called Singleton home at some time during their basic training.

"Over the past 50 years, Australia has seen a multitude of conflicts, domestic operations and international deployments," Lieutenant Colonel Thapthimthong said.

"Every one of them involved infantry soldiers, and every one of those soldiers got their baseline training here at Singleton.

"The job has not changed. So, in 2023, we continue to prepare soldiers and officers in world-class infantry skills."

Contact Newsletter 192

How Cryptocurrency Works

Not long ago a merchant found many monkeys living near a certain village. One day he came into the village stating that he wanted to buy these monkeys.

He announced that he would buy the monkeys for \$100 each.

The villagers thought that this man must be crazy,

"How can somebody buy stray monkeys at \$100 each?"

Why would he buy stray monkeys at \$100 each?"

Still people caught some monkeys and sold them to the Merchant for \$100 each.

This news spread like wildfire. More people caught monkeys and sold them to the Merchant.

After a few days, the Merchant announced that he would now buy monkeys for \$200 each. Now even the laziest villagers ran around to catch the remaining monkeys! They sold the remaining monkeys at \$200 each.

The Merchant then announced that he would buy monkeys for \$500 each!

The villagers started to lose sleep! They caught six or seven monkeys, which was all that were left and got \$500 each. The villagers were awaiting anxiously for the next announcement. Then the Merchant proclaimed that he is going on holiday for a week, but when he returned would buy monkeys at \$1000 each! He also said that in his absence his Employee would be in charge to take care of the monkeys he had purchased.

The Merchant went on holiday.

The villagers were frantic and very sad as there were no more monkeys left for them to sell at \$1000 each as promised by the Merchant, but then the Merchant's Employee publicized that he would secretly sell some monkeys at \$700 each.

The news spread like wildfire as the Merchant had promised that upon his return monkeys would be purchased for \$1000 each, a \$300 profit for each monkey.

The next day the villagers queued up near the monkey cage.

The Employee sold all the monkeys at \$700 each. The rich villagers bought monkeys in large lots, and the poor borrowed money from money lenders and bought the rest of the monkeys. The villagers took care of their monkeys and waited for the Merchant to return.

When the Merchant didn't return they searched to and fro for the Employee, but he could not be found either. Eventually the Villagers realized that they had been duped into buying the useless stray monkeys at \$700 each and were now unable to sell them for any amount.

This Monkey Business is now known as cryptocurrency.



Agiru Highway opens, PNG

THE 94km Agiru Highway linking Gulf, Southern Highlands and Hela is open for use, says Minister for Works and Highways Solan Mirisim. Mirisim said the road was linked to the Okuk Highway and connected the Southern, Highlands and Mamose regions.



“The Agiru Highway starts in Kikori, links up with the Okuk Highway and ends at either Lae or Madang,” he said. “For the first time in PNG, three regions are connected by road.

“The highway also known as Route 700 which started

in 2016 was based on a dream to build an uninterrupted road network that will connect Kikori to the Highlands Highway at Kinsenpoi Junction in Southern Highlands and onwards to link Ramu, Madang Highway connecting the northern region. “We have just achieved that.

“Our people in those rural enclaves can now seek markets for their rural produce and access Government services through this connected missing link. “Over 60 per cent of this road is sealed and although 40 per cent is not yet sealed, but it is usable. “The Government is very committed to funding this road and we hope to seal the remaining 40 per cent in the medium term.”

Prime Minister James Marape, who spent his Christmas and New Year driving along these highways was grateful and very pleased at this milestone achievement. “I thank the Works and Highways Department for connecting the south and north through opening up of the Erave to Simbering Road,” he said.

National Newspaper 12 Jan 2023.



ANZAC Day 2023

Cooler but fine and windy weather made for more comfortable marching conditions for our Brisbane Anzac Day march this year, a sharp contrast to last year’s rain sodden affair. Although

Army preceded Navy and Air Force and we were number 38 to march off, it was an extremely slow start.

About 20 members and friends made up our marching contingent with another four with carers riding in the jeeps. Although we marched without music, friendly observers remarked how well we looked particularly as we passed the King George Square saluting platform.

President Phil Ainsworth lead the group followed by flag bearers Peter Rogers (the younger) carrying the Australian flag, Kieran Nelson with the PNG flag and Mike Griffin with the Regiment’s flag. The NGVR/PNGVR Banner bearers were Ian Thompson and Gil Harvey- Hall. Given the windy conditions, the flag and banner carriers did a remarkable job, thank you.

Following the march we immediately moved to the usual watering hole, the Stock Exchange Hotel for our Reunion. Thirty-eight members and friends were in attendance to enjoy the camaraderie and finger food.

Phil Ainsworth was asked and he gave a briefing about the recent finding of the MV Montevideo Maru by the Silent World Foundation Team in the Fugro Equator ship in the South China Sea about 100km north-west of the northern tip of Luzon Island, Philippines. Phil, a member of this team received daily briefings from Andrea Williams who was on the ship at the time of the find.

Overall it was a very pleasant day. Thank you to Colin Gould and Paul Brown for arranging the day, with a special thank you to Paul Brown for his multiple tasking on the day when Colin was unable to attend.



Waiting for the Jeeps. Douglas Ng, Roy Edward, Paul Brown. Paul was the organiser of the jeeps for the day and was unable to march with the group as usual.



The March. Ian Thompson and Gil Harvey-Hall carrying the banner had a difficult job with a strong wind blowing.



