

**PATRON**  
Sir Dennis BUCHANAN, Kt. B. MBE.

**OFFICE BEARERS 2000/2001**

**PRESIDENT:** Colonel Harry N GREEN, MBE.ED. (Ret)  
**SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT:** Tom LEGA, MM (N.G.V.R.)  
**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Tony MILAN (P.N.G.V.R.)  
**SECRETARY:** Colin L GOULD, JP (Qual). AF.A.I.M. (Ph: 07 3355 3382)  
**TREASURER:** Bob COLLINS  
**HON. SOLICITOR:** Bruce CRAWFORD  
**MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVES:** Joe FISK, (Ph: 3208 5298)  
Norm MUNDY, (Ph: 075424 1492)  
Bill BICKERTON, JP  
John HOLLAND  
**WELFARE OFFICER:** Tom DOWLING  
**HISTORIC OFFICER:** Barry WRIGHT  
**ASSIST. HISTORIC OFFICER:**  
**PROJECTS:**  
**WELFARE REP SYDNEY:** Noel SERAFINI (Ph: 0293983264)

**NATIONAL SERVICEMENS' DAY**

The National Servicemen's Association in Brisbane will be holding a march and commemorative service for all former Nasho's.

**Date:** 11th February 2001  
**Time:** 10.00am  
**Assemble:** Corner Adelaide & George Streets  
**Dress:** Anzac Day Dress  
**Enquiries:** Joe Fisk Ph: 3208 5298

The march will be followed by a Memorial Service in Anzac Square. Lunch and fellowship will be held at the QE2 Sports Club, Nathan.

**REGIMENTAL DINNER WARNING ORDER**

The Association will host its Anzac Day Regimental Mixed Dinner Reunion either on Friday 20th April or Friday 27 April 2001. The final date is subject to confirmation by the dinner venue which should be available later in January.

Dress will be Mess Dress / Anzac Day dress or civilian.

Full details next Newsletter.

**NGVR/PNGVR ANNUAL  
REGIMENTAL MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**Date:-** Monday 22 January 2001 **Time:-** 10.00am **Venue:-** Eternal Flame Anzac Square

**Dress:-** Anzac Day Dress / civilian **Personal & Family Wreaths welcome**

Refreshments will be available after the service at the Central Station Hotel across the road opposite Anzac Square.

Members of the NGVR were called up for full time duty just prior to the Japanese invasion of Rabaul in January 1942. This day is dedicated to our Regimental comrades who made the supreme sacrifice, and also to those members of the PNGVR who volunteered during the Indonesian confrontation and later in Viet Nam, and to those members who have since passed into the Silence.



**HARIM TOK TOK**



NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES  
EX MEMBERS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED.

**VOLUME 19**

**JANUARY 2001**

*We wish all our Members  
And their families a  
Happy and prosperous New Year*

Telephone: (07) 3221 7915  
Facsimile: (07) 3229 6084  
E-mail: pngcg@iandubne.org



Christie Centre  
320 Adelaide Street, Lvl 3/Suite 12  
P O Box 220  
Brisbane QLD 4001

ABN: 61 173 930 341 - 003

**CONSULATE GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

08<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Col. Harry Green MBE, ED, EM.  
President  
PNG Volunteer & New Guinea Volunteer Rifle Group  
P O Box 287  
EVERTON PARK  
QLD. 4053

**Subject: Letter of Appreciation.**

We have witnessed the ending of a very successful year 2000. Your men's generosity and willingness to assist the staff of the Consulate General in performing specific tasks attribute much of the success, which helped to promote and strengthen the relationship between Papua New Guinea and Queensland.

On behalf of the people and Government of Papua New Guinea I extend to you and your members our sincere appreciation for your co-operation in the past and to date. We look forward to working closely with you as we have done.

On behalf of the staff from the Consulate and their families we wish you, your members and families a joyful and peaceful Christmas Celebrations and a very Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely  
  
Henry P Koiaie  
Consul General



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
QUEENSLAND

23 November 2000

Mr Tom Dowling  
11 Harding Street  
RACEVIEW QLD 4305

*Dear Tom,*

Thank you very much for the photographs of the Papua New Guinea 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence celebrations.

Barbara and I would like to extend our very best wishes to the members and partners of the PNGVR and NGVR association.

Yours sincerely

*Peter Annunzio*

Governor

### PRESIDENT'S UP-DATE

To all members and their families I wish you all a New Year full of good cheer, good tidings and may you all prosper.

On behalf of your Executive Committee I would like to report on the following issues:-

Your Association is totally dependent on the receipt of annual subscriptions to meet its operational expenses. Our Treasurer Bob Collins advises that 78 members currently owe \$2045 in unpaid fees which includes 26 members who are two or more years overdue. Reminder notices will shortly be sent to those members concerned.

Membership fees are due on the 1st July each year and renewal notices are sent out in May. The majority of members elect to pay their fees for the coming year at the Anzac Day reception which is convenient and quite acceptable.

For the Past 5 years the Committee has been trying to locate the whereabouts of the original US Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation that was presented to 'B' Coy PNGVR by Colonel R Ramsey - US Military Attaché to Australia - in June 1952. During my time as OC 'B' Coy in Rabaul in the late 50's until I became Bn 2IC, the Citation hung in my office in Rabaul. All efforts to locate this Regimental historic document have proved negative.

### 2000 SHIELD OF MILITARY EXCELLENCE - 9 RQR

On Saturday 2 December, a group of Association members attended Gallipoli Barracks in Enoggera for our annual presentation to 9 RQR.

This year 9 RQR really excelled themselves in their efforts to establish the best Section in the Battalion. They had been in camp for 9 days narrowing down the field to the best Section in each Company, which then competed for the best Section in the Battalion.

In addition to our prize, which is an attractive medallion and certificate for each soldier in the winning Section, there is a Section prize donated by a former CO of the Battalion and the winner has their Section details engraved thereon.

This year ( 2000 ) however there was an additional reward as the winning Section is to be among a group of 70 Australian soldiers going to Hawaii on an exercise in 2001. Good luck to them as the best Section. In our day we were lucky to get a "well done" from the CO - how times have changed.

Those who attended the presentation were Bill Kelly, MBE, Joe Fisk, Barry Wright, Tom Dowling, Bob Collins, Norm Mundy and Ralph Seeto.

After the formalities, members were

treated to a Bar-b-q which gave us the opportunity to mingle with members of 9 RQR and rediscover our lost youth.

Those present were made aware in no uncertain terms, of the prowess of the PNGVR Pioneer Platoon - by none other than ex Platoon Sgt Tom Dowling.

On the 12th December several Association members revisited Gallipoli Barracks to re-present the now engraved medallions and certificates to the winning Section in front of a Battalion Parade.

The Army Reserve is changing rapidly these days and new legislation is to be passed that will make the Army Reserve subject to call out at any time for both civilian and military emergencies, similar to the National Guard in the USA.

9 RQR is an integrated Battalion now and has a heavy sprinkling or regular soldiers in what used to be a purely Reserve Unit.

It is always a pleasure to attend a function such as this and see the quality and dedication of our young soldiers of today. They are well trained and motivated and can be counted on to uphold all the traditions of the Australian Army.

Bob Collins.

#### STOP PRESS

Congratulations to our Welfare Officer, Bill Bickerton - recently returned from East Timor - who has been elected "Australian Citizen of the Year" for the Gold Coast region for 2001. Bill will receive his award on Australia Day, 26 January.

#### CHANGED ADDRESS????

If you have recently changed your address, phone number, fax or email address, please send your new details to the Secretary as soon as possible.

c/- PO Box 287 Everton Park Q 4053  
Ph: 3355 3382 (after 1930 hours)

#### URGENT REQUEST

To convince the bureaucrats in Canberra that PNGVR was in fact an AUSTRALIAN Army Unit, it would be appreciated if members who have been issued with a formal "discharge certificate" could send a certified copy to our Secretary ASAP. This will greatly assist the Committee in overcoming, once and for all, the ongoing response from Canberra to many members that PNGVR was NOT part of the Australian Defence Force.

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NGVR/PNGVR Ex Members Association Inc PO Box 287 Everton Park Q 4053  
Email: pngvr@one.net.au

tress and branches moving across them – stopping, and moving on again. You didn't have to be too smart to work out what was going on. For one, the Japanese who were expert at camouflage, had outsmarted themselves. This time, their attack consisted of a much bigger force, and we slowly withdrew to Wau, having to abandon our mortar by throwing it down a ravine.

Again the Japanese attacked at 2.00am, throwing everything they had into the attack on Mubo., but by this time it had been abandoned and nobody was hurt. This was the start of the big push on Wau which the Japanese made by coming up through the Bitoi River and the Black Cat.

The Japanese were stopped at Wau but only because an airlift of Australian soldiers into Wau. The

soldiers literally came off the planes into battle. Overall I spent some 8 months in the Mubo / Komiatum area.

When the photograph of NGVR with the Japanese flag was taken – the one appearing in the NGVR book – I had been sent back to Mubo as a runner with a message. To get to Mubo you staged through two different camps, Billims and Skin Diwai, and then onto Mubo. On those occasions I carried a rifle and grenades. That particular trip I completed in one day – 32 miles down.

*To be continued.....*

### **PNG Prime Minister Sir Mekere's Cabinet As at 20th December 2000**

Following recent Ministerial terminations in Papua New Guinea including that of Sir Michael Somare (Foreign Affairs & Bougainville) on the 19th December, the new PNG Cabinet now comprises:-

Sir Mekere Morauta	Prime Minister & Treasurer
Michael Ogo	Deputy Prime Minister & Forestry
Kilroy Genia	Defence
Chris Haiveta	Petroleum & Energy
Ron Ganarafo	Fisheries
Alfred Pogo	Transport & Civil Aviation
Bart Philemon	Foreign Affairs & Bougainville
John Kamb	Works
Sir John Kaputin	Communications & High Technology
Vincent Auali	Privatisation & Corporatisation
Iairo Lasaro	Provincial & Local Government Affairs
Ludger Mond	Health
Sir Peter Lus	Housing
John Waiko	Education
Puri Ruing	Justice
Herowa Agiwa	Environment & Conservation
Michael Laimo	Mining
Andrew Kumbakor	Finance & Rural Development
Willaim Ebenosi	Home Affairs
Jimson Sauk	Police
Philemon Embel	Public Service
Moi Avei	Planning & Implementation
John Tekwie	Trade & Industry
John Pundari	Lands
Henry Smith	Corrective Service
Charlie Benjamin	Labour & Employment
Muki Taranupi	Agriculture

Recent information has been received as to the possible location of the Citation. Whilst checking this information out, your Association is writing to the US President, as Commander in Chief of US armed forces, seeking a possible replacement of the Citation.

We would like to make contact with a former ARA S/Sgt, 'Spike' Welsby of HQ Port Moresby. Mr Welsby who was promoted to WO2 then took a Quartermaster's Captain commission shortly before disbandment, was responsible for each PNGVR centre's army property. Capt Welsby was also involved in the setting up of the Goldie River Army Museum – a possible location, in storage or otherwise, of the Citation.

Does anyone know how we may contact Spike Welsby for any possible leads, or more particularly can any member offer any advise on a course of action to help recover this document? Gentlemen, it is imperative that we make every effort to find this historic citation.

Recently I wrote to and spoke with Sir Rabbie Namaliu and wrote also to the PNG Prime Minister, Sir Mekere Morauta on matters affecting our Association and its members. Similar contact has been ongoing with our Junior Vice-President in Port Moresby, Tony Milan and with Sir Peter Barter in Madang on our long outstanding PNG awards submissions which includes the Silver Jubilee medal and Community Service medals.

Our congratulations to Sir Peter Barter who was made a Knight in the Queen's New Years Honours list.

Similarly here in Canberra, we have replies pending from the Commonwealth Government, Federal members of Parliament and bureaucrats relating to our submissions for PNG awards to be

included on our Australian Army service records and on the South-East Asian Service Review. The bureaucratic 'too hard basket' is alive and well.

Again, a little over 2 weeks ago a former member of PNGVR when seeking the ASM 1945-1975 with clasp PNG, was told that he did not serve in the Australian Defence Force. How downright insulting. This from another senior public servant to a unique voluntary Battalion which saw continuous overseas service under the Australian flag.

I did have a chat on Remembrance Day last year with acting Queensland Premier, Jim Elder on these matters – sic 'transit Gloria'.

Members Representative and Association foundation member, Joe Fisk, recently wrote to his Federal Member of Parliament on the Association's long outstanding correspondence to the bureaucrats in Canberra, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the Minister for Defence, that have gone unanswered for almost 2 years. Our sincere thanks to Joe for achieving a long awaited break through. This enabled me to brief member Peter Grimshaw, OBE.OAM who has since made a working contact with Mr Pat Clarke of Honours & Awards in Canberra. Our congratulations to Peter on the award of his OBE.

Peter has also give his approval for the reproduction of his letter of the 21 November 2000 for the benefit of members. The letter appears at the end of this report. It appears that the bureaucratic minds find it hard to assist or even understand the role and proud history of an Australian Army Regiment that was PNGVR 26 years on.

Your Association for some years now has supported the young soldiers of 31 RQR

(The Kennedy Regiment) in Townsville and 9 RQR at Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane, via our annual Shield of Military Excellence for the best soldier below the rank of Sergeant – 31 RQR and the best Section – 9 RQR.

Our member in Townsville, Major Juergen Raasch, has advised that no award was made to 31 RQR for 2000 due to the dwindling number of soldiers in the Regiment. No military skills competition was held for 2000. With the constant change of members in the regiment, Major Raasch is of the opinion that the original intention of awarding our Shield seems to have been lost. We will have to reconsider our future support of 31 RQR.

It is with regret that I advise members of the recent passing into the Silence of NGVR member Dr Ed Tscharke, AM. MBE. Senior Vice-President Tom Lega, MM., Tom Dowling, Mal Zimmermann and I with other members attended the funeral service in Ipswich. Recent ill health prevented Ed from attending Association functions, but he always phoned in to record his apologies. Dr Tscharke will long be remembered for his dedicated medical work on Kar Kar Island spanning many years after the war.

Our Patron, Sir Dennis Buchanan, Kt.B., MBE was recently diagnosed with leukemia cancer late last year and has been undergoing extensive treatment. During this time he suffered a stroke that required an extended stay in hospital. Sir Dennis is now at home and in remission but is still required to continue daily treatment and exercise. Sir Dennis has asked me to thank all members who sent in their greetings and good wishes during the 6/7 weeks he was not able to receive visitors other than close family members. We extend to our Patron our sincere best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Also on 'sick parade' is life member and great Association supporter, Peter Grimshaw, OBE.OAM., who has been laid low with aneurysms. Peter is awaiting further treatment and we wish him a speedy recovery also.

Members Bruce Crawford and Jesse Chee were also on 'sick parade' recently. Thankfully both gentlemen have recovered.

Bill and Sylvia Bickerton are back from holidays in Scotland. Sylvia is courageously fending off the effects of liver cancer whilst visiting relatives in Scotland. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them both at this difficult time.

Tom Lega, MM our Senior Vice-President may not be able to run the 100 yards any more but he is still a wonderful help and source of advice to me and your Committee. Tom recalled the names of all but one of the NGVR team involved in the Los Negros campaign. Many thanks Tom.

Committee member and owner of "Jimboomba Retreat" Barry Wright recently required surgery to both shoulders. Not to be excluded, wife Pam also required complicated surgery to one of her hands. Barry and Pam are wonderful supporters of the Association and are to be commended for their efforts in hosting our field functions on their property.

Those of you who were in the PNGVR in the late 50's will be sad to hear that Major Dick Newman, CO at that time, has gone into the Silence. During his command, PNGVR benefited greatly from a submission he made to AHQ on the role of PNGVR. I well remember his 'polite' analysis on my action in the field when as senior officer of PNGVR I mounted an assault on a vital piece of ground – a 400m high feature in the Papuan bush

NGVR – At that time I had no interest in serving in the Middle East with the AIF as I considered it not to be my war. However when the Japanese came into the war it was time to do something, so I made up my mind to join the Forces. By that time the Japanese had reached Rabaul. As the threat to the PNG mainland became apparent, all civilians were called in. We were all called down to Bulolo, lined up and personal particulars taken. There were about 100 of us all up.

The first question asked was "Who hasn't fired a rifle?". At that stage we were divided into two parties, one to go to Salamaua and one to Lae. Because of the tactical situation our training was practically nil.

We came from Edie Creek to Bulolo by truck. The road was so bad that the truck had to go most of the way in first gear. I used to always sit at the rear of the truck with my legs over the side just in case the road was wet and slippery. One local driver had gone over the side not long before.

We were taken out onto a plantation close to Bulolo and given two weeks of training, including weapons training with the .303 and Bren and hand grenades. Len Noakes was the instructor. During this time I completed an NCO Course, even though I was likely to remain a Rifleman for some time.

I was originally to go to Salamaua with, among others, Tom Lega, however by the time we left Bulolo that Japanese had occupied Salamaua and we stopped at Mubo. Our role at the time was patrolling, observing and scouting, not combat. We operated out of Mubo and Komiatum.

When I originally went to Mubo, the outpost consisted solely of NGVR, but later we were reinforced by 50 soldiers of the 2/5 Independent Coy. Our patrols lasted for various period of 2 to 5 days. On patrol we went to the ocean. Leigh Ashton was in charge of the patrol, and, because we could be seen by the Japanese at Salamaua we were supposed to keep away from the water. However we did manage to slip in a quiet swim or two.

After a number of patrols I volunteered to do cook house duty as we did not have a cook at Mubo. I have previously mentioned that I cooked on the Queensland cane fields. I remained the cook even after the NGVR has moved out of Mubo. In fact after the war I cooked on the gold fields of New Guinea. I was a miner but, when the cook was sick, missing etc I did all the cooking, sometimes for months on end.

My medical classification was 'B' so I should not have been out in a forward area, but then a lot of others were in the same classification. It was because of that classification that I did not take part in the raid on Salamaua.

After that raid, the Japanese made serious efforts to push inland and NGVR was called back to Wau.

*'The first question asked was 'who hasn't fired a rifle?'*

Geoff White and myself stayed behind at Mubo with about 50 men from 2/5 Ind Coy. When the Japanese attacked Mubo the first time, we were lining up for 'kai kai'. They hit us with mortar bombs and a panic ensued. About 40 of the soldiers went bush but later

returned. I grabbed my rifle and headed for my post in the place 'mat-mat'. I assisted a Vickers Gunner who was on his own, burning my hand on hot shell cases in the process.

When the Japanese retreated all was quiet again. I looked down at my leg which was covered in blood. I exclaimed, "S..t! I've been shot" My mate agreed and said "so you have Swanny" As it turned out I had a carbuncle on top of my leg and it had burst, causing the blood stain.

The Japs attacked a second time soon after ( at 2.00am one morning) but we had been warned that they were coming and had withdrawn further up the track and held them again until they retreated.

We stayed until the threat from the advancing Japanese was too great. We had listening posts out of course, and at this particular listening post we could see "trees" moving on two sides of the ridges coming into Mubo. The ridges were only



*Association Member, Neville Charles Swanson – NGX 418 – Sgt – NGVR/ANGAU, has kindly recorded his service history for 'Harim Tok Tok'. Our thanks to Association Treasurer, Bob Collins for putting Neville's story down on paper and to Neville for sharing his experiences. Ed.*

It would be fair to call me a B4 as both my father and grandfather lived in PNG prior to World War 2. I was actually born on the 19th October 1914, in Charters Towers (result of my parent's honeymoon on Woodlark Island in PNG.) but went to PNG as a baby. As it happen both my grandfather and an Uncle disappeared in PNG whilst prospecting.

My grandfather passed away out in the bush and was being carried in on a sheet of iron by a carrier line supervised by my uncle. Uncle liked a drop or two and when the carrier line reached civilisation grandfather had disappeared. A search of the route in was made but still no grandfather, so his whereabouts remain a mystery. My uncle also disappeared in mysterious circumstances. He was a remarkable man and could speak 18 different dialects on the Papuan side of the border.

I was educated at the Port Moresby Primary School (some 75 years ago now) but completed basic education in Townsville. My son also went to Wau Primary School 45 years ago.

After knocking about North Queensland for a few years I went back to PNG at age 21 looking for work and adventure. Whilst in Queensland I had worked on tobacco and cane farms and even spent time as a cook's off-side. This was to come in handy later during the war years. The cane fields were run by Italians at that stage and that was were I learnt to cook spaghetti and other pastas.

I went to Port Moresby and tried to get work. At one stage I went out to Koitaki Rubber, was unsuccessful, and set back to Port Moresby on foot. It would have been a trip to remember had I not been put up for the night at McDonald's Plantation at Sogeri. I eventually obtained a position as a Cadet Miner at Mount Ceaser on Misima Island.

In 1938 I moved to Edie Creek to prospect and spent the next few years there and at Bitoi River working mainly as an underground miner. I was at Edie Creek during the six months miners strike in the late 30's.

Those days were interesting and wild. Aircraft pilots nearly always flew visually and I can recall one pilot who covered up all his instruments with sticking plaster as he "didn't need all those rubbish instruments."

I never drank before the war (during the war was totally a different thing) and remember one trip in a Ford tri-motor plane. The Ford tri-motor, similar to the Junkers, had doors that could be opened in flight. On one trip there was a group of miners, sitting on the door ledge with their legs swinging merrily away. The pilot was noted for his own thirst and came back to me and asked me to come forward. He gave me a quick lesson on how to fly the plane and then left me to join the rest of the miners for a drink. I can tell you that he wasn't back there too long before he hurried back to the cockpit and took charge.

As the threat to PNG became more apparent civilians were evacuated. I can recall seeing the Avro Anson (a sister plane to Kingsford-Smith's Southern Cross) taking off from Wau, that carried by Mother. The aircraft was so full that the passengers had to sit on the floor with their legs apart so that someone else could sit between them. The aircraft was so overloaded that it had to circle around Wau half a dozen times before it could gain sufficient altitude to fly over the surrounding mountains.

I was at Golden Ridge mining when Japan came into the war, and, interesting enough, went back there not long after the war ended.

during an annual exercise – with a Section instead of the full force at my disposal.

Denis Samin, OBE at Malanda in far north Queensland also gave us a scare late last year. Fortunately a biopsy proved the problem to be non-malignant. Dennis and wife Lisa are great supporters of the Association. Denis recently presented his service sword to the Association for inclusion in the table layout for formal occasions.

Both Denis and I attended the Victory in the Pacific Day at Rocky Creek on the Atherton Tableland in 2000. Denis gave an outstanding speech at the function but space did not allow for its inclusion in this report. Many World War 2 Units were represented at this event.

John Mudge, MBE is also at Malanda where the avocado plantation run jointly by Sharon McIntosh and John is a sight to see. John commutes between the tablelands and his business interests and RSL voluntary work in PNG.

Our thoughts go out to Ken MacGowan who, whilst undergoing a serious hip replacement last year, sadly lost his brother at the same time. Our sympathy to Ken and we are pleased to report that his hip operation was successful.

Our roving photographer, Tom 'Snappy Tom' Dowling advised that member Dave McRae in Western Australia recently underwent some knee surgery but is now on the mend. When asked the nature of the problem, Tom merely commented "samting bilong lapun tasol" We wish you a speedy recovery Dave.

Whilst on medical issues, the next time you see 'Snappy Tom' he will be the proud owner and operator of a new set of top teeth and plate – so now it will be a smiling 'Happy Snappy Tom' behind the

camera lens. A special thanks to Tom for his never ending efforts to ensure that we always have a photographic record of our various functions.

Members Simon Hui and Gerry McGrade in Rabaul have been doing it tough since the volcano eruptions and almost daily shakes and ash. Please spare a thought for our two comrades who certainly reflect our regimental motto "Through Trials to Triumph" as they go about their daily business in Rabaul.

If you know of any members who may be ill or may just need a friend to discuss issues, please contact a member of the Committee.

I would like to record my thanks for the work of Committee members. Our Secretary Col Gould as you know does an outstanding job for the Association. So much is dependent on giving him and our Treasurer Bob Collins the necessary equipment and funds to carry out their tasks. Thank you Colin, and Bob – whose Treasurer's reports leave nothing to be desired. You have both developed computerised information vital to NGVR/PNGVR.

I must also single out our Historic Officer, John Holland and thank him for his willingness to devote countless hours to organising and hosting our well known historic displays. The most recent display in support of the Brisbane PNG Consulate being at their Silver Jubilee function in September last year. I can assure members that it takes John many hours to sort, select and stage such a display, not to mention the pulling down and re-packing material after the event. I would like to thank John's State Manager, Mr John Khoury of Kembla Tube and Fittings in Brisbane for kindly donating the use of his Company's mobile partitions for our displays.

I would also like to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by our Junior Vice President in Port Moresby, Tony Milan, especially with his delicate negotiations with the Honours & Awards Committee. My thanks also to our Honourary Solicitor Bruce Crawford, Joe Fisk, Jesse Chee and Norm Mundy and to those members who have supported our various functions.

*Im tasol Planti samting moa I kamap long tingting bilong mi. Moa beta narapela man I toktok long gutpela samting bilong Association. Tenku tru promans.*

H N Green.

*Copy of a letter from Member Peter Grimshaw, OBE.OAM. Dated 21 November 2000  
With the permission of P J Grimshaw.*

Colonel H N Green, MBE.ED.EM.  
Unit 7 'Coomera Green'  
COOMERA Q 4209

My Dear Harry

Pat Clarke eventually returned my call this morning. He is acting in Bloomfield's position, the later having resigned from the RAN and taken up a position in the Commonwealth Public Service. Pat Clarke is acting in the position until January when it will be filled by a half Colonel. He does not know who it will be.

He was most helpful but clearly constrained by the mantle of office? He was able to clarify some of the points contained in Scott's letter to Jull. The following are the major points you will find of interest.

(1) AASM Minister Scott's view that PNGVR members do not qualify for this award is consistent with the Mohr Review. In the fourth paragraph (5th line) the words 'not allotted for any warlike duties at the time' appears to be inconsistent with the fact that the Unit was included on the Australian Army's Order of Battle. It seems to me this is a further example of the lack of knowledge amongst the existing Army hierarchy of the role of the PNGVR and the purpose it was designed to fulfil. Nevertheless, to pursue the AASM is unlikely to be productive.

(2) PNG 10th Anniversary Medal: Since the introduction of the Australian service award system the wearing of awards made by a foreign power (even though a member of the British Commonwealth) requires the Governor-General's approval. It would appear that PNGVR never submitted a request to the Department of Defence for such approval to be obtained. Notwithstanding this, we can now lodge a request for retrospective approval. However, the request will need to include:-

- (a) The Association's support
- (b) A certified copy of each of the certificates issued by the PNG Governor-General to each of the recipients.

Once the G-G (Australian) has approved, the details will automatically be sent to CARO for inclusion on an individual's record of service.

(3) The LSGCM and PNG 50th Commemorative Medal: Pat Clarke indicated that some members of the Australian Defence forces had applied for these medals to be recognised but all submissions had been turned down. In view of this, he thought it would be most unlikely (virtually impossible) for approval to be given to PNGVR members. The main reason is this medal recognises "commemorative service".

Why it took Scott so long to respond to Joe Fisk's letter of the 19 May cannot be explained. It may have something to do with Bloomfield's departure.

I hope that the above proves helpful. An initial step you may consider if appropriate is to have Colin Gould ask those members involved to send him a certified copy of the PNG Independence and 10th Anniversary Medals certificates to permit the Association to lodge a consolidated submission.

With warm regards

Yours sincerely

(signed)  
P J Grimshaw.

Coys and the 17th Brigade around Wau & Bulolo, and the tracks and approaches to Lae and Salamaua.

I was next sent to Edie Creek ( 30/31 January, 1943) for a rest and to wait for my movement orders to proceed on a long awaited leave. After 3 days I was recalled to Wau and ordered to report to N.G. Force HQ at Port Moresby. In February 1943 I was flown to Port Moresby to be a guide for the Yanks flying Biscuit Bombers, C47's or DC3's as we know them, into the Wau Valley, Ballams and Skin Diwai.

Some of these planes were piloted be mere lads 20/21 years old and their navigation wasn't really spot on. This went on for approximately 3 weeks, Other guides on the job with me were Charles Blake and Roy Barnett. Some days, if the weather was favourable, we would do 2 x 3 hour trips – 1.5 hours over, approx 30 minutes of dropping and approx 1.25 hours back to Port Moresby. However more than one trip was usually prevented by cloud which would close in around 2.00pm / 3.00pm and all flying would cease. We would take a can of pineapple juice with us, lay it up against the aircraft's aluminium fuselage, and after 3 hours flying at 7,000 ft, it was chilled pineapple juice to drink while the plane was refueled and the next drop loaded.

One day I was sitting under the wing, took my hat off, and put it on the ground. When the time came to go I put my hat on and felt something crawl across my hair. I removed my hat and brushed my

hair with my hand and a 6" long centipede fell to the ground – a cold shiver ran down my back. It was whilst I was in Port Moresby that I found out about my young brother's death. I walked over from New Guinea Force HQ to Murray Barracks and about a mile beyond to the 53/55 Bn camp.

I asked the Orderly Room Corporal if I could see Pte Lega, and he said "Christ Mate! He's dead. Why? Who are you?" I replied, "I'm his brother" and he said "Christ Mate! I'm sorry. I didn't mean to break the news to you like that". He then called the Officer of the Day, a young Lieutenant, and explained to me that my brother has copped a burst of machine gun fire across the chest on the 19th December, 1942, at Sanananda, and had sunk down in the swamp. His body has never been recovered.

I walked back to New Guinea Force HQ a very depressed young man, as I had received a letter from him in January 1943 in Wau. It was written in November, 1942, telling me how he disliked New Guinea and that I could keep it. He had only ever seen the war side of New Guinea.

We were given thirty days leave after 15 months active service with NGVR. In March, 1943, proceeded on leave. On 23rd March I reported to the Sydney Show Grounds and had my pay book entered up. A clerk said to me "Where have you been! You haven't operated this pay book for over 12 months." I replied "I have been in places where you don't need money." He had no idea.

*To be continued....*

### **SAMARAI REUNION 2001**

**Date:** Saturday / Sunday  
3rd & 4th March 2001

**Venue:** Canberra – site to be advised

**Contact:** Una Douglas  
Ph: 02 6286 2456 (ah)

A successful Brisbane reunion in 1998 was attended by over 350 ex "Samaraites." The reunion committee (Una Douglas, Onu Palm and Laurie Le Fevre) have received over 100 bookings and space is limited. **BOOK NOW.**  
Laurie – Ph 03 9725 8765 (ah)

### **NGVR 1939-1943 A HISTORY**

By Dr Ian Downs, OBE.

A comprehensive history of the courageous civilian volunteers who led the defence of New Guinea in the Pacific War. Between January and June 1942 the 500 men of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles were the only armed force in the path of the Japanese forces and Port Moresby until the arrival of Kanga Force.

Available from:-  
Pacific Press

17 Park Ave., Broadbeach Waters Q 4218

Ph: 07 5539 0446 Fax: 07 5538 4114

was more or less sending a boy to do a man's job. I can recommend his book which will explain his orders more clearly. He was 18 years old, already a Warrant Officer class 2, when he crossed the Markham River. He was with Captain Howlett when Howlett was killed in an ambush at Chivising Village, and he (Ryan) escaped by submerging himself in a filthy muddy pig wallow. Both Howlett and Ryan made a big mistake – they sent a Police Boy into Chivising Village to see if it was all clear, and when the Police Boy did not return they openly walked into the village and the Japanese opened up on them.

Another Patrol crossed the Markham near the Watut Junction. We heard that it was a naval party and later found out it was led by Ian Downs. Unknown to us at the time this Patrol was part of the Coast Watchers Organisation.

RETURN TO WAU – I was at Kirklands until January, 1943, and was then ordered back to Wau to proceed on leave. I walked into Wau on the afternoon of the 29th January and reported to Issy Dizzy, HQ Kanga Force. As a matter of interest the trip from Kirklands to Wau took 5 to 6 days hard walking. It was carried out on a regular basis.

There I met one Captain Cameron West, a 21 year old Duntroon Graduate (example of a soldier). I snapped to attention, saluted and went to hand him the dispatches I carried from Captain John Taylor. He looked at me and said "Go outside Corporal and wipe the mud from your boots" – I had walked 8 miles from a land slide on the Bulolo Road. I went outside, lay down on the grass and wiped my boots on the grass then went back inside where Captain West was waiting, snapped to attention, saluted, and handed him the dispatches.

He sent me out to Fullers Trade Store by jeep. I reported in and met Mick Rouse, NGVR, and sat down at the table for a plate of M & V. As I picked up the spoon the Japanese opened up with a machine gun and put a burst into the bank beside the trade store.

We flew out the back door and when we checked our ammunition only one bloke had five rounds more than we had in our rifles. Mick Rouse, Jim Savage and myself re-entered the trade store and retrieved a case of .303 ammunition and we then fell back to the Big Wau Creek where we held a defensive line. Later during the night we fell back to the edge of the Wau airstrip. It was here that I almost shot an Australian soldier. There was a Japanese sniper under the tank stand at Andy Villiers house and we were trying to pick him out. An Australian soldier came running along, doubled up. I dropped my rifle sights down on him – I already had the first pressure on the trigger when a grenade exploded under the tank stand. The Australian soldier had heard the sniper and thrown a grenade at him.

Another episode came right at daybreak. We could dimly see a Mortar Crew moving into position and couldn't recognise them, so we lined up with a Bern gun and waited for them to get their first bomb away – it landed in the Japanese positions so we knew they were ours. They didn't know just how lucky they were.

The Japanese penetrated right into the Plantation at the bottom of the airstrip and

were firing at the planes as they took off, however they were soon cleared out. That day the remainder of the 17th Aust Inf Brigade were flown into Wau. It was a close shave, as Wau was defended only by odds and sods at the time – hardly Company strength.

An American P31 Air Cobra Fighter almost fouled up the whole works. He was one of the top cover screen of Fighters protecting the transport planes when he sheared the key off his propeller shaft. The 6 transports took off and, with engine screaming, he came in and landed with wheels up, ploughing a furrow up the middle of the strip. We ran across and helped him out. A big Yank stepped out and said "Stand clear! That cannon is loaded."

NGVR was officially disbanded in August, 1942. A few of us were kept in Morobe District until February, 1943, to show the Independent

Tom Lega, MM (Senior Vice-President) continues his NGVR service recollections.....

Aug 1942 – I was sent down to the Markham River where I was to spend the next 6 months. 'Bob's Camp' was our base HQ, under the command of Captain John Taylor with Captain Sheppard of the 2/5 Ind Coy as 2IC. I shared a hut with Buster Mills also of NGVR. Also present at 'Bob's Camp' was Bob Emery who was carrying out numerous patrols across the Markham with Bill Chaffey and Bob Booth, both from 2/5 Ind Coy.

On one patrol across the Markham River, Bob Emery, NGVR, was chased by a party of Japanese and sustained a shot through the elbow. He was able to elude them and return across the river. About this time Bob was awarded the Military Medal.

I was placed in charge of 'Kirklands Camp', an outpost right on the banks of the Markham River. From here most crossing of the river took off and returned.

The crossings of the Markham was achieved by using canoes owned by people from Old Marie village. They had their canoes hidden in thick scrub. We would send word down that we wanted 3 or 4 canoes in the morning, and, sure enough, soon after daybreak the canoes were in the water. Most crossings were effected early morning or late afternoon to prevent aerial detection.

Most patrols across the Markham had much the same purpose as those from Mubo., to see and not be seen, and observe enemy troop movements on the Markham road – Lae to Madang.

On another patrol across the Markham River Jock McLeod, NGVR, picked up a couple of shot down American flyers. They asked Jock what he was doing over the river. Jock replied, "on a routine patrol". The Yanks said "Good God man!

We've got orders to shoot any movement we see north of the Markham."

While at Kirklands Camp I was ordered to patrol across the river up to Sangan to try and locate a suitable site for an airfield. I crossed the river early in the morning and proceeded up to Chivising and then followed the big road up past the Saw Tooth Mountain to the Leron River.

It was there that I became temporary lost. The Leron River ran in four streams, each about waist deep and very fast. One would walk upstream then enter the stream and bounce back down the stream emerging approx 200 ft downstream, walk up the island into it again, and so on, until the stream was crossed. Where I emerged I couldn't find the track, so I walked up stream on a little foot track and camped for the night beside a clump of bushes. The next morning I entered Sangan from the Kiapit side causing the villagers to wonder where I had come from. I then returned to Kirklands Camp.

The Patrol lasted four days and I had reported a suitable site for an airfield near Sawtooth Mountains.

Unknown to me at the time, my reconnaissance was part of the preparations for the assault on Lae which occurred in 1943. An airfield was chosen and opened in the Lower Watut River – named Tsili-Tsili.

Conditions at Kirklands Camp were pretty miserable. Water had to be boiled at all times, mosquitoes were present by the thousands, the kunai grass absorbed a great deal of heat and, consequently we suffered from the heat all the time.

While I was at Kirklands Peter Ryan (later to write the book "Fear Drive My Feet") crossed the Markham and carried out a patrol across the river.

I don't know what Peter Ryan's orders were but it







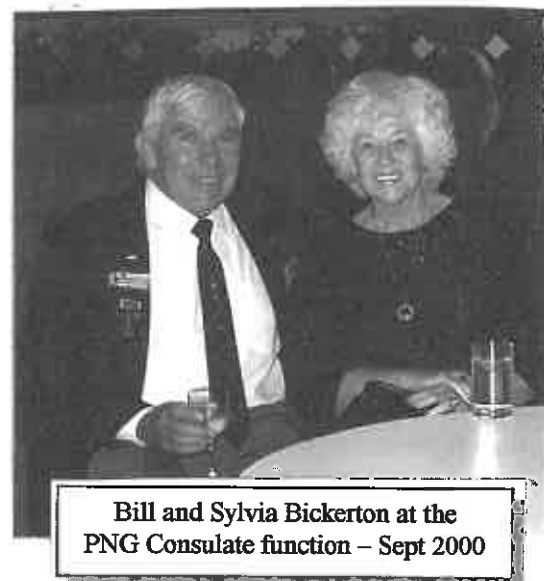
PNG Consul General Mr Henry P Koiaie, Queensland Governor Major-General Peter Arnison, AO with NGVR / PNGVR guests at the Consulate's Independence Day function – Brisbane Sept 2000 (Background historic display of PNG , NGVR and PNGVR courtesy of John Holland. Partitions donated by Kembla Copper Systems (Qld).



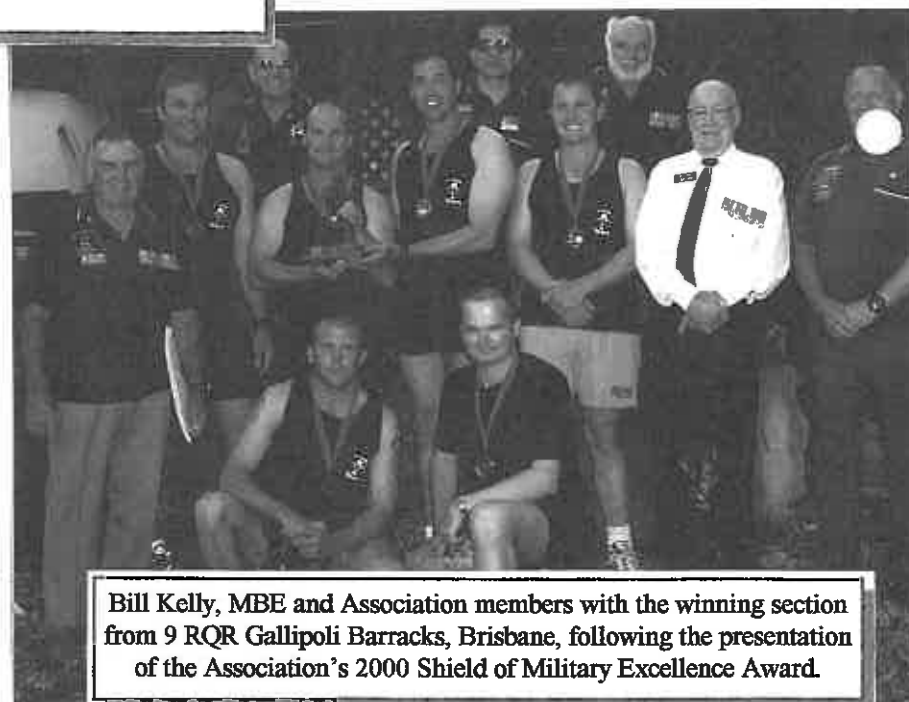
His Excellency Major-General Peter Arnison, AO at the PNG Independence Day function.



Peter & Sue Rogers – Field Dining Night.  
Peter has either won the raffle or is celebrating the opening of the 'Port'.



Bill and Sylvia Bickerton at the PNG Consulate function – Sept 2000



Bill Kelly, MBE and Association members with the winning section from 9 RQR Gallipoli Barracks, Brisbane, following the presentation of the Association's 2000 Shield of Military Excellence Award.



Colonel Harry Green, MBE, ED, EM Shrine of Remembrance – Anzac Square Brisbane 11 November 2000



Bruce & Jocelyn Johnson enjoy the November Field Dining night



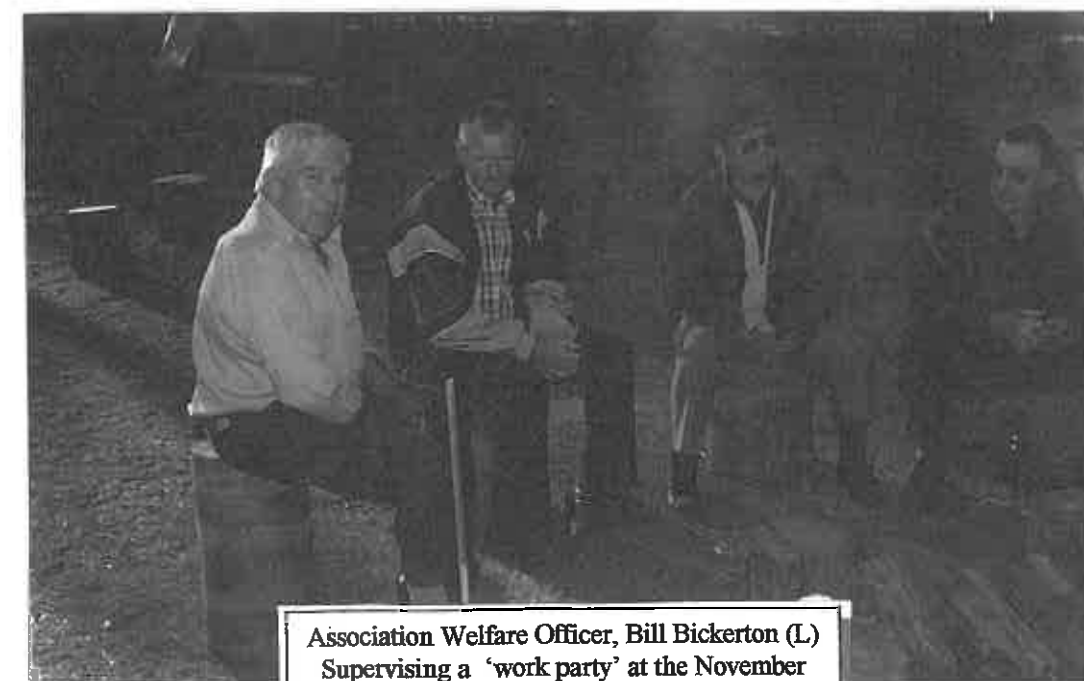
"Wan Toks"  
Doug Ng and Jesse Chee at the PNG Independence function 'Bung Wantaim' in the Park, Brisbane Sept 2000



John Holland & Ken Hendren at the Field Dining Night – Jimboomba



Barry Wright keeps a watchful Eye on the 'working party' (see photo - right) at Jimboomba



Association Welfare Officer, Bill Bickerton (L) Supervising a 'work party' at the November Field Dining Night.