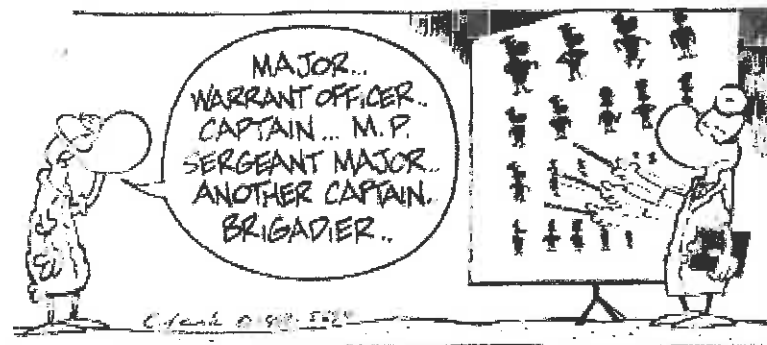


HAVE A LAUGH

ARMY MEDICAL (The Eye Test)

The ability to see danger from a long way off is essential to a long, safe and successful Service life.

(Courtesy of 'Swamp' Productions, Brisbane.)



- A 15 year old boy came home with an almost new top of the range Mercedes Benz S class sedan and his mother began to stress out thinking he had stolen a motor vehicle.

"Where did you get that expensive car ???? " shouted his mum.

He calmly told her that he bought it that very morning.

"Where did you get the money to buy such an expensive car? " demanded him Mum.

"Well "said the boy "it only cost me \$15. "

"Who in their right mind would sell an almost new Mercedes Benz for only \$15 " stressed Mum.

The boy responded that he was riding his bike past the new lady who had just moved in up the road, and when the lady saw the boy she asked him if he would like to buy a Mercedes for \$15-00 cash.

"Oh my goodness "said the Mum, there is something very wrong about all of this so she decided to pop up the road and front up the new lady immediately.

The lady who had sold the car for \$15 said "This morning I got a phone call from my husband who I thought was in Hawaii on a big business deal. A good friend of mine told me my husband had actually run off with his Secretary and was not coming back. My husband claimed that he urgently needed cash to complete a big business deal and asked me to sell his Mercedes and send him the money straight away. So I did "

KILLER ONE LINERS Courtesy of Max Hayes

- "He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire"Winston Churchill
- "I've had a perfectly wonderful evening, but this wasn't it ".....Groucho Marx
- " I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new Play, bring a friend....if you have one"George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill
- " Cannot attend first night, will attend second night....if there is one".....Winston Churchill in response.
- "He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up ".....Paul Keating
- "There is nothing wrong with you that reincarnation won't cure ".....Jack Leonard.
- "His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork"Mae West
- "Some cause happiness **wherever** they go, others **whenever** they go..... Oscar Wilde

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

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Mobile:- 042 456 2030 Email: pngvr@optusnet.com.au www.pngvr.com

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Col Gould—Editor

Includes former members of the Pacific Islands Regiment, Papuan Infantry Battalion and New Guinea Infantry Battalions



HARIM TOK TOK

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

PATRON: Major General John Pearn, AM, RFD. (Retd.)

VOLUME 51

JUNE 2007

PRESIDENT'S UP-DATE

The main activities of the Association since the last issue include those of the ANZAC week and the Canberra Plaque dedication trip. This year our annual Regimental Mixed Dinner Reunion was held on Monday the 23 April at the 6RAR Long Tan Sergeants Mess at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera when 54 members and guests attended. Our Patron, major-General John Pearn was in attendance and our guest speaker Phillip Bradley spoke passionately about the 1942/43 Battle of Wau, the subject of his book which will be available soon. It was a most enjoyable evening. Our thanks to Mess Supervisor, Sgt Stewart Lynch, Mess catering and bar staff, who once again ensured that we had a successful dinner. Well done Colin Gould for organizing the event.

Some of the Committee members were invited to the PNG Brisbane Consulate General on Tuesday 24 April, to witness the presentation of three PNG 30th Independence medals to senior Queensland Ambulance Officers who have provided great support for St John Ambulance service in PNG. Our Patron Major-General John Pearn, and our Vice President John Mudge (who is the Brigadier of St John Ambulance in Port Moresby) were there along with Phil Ainsworth, Col Gould and Bruce Crawford.

The occasion also saw our Consul General, Paul E Nerua, J.B., presented with the 30th Independence medal in recognition of his service in Queensland. Paul was recently re-appointed for a further term as our PNG Consul General in Brisbane. Congratulations Paul.

About 80 members of our Association marched on ANZAC Day in Brisbane. Our unit was well turned out and we had great Queensland weather on the day. Fortunately we were very close to a pipe band, and this makes a great difference when marching. PNG Consul General, Paul Nerua, gave as a good wave as we passed the saluting base in King George Square. Immediately after the march Paul Brown and Mal Zimmermann conducted a short but solemn NGVR memorial

service in the Shrine of Memories, ANZAC Square.

The post march Reception was again held at the Exchange Hotel where the dry till held out until almost the very end. Some 110 members and guests enjoyed a great day and the old PNGVR stories just seem to get better and better as each year passes. It was good to see NGVR veteran Tom Keenan present.

A BYO Bar-B-Q was held at our museum the following Saturday for members in town to get together and check out the museum's exhibits. While attendance was limited, it was an enjoyable time. Thank you John Holland.

Over the past few months much time and effort has been spent in organizing the recent twin plaque dedication ceremony at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. This was held on a beautiful autumn morning on Tuesday 15 May, when over 150 people from NGVR, ANGAU, PNGVR, PIR, PIB and NGIB as well as Australian and PNG military representatives joined with His Excellency Major-General Michael Jeffery to dedicate the plaques.

Amongst the guests were veterans:- Harold Osbourne (NGVR); Jim Birrell, MC (NGVR); Les Irving (ANGAU); Mr James Snr (ANGAU); Roy Sheargold (PIB); Frank Wust (PIB); Alan Hooper (PIB); Ron Jager (PIB); Ed Jones (NGIB).



NGVR Veteran, Harold Osbourne, wearing slouch hat with Bird of Paradise plumes, stands before the NGVR memorial plaque at the AWM Canberra, whilst the Ode is recited.

In this issue:-

President's Up-date; PIR; Canberra; Last Parade of 'A' Coy; Coming Events; ANZAC Day Canberra; ANZAC Day Brisbane; Regimental Dinner 2007; Letters to the Editor; VALE; Have a Laugh: Col Gould—Editor

While little state coverage was given, the Canberra press and TV covered it well. Ninety year old NGVR veteran Harold Osbourne, motorvanned up from Melbourne for the occasion and dominated press photos with his vitality, and jauntily wore, "Hat, fur, felt" with an NGVR style Bird of Paradise plume stuck in the puggaree. Harold bought with him a photo of himself, in NGVR uniform, taken when he enlisted in Bulolo in 1939, wearing similar headgear which was the norm for the NGVR.

King & Co Property Consultants in Brisbane, sponsored a 2 page colour marketing brochure about NGVR, PNGVR, our Association and military museum. This assisted the Association greatly in furthering our Association's name and cause in Canberra.

If the success of the dedication ceremony can be gauged by the attendance of VIP's, it was outstanding. The reflection speech was given by His Excellency the Governor General, Major-General Michael Jeffery, the welcome, by the Director of the Australian War Memorial, Major-General Steven Gower, the dedication by the Duntroon Padre, the Ode by WO2 Keith Payne, VC. music by the Duntroon Military Band supported by the Australian Rugby Choir with the final 'thank you' by yours truly. Other guests included Senator Bronwyn Bishop, MP., Australian Army Chief, Lt-General Leahy, PNG High Commissioner Charles Lepani, Brisbane PNG Consul General Paul Nerau, LLB., PNGDF representative and representing PNGDF Commander, Colonel Ben Norrie, six PNG Duntroon Cadets and several ranking officers and dignitaries. Association members who were present included, John Mudge, Bob Collins, Col Gould, Bruce Crawford, Doug Ng, Jes Hansford, Michael White, Bill Molloy, Bob-Harvey-Hall, Charles Schuster, Don Hook, Ken Hitchcock, Barry Wright, Ian Sayers, Bruce Inch, Byron Sullivan, et al.

The ceremony was followed by a morning tea and a conducted short tour of the Museum. Lunch followed and this proved to be an enjoyable part of the day's events, meeting with many old friends and other veterans and ex soldiers of the remembered units and their successors. I particularly thank Bruce Crawford, OAM, and AWM organizer Martin Hanson for organizing this excellent function. It could not have been better arranged.

Speaking with many at our various functions, I was constantly reminded by members, including the ex- PIR Association members who are now the responsibility of our Association, about the importance of Harim Tok Tok in communicating across the nation and overseas with all

members. Some expressed the view that more editions should be produced. However, I am sure that they are unaware of the effort each edition entails, and that the onerous duty falls mainly on our hard working Secretary, Colin Gould. The cost of printing and posting our newsletter must also be considered during the course of each financial year.

Coming activities include the Reserve Forces Day march, the Montevideo Maru Memorial Service and AGM. One activity which was decided to be cancelled due to many reasons was the proposed 2007 July tour to PNG. We are looking at organizing a visit in July 2008.

It never ceased to amaze me what our Association is capable of doing. Although we are not financial wealthy, we are indeed rich in supportive and dedicated people and organizing capacity. Well done Committee and members all.

Phil Ainsworth.



PNG Consul General Paul E Nerau, LLB. following the award of his 30th PNG Independence Medal, in Brisbane.
(R) CEO St John Ambulance, Port Moresby, Doug Kelson.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.....

**** Rotary in Wacol region needs help....**For many years, Rotary International in the Wacol region of Brisbane, have been collecting and shipping to PNG, hospitals beds, educational material, medical supplies, ambulances and all manner of goods that are urgently needed by schools, hospitals, clinics etc throughout Papua New Guinea.

The Rotary volunteers currently operate out of a warehouse facility donated by the Brisbane City Council where they collect, store and make ready for packing shipping containers to be sent to Rotary in PNG who on delivery the much needed supplies. Unfortunately Rotary will lose this facility as the land is required for development by the State. They must vacate the premises by 15 July, 2007. Rotary is urgently seeking alternative temporary premises so they can continue their good work until such time as they can secure a long term home. They are seeking warehouse storage of some 800 + m2 preferably in the Wacol area where the majority of their volunteers, donors and transport needs are located.

If anyone can help Rotary with some alternative warehouse storage and work space, please contact Rotary direct— Bill Waterfield Ph; 07 3201 0741 or our Association Secretary Col Gould on 042 456 2030.

**** Bob Harvey-Hall is urgently seeking** hard copy contributions, photos etc from anyone who served in 'A' Coy PNGVR. Bob is putting together the history of A Coy and seeks stories from those who served—eg family involvement, civilian employment, interaction with other units of PNGVR, PIR or ARA units. This will form part of the history of PNGVR. Please send material to: Bob Harvey-Hall, 4 Katrina Court, MOOROOLBARK Vic. 3138. Photos will be returned if required.

**** Ian Sayers (PNGVR) in Canberra writes** malaria in PNG is a fact of life for the average person, and more than 1.2 million in PNG are struck down with the disease each year. One of the programs initiated by Rotary is Rotarians against Malaria (RAM). One of the aims of Rotary is entitled "Adopt a village" When a PNG village is adopted, every individual in that village is supplied with a long lasting insecticidal mosquito net (LLIN) These nets are treated so that the insecticide (Delramethrin) is released slowly over many washes. These nets not only stop mosquitoes, but in effect can kill them. The nets can also kill bed bugs, head lice and other creepy crawlers that makes it hard to sleep at night.

The nets do work. In Kikori District of PNG in the Gulf Province where "Rotary" nets have been supplied to all villages, the results have been dramatic, with the local hospital reporting a huge drop in malaria cases. The program has also seen:- * a big drop in premature birth; * a huge reduction of anaemia in pregnant women; * a huge increase in new birth weights and a reduction in the number of miscarriages.

If any members want to know more about this vital project in PNG, go to their web site www.ram.com.pg Better still if anyone or any business would like to support this project by way of a tax deductible donation, or know of a village you would like to adopt, please contact Ian Sayers on 02 6254 0130 or email isa34235@bigpond.net.au

VALE

Brian William CRANE 1/59516 of Port Macquarie, NSW passed away on 16 May 2007 aged 76 years.

After 5 years service in the Victoria Police, Brian joined the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary on 14 March 1955 as a Sub-Inspector serving in Lae. The onset of severe malaria caused him to resign on 19 April 1956, following which he joined the Australian Army separating some years later as a Warrant Officer. He then went into business and worked for many years as a consultant, before branching out and becoming a specialist in militaria, coins and medals.

Brian was a member of PNGVR joining A Coy on 12 November 1955. He donated to the Association a bound copy all NGVR RO 2's and PNGVR RO's up to 1965. This has proven to be a valuable resource for the Association. Brian is survived by his wife, Erma, a son and two daughters.

REST IN PEACE BRIAN
Information kindly supplied by Max Hayes



**2007 REGIMENTAL MIXED DINNER REUNION
6 RAR LONG TAN SERGANTS MESS—23 APRIL**



Patron Major-General John Pearn address guests

Members and guests enjoyed another most successful Regimental Dinner at the Long Tan Sergeants Mess, with an elaborately laid table with silverware and wine glasses etc.

Pre-dinner sherry and finger nibbles preceded the piping in of the official party and flags. Guests enjoyed a menu of Pork & Asian Salad, Stuffed Chicken Breast with creamy garlic sauce, Grilled eye fillet steak with mushrooms and a rich red wine jus, with dessert of Pavlova with fresh fruit or Chocolate Mud cake, all supplemented with white and red table wine. Following a short comfort break, Port was laid on before the Kangaroo Court.

Mr Vice, Sgt Col Gould chaired the Court, with S/Sgt Barry Wright taking up the duties of 'Bailiff'. In line with the recent GOLD Logies and GOLDEN Globe awards, this year's court adopted a GOLD award theme.

Mal Zimmermann, who was asked earlier in the year to "bring his drill equipment to a working bee" and who fronted up with the drill but no drill bits, was award the GOLDEN 'pointie bit award'—a Gold coloured mounted drill bit—to help remind him NOT to forget the drill bits at future working bees.

Doug Ng, who at a recent museum working bee, accidentally ran over an above ground mains pressure water pipe with his lawn mower resulting in a water fountain jet, was awarded the GOLD Stick—a gold painted forked stick for Doug to use for all future water finding missions instead of his lawn mower. Barry Wright also presented Doug with the original piece of cut water pipe mounted on a wooden base.

Vice President John Mudge, whose recently mounted medals came apart during another function and fell to the ground, was presented with the GOLD Steel Bar award—a gold coloured length of flat steel of some 5 cm wide and 30 cm long, fitted with a solid neck chain on which to more securely court mount his medals. To better take the "weight" of responsibilities so to speak.

The annual GOLDEN Horses 'Rear End' award went to our own Tom 'Snappy Tom' Dowling for showing great enthusiasm for this year's Regimental Dinner. Tom arrived at the main gate of Gallipoli Barracks, complete with ANZAC Day dress, miniatures, cameras and overnight kit for the Dinner on **Saturday** 21 April. Not bad when considering the Dinner was not on until **Monday** 23 April—Tom had arrived 48 hours early. Something to do with an incorrect wall calendar endorsement.

Guests included Maj-General John Pearn, Phil Ainsworth, Paul and Pauline Nerau, Phillip Bradley, John Mudge, John Holland, Jessica Harrington, Doug & Fran Ng, Paul Brown, Rayleen Keer, Bruce & Jenny Crawford, Alastair Martin, Col Gould, Jim Kellaway, Mal & Marie Zimmermann, Charles & Janet Schuster, Alan & Lorraine Clayton, Chief Superintendent Thring, Jack & Judy Hobbins, Barry Wright, Owen & Joy Barry, John Winterbottom, Joe and Mrs Hall, Tom Dowling, Bob Collins, Percy & Jill Neville, Bob & Dawn Harvey-Hall, Karl & Jenny Aschhoff, Peter Rogers, Bruce Inch, Doug Thorensen (Piper) and Mrs Thorensen. Thanks to all who attended.

Mal Zimmermann fronts the Kangaroo Court assisted by 'Bailiff' S/Sgt Barry Wright,



The Link Between the Pacific Islands Regiment and the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles

It may be of interest to members of the linkage between the two organizations post World War 2. This text is from "To Find a Path" Vol. 2, pp 6 & 7, by James Sinclair.

When the decision to reactivate the Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR) was made, it was decided to raise a corps of volunteers similar to the wartime New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR). The decision was strongly supported by the Administrator of PNG Colonel J K Murray. The authority for the raising of the NGVR had been issued by the Australian Army HQ on the 4th September 1939 and the Unit served with great distinction during the Second World War.

PNGVR was reactivated on 17th March 1951.

During May, 1958, PIR and PNGVR soldiers took part in joint exercises in the Goldie River—Kokoda Track area, for the first time in the Army's post war history. Joint exercises were thereafter a feature of PIR and PNGVR training. PNGVR units regularly marched with PIR units during such occasions as ANZAC Day and Queen's birthday celebrations.

— Peter Porteous.

The NGVR / PNGVR Association welcomes the following PIR, PIB, NGIB members who have joined as Associates:-

Mr John ANDRSON	(NGIB)	Mr Raymond BRELEY	(NGIB)
Major Albert HABERLEY	(PIR)	Mr Gregory IVEY	(PIR)
Mr Ronald JAGER	(PIB)	Mr Graham JOHNSON	(PIR)
Mr Edmond JONES	(NGIB)	WO2 Keith PAYNE, VC, OAM, DSC.	(PIR)
Lt Colonel Tony PERRIMAN	(PIR)	Lt Colonel Alistair POPE	(PIB)
Mr Peter PORTEOUS	(PIR)	Dr L. T ROBEY	(PIB)
Mr Malcolm ROBINSON	(PIR)	Mr Phillip SEMMENS	(PIR)
Mr Roy SHEARGOLD	(PIB)	Colonel Cecily SMITH	(PIR)
Mr Peter SUNA	(PIR)	Mr Victor SVENSON	(PIR)
Colonel David WILKINS	(PIR)	WO2 John WILKINSON	(PIB)



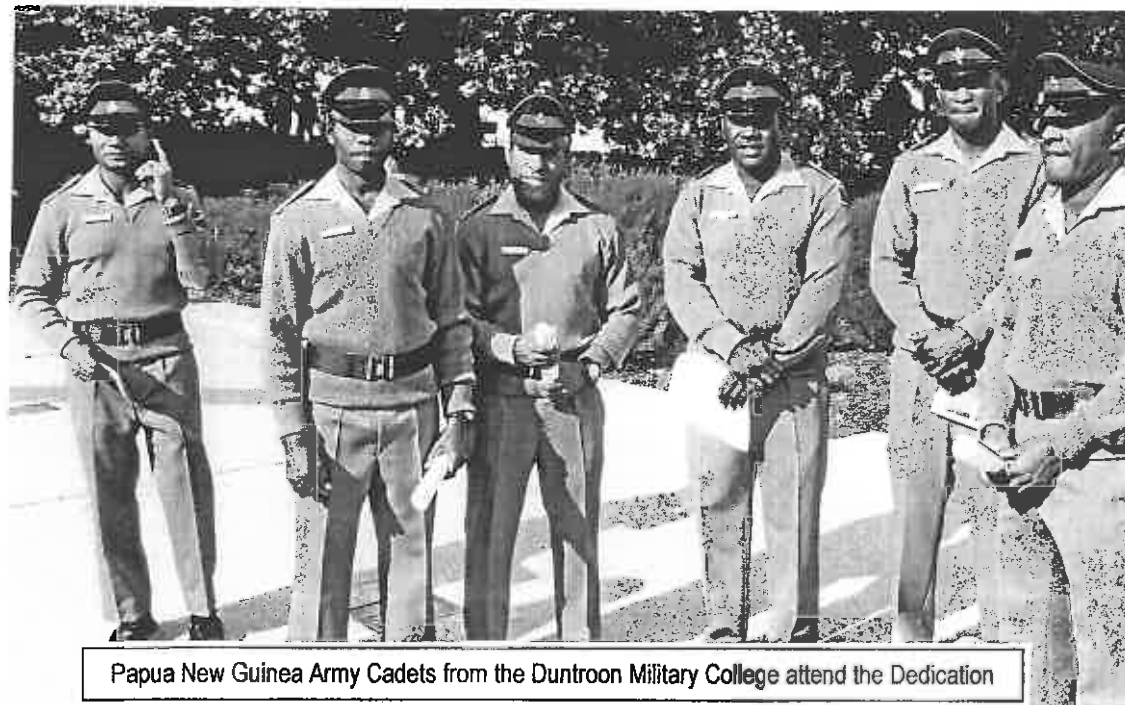
Ex PIR member, WO2 Keith Payne, VC, OAM, DSC. (Rtd) with Senator Bronwyn Bishop at the AWM



The PIR Plaque unveiled by Peter Porteous (PIR) & Roy Sheargold (PIB) 15 May 2007. Australian War Memorial—Canberra



(L) Mrs Payne; WO2 Keith Payne, VC.; Phil Ainsworth; Maj-General Steve Gow, His Excellence Major-General Michael Jeffery and Mrs Jeffrey.



Papua New Guinea Army Cadets from the Duntroon Military College attend the Dedication



Bruce Inch and his great moustache . Well done Bruce !



BRIAN JONES



(L) John Mudge; Lt. General Peter Leahy—GOC Australian Army; Phil Ainsworth; Col Gould
Plaque dedication—AWM Canberra—15 May 2007.



COMING ASSOCIATION EVENTS

SUNDAY 1 JULY 2007.

Reserve Forces Day march in Brisbane.

Members are requested to form up at the intersection of **Creek Street** and **Queen Street** in the city from **9.30 am**. Just look for our banner. The march starts at **10.00 am** and proceeds along **Creek Street** then up **Adelaide Street** finishing in **George Street**. Members in the SE area of Qld are requested to support this important annual event. Dress will be ANZAC Day dress with full medals. Please support this march as it is designated to recognize the service to the Nation by all RESERVISTS, past and present. This is our special day.

SUNDAY 1 JULY 2007

Montevideo Maru Memorial Service.

Following the Reserve Forces march, members are invited to attend the Montevideo Maru memorial service in the Shrine of Memories, ANZAC Square, Brisbane. The Service will commence at **11.15 am** and will be followed immediately by morning tea and light refreshments in the meeting room next to the Shrine. No cover charge.

SATURDAY 14 JULY 2007

Jimboomba Bush Dinner

Have you made and paid for your seat at the Dinner ??? Contact Bob Collins now Ph: 041 383 1397
Mail you cheques to Bob at:- 'Capricornia' 45 / 121 Surf Parade, BROADBEACH Q 4218

ANZAC DAY 2007—CANBERRA

A typical autumn Canberra weather—light rain and 9 degrees greeted this year's marchers. Three members had earlier indicated their intention to attend—Byron Sullivan, Bill Molony and Jes Hansford. Quite a surprise when Trevor Connell from the NT arrived followed by a Tony Connor from Canberra who was surprised to learn of our Association. A new member Colin!

We were in position number 43 in the order of march. As we proudly marched along, we spotted Max Hayes from Box Hill marching with another contingent. We were able to chat for a while.

The ceremony concluded at 1230 hours when participating members dispersed to pre-arranged venues.

I would like to remind ACT members that the Army Reserve ACT Parade will be at the AWM on Saturday 23 June commencing at 1400 hours in the western forecourt approach, march 200 m to the seating, and, after the ceremony, retire good order and condition to the Ainslie Football Club for the post march function of food and drinks mixed with tall stories—cost is \$15 pp for kai kai.

Members who wish to attend the Sydney Reserve Forces Day march on Sunday 1 July, can catch a coach which the ACT Reserve Forces Day committee arranges at a cost of \$30 return leaving Canberra Jollimont Centre at 0500 hours. Contact Jes Hansford on 6238 0929 for further information. It is better to be driven up to Sydney and back than to drive yourself.

Js Hansford.

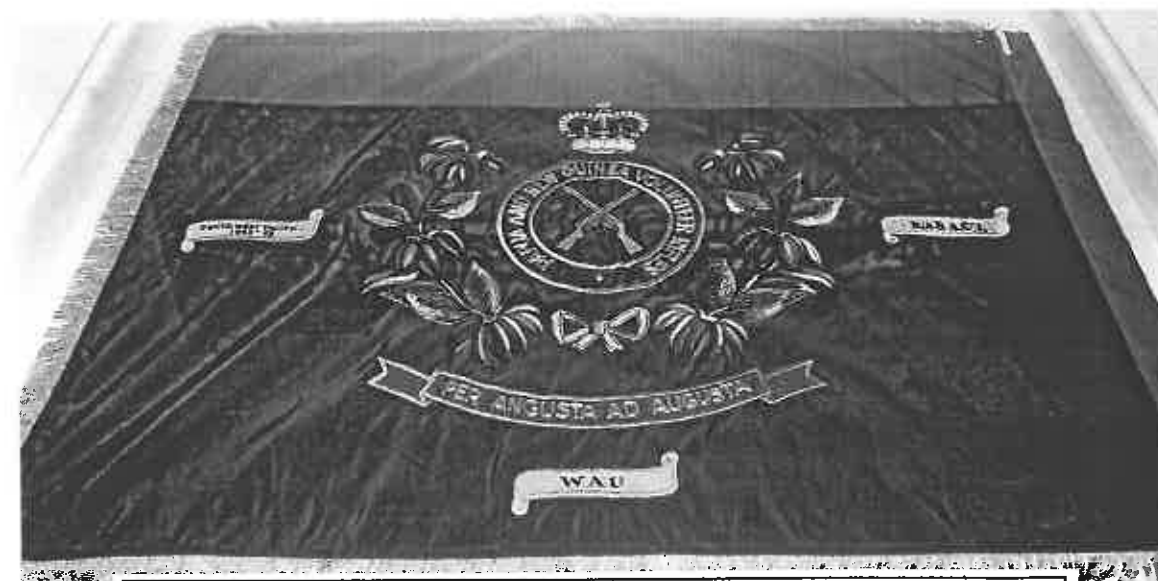
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59 Bryants Road, Loganholme

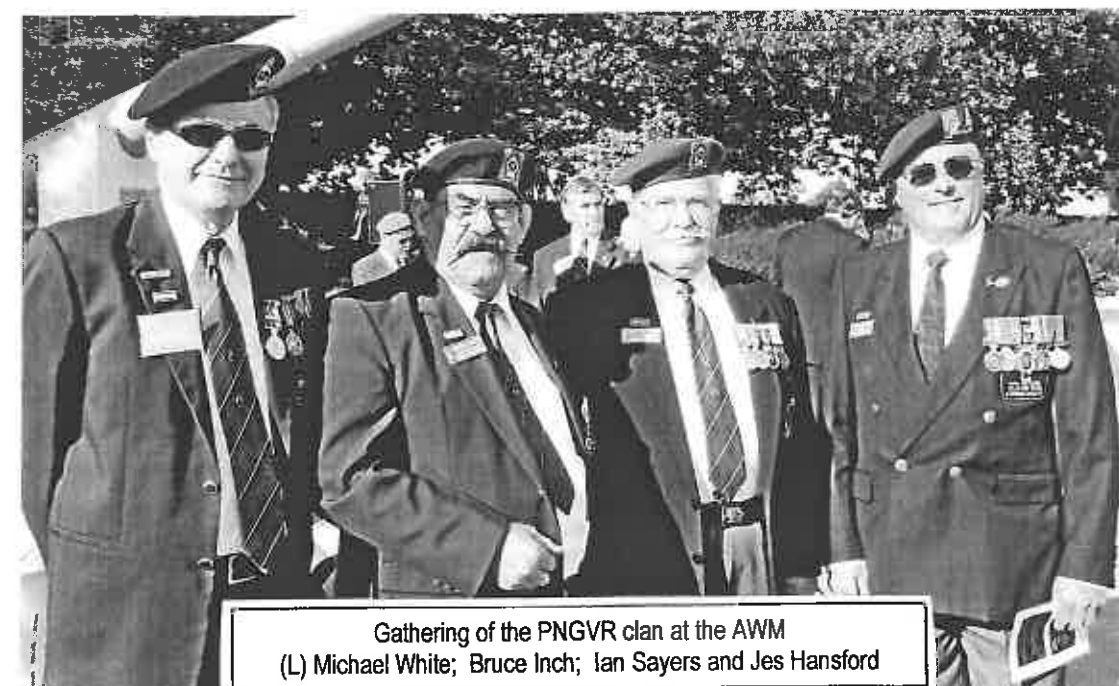
Ph: Clive Johnson
07 3806 5980 Web: www.cjmedals.com

MAIL RETURNED—WHERE ARE THEY???

Ls CHURCH	John PAGE
Brian PARCE	Bob RASSMUSSEN
Mike WARREN	<i>Can anyone help ???</i>



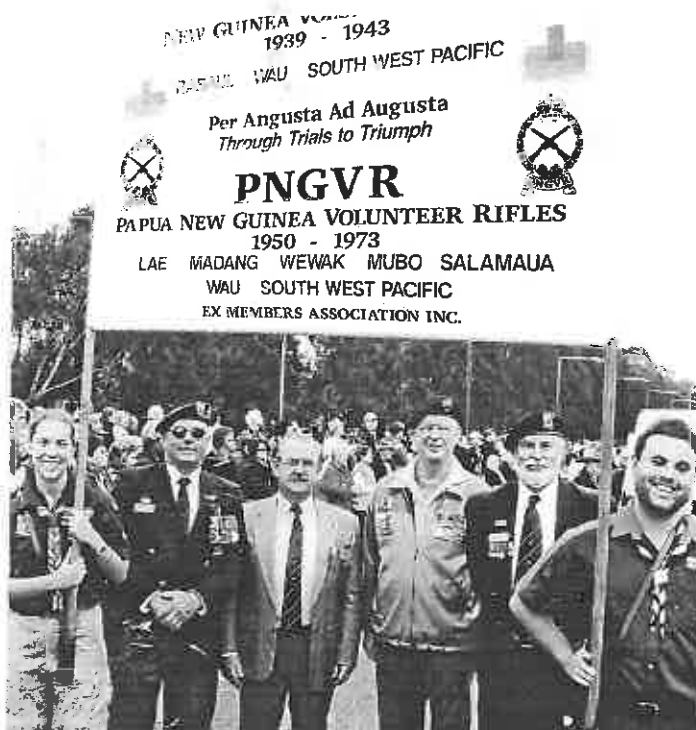
The PNGVR Regimental Colour was on display during morning tea at the AWM Canberra



Gathering of the PNGVR clan at the AWM
(L) Michael White; Bruce Inch; Ian Sayers and Jes Hansford



(L) Bruce Crawford (PNGVR) Les Irving (ANGAU) and Harold Osbourne (NGVR)
At the Australian War Memorial Plaque dedication



PNGVR Canberra Branch—ANZAC Day 2007
(L) Jes Hansford; Byron Sullivan; Trevor Connell & Bill Molony

THE LAST PARADE OF A COMPANY PNGVR
With Quite a Bit of Latitude to Reminisce
By Major Bob Harvey-Hall RFD ED Rtd

This is part of a series of articles with the aim of recording events in and around
the life of A Company PNGVR

The Post-Courier newspaper, dated Tuesday, October 9, 1973, stated, *Last Parade for Volunteers* and commenced the article with: *The Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles was being disbanded against the wishes of many people in Australia and Papua New Guinea, Mr Norm Osborn, state President of the RSL, said recently.*

Norm Osborn was correct: however those of us then in PNGVR, who were realists and had known for some time the matter was a closed book as far as the Administration and, particularly, PNG Command was concerned, understood an emerging third world nation such as Papua New Guinea would not be able to justify the existence of a defence force made up of a professional navy, army and airforce, a para-military police force *and a volunteer militia*. And, on that day in October at Lae, although I had decided to transfer with TAA to Australia in my civilian job and not remain with an emerging New Guinea Airlines, I was left, along with other unit members, with a bittersweet taste. The sweet part related to my 21 plus years as a member of a unique Citizen Military Force Battalion. I transferred to A Company as a Warrant Officer Class Two and handed over as a Major to another Major; Laurie Kelly joined the sub-unit as a Recruit Private, along with his older brothers John and Tom, the latter a WW 2 veteran. In handing over to Major Kelly, I became Battalion 2IC to Lt Col Bill Harrington MBE.

In the article, the RSL President went on to say that "the men of PNGVR had done a wonderful job: they are not professional soldiers, they are men who have put in time after work and at weekends to train themselves as soldiers, and because of this I think they are better men and better citizens".

Of course, what Norm Osborn did not mention was that members of PNGVR also put in two weeks of full time duty at annual camps, with training exercises conducted in the field at such places as Goldie River outside Port Moresby; at Ambra, aka Umbra, outside Mt Hagen; at the Lae showgrounds and making use of the rain forest terrain to the SW of that town; on an old war time site on the banks of the Busu River, at Igam Barracks for the presentation of the Colours, NW of Igam Barracks for a Battalion exercise and at Finschhafen in 1973, the last annual camp.

Having digressed a tad, allow me to go further along the lines of A Company members putting in extra unpaid training time; specifically in relation to providing weekend patrols to monitor the working up patrols by the SAS Squadrons based at the A Company training depot and Igam Barracks prior to being posted to Vietnam. Some of the early SAS Squadron training, prior to helicopter insertions towards the borders with Indonesia, was within reasonable

'army person' I was expected to look after such persons during their visits. He regaled our group of A Company chaps with a story about him being the spearhead of an armoured column which had a tremendous battle with German Armour at a place called Eisenhaeur in Germany; the Colonel said he had come up against a well fortified and very determined enemy position, however, using superior tactics and good old American Army know-how, he was able to breach the massive defences. Karl Asschhoff was sitting near me and I could see he was becoming agitated. 'Well now', Pte Asschhoff said to the very gung-ho Military Attaché, when the chap paused in his soliloquy; 'Colonel, your battle was never like that, I was there in that town and I was expected to defend it as a member of the Hitler Youth; I was about fourteen, like my