Before the March. Brisbane. Gerry McGrade, Ian Thompson, Charles Blake & sons, Glen O'Brien, Martin O'Sullivan, John McGrath, Phil Ainsworth, Gil Harvey-Hall Kevin Shorthouse, Mal Zimmerman, Simon Hui, Robert Jackway-Koomans and Ken Duus



Phil Ainsworth giving his address re the finding of the M.M.



Fran Ng, Ian Thompson, John McGrath, Doug Ng, Glen O'Brien



Simon Hui, Gerry McGrade, Dr. Gorgia Phillips, Joyce McGrade, Charles Blake, Tina Vetada



Terri Ng, Sarah Weight, Doug Ng, Wendi Ng, Fran Ng.



Martin O'Sullivan, Ian Thompson Phil Ainsworth



Noel Kenna at Warrnambool, Vic.



Karl Aschhoff at the service at his nursing home in Charleville



Dawn Service Madang.



Above—Dawn Service Port Moresby

Below—Dawn Service Rabaul.



VALE Cpl Michael RAASCH

860073 11.3.1942. – 25.2.2023

Michael was born in Berlin with his father away with the German Army in Stalingrad, Russia, leaving him with his mother and young sister Gaby at a rather bad time in Berlin. When the city was being systematically destroyed the family fled into the countryside only to be chased back by the advancing Russian Army. He was able to recount several of not so nice stories of that particular episode.

He remained in post war Berlin and started school in the suburb of Spandau.

Post war Germany was a rather horrible place to live and as a result his parents separated. His mother worked for a British EME outfit as did his Uncle Paul. Soon a new family was formed. As Paul Raasch was Lufthansa's first engineering apprentice before the war, he was engaged to work for Lufthansa again. At this stage the family had moved to Hamburg.

It was sometime mid 1956, that Paul was engaged by Bobby Gibbes from Goroka TPNG to get two old German Luftwaffe Ju 52's back together and fly them to New Guinea. This happened in Feb 1957 and the family took some four weeks on a most adventurous trip to Goroka. The aircraft flew for several years with Gibbes Sepik Airways.

Michael went to school at St Mary's Convent School in Goroka to not only learn English, but also to grow as a teenager in the best place in the world, very different from his earlier life experiences. He was allowed to join 'C' Coy PNGVR despite being underage and still a German citizen. The Coy needed fresh blood as it's total strength was only around 10 strong. The CO Major Frank Hoeter, also the local Police Inspector, insisted that Michael and his brother Juergen join up.

A service highlight was the brothers selection for the 1959 ANZAC Day Honour Guard despite some sour comments from the local RSL about their Nationality.

In 1961 he left TPNG for Brisbane to study the last two years at St Peter's Lutheran College in Indooroopilly. He continued to serve with 'C' Coy having passed his junior NCO examinations. After Senior in 1962 he decided to study Engineering at UQ. Unfortunately this didn't turn out to be his future and he married wife Anne Fehlberg on 8 December 1965.

They joined the family in Goroka where he had a number of jobs trying out his luck and settling as Manager for Cottee's Passion-fruit factory in North Goroka.

He moved to Brisbane sometime in 1974/5 and worked as a



8 Pl, C Coy, PNGVR, 1959 in front of old drill hall in North Goroka.

L – R rear rank – Ian Fraser, Frank Hiob, ??, Darryl Sears, WO2 Jack Eggins and WO2 Burrows

Font rank – Michael Raasch, Juergen Raasch, Colin Green, Ken Weare, Jeff Wolfe and Pte Plumb (only ever known as such)



Before the mounting of the Catafalque Party, ANZAC Day, Goroka, 1960. WO2 Jack Eggins, Michael Raasch, Juergen Raasch

Tandy Electronics Store manager in the city and later on in Indooroopilly.

His later life then needed some readjustment as he was required to basically look after five grandsons that took up every minute of his life. It was an activity that he thoroughly enjoyed. He kept on meddling with computers and became quite expert in all things concerning those early DOS computers.

He enjoyed his first and last visit to Germany and Europe in 2008 where he met up with old family members in Berlin.

Unfortunately, he contracted Lymphoma in 2017 and had ongoing numerous medical problems spending his last years in and out of hospital finally succumbing to a Covid infection 14 days before his 81st Birthday.

Thank you brother Juergen.

LEST WE FORGET

The Association gratefully acknowledges the very generous donation of \$5,000 from the Estate of Bernice (Berry) Cosgrove. Berry and her husband Hank were strong supporters of the Association, attending many of our social functions and also providing funding for the improvement of the facilities at Jimboomba for the field dinners. A VALE notice for Berry appeared in HTT Vol 138 and for Hank in HTT Vol 127. RIP Berry, and thank you for your generous donation.

Don't Forget Saturday 21 October, 2023.

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

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

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

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

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

The Association would like to thank KING & Co Property Consultants for its continuing support, including the printing of this edition, together with the past 81 issues of Harim Tok Tok.

Its contribution is much appreciated.

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Includes former members of the PIR, PIB and NGIB.

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

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FUNCTION DATES

Sat 3 June

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

The Museum will not open on Sat 1 July—see below

Sat 1 July

Montevideo Maru Service at Post WW11 gallery in tunnel underneath the Cenotaph at ANZAC Square, Brisbane. 10am. Morning tea will be held on site after the service.

Sat 10 June

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

Sat 12 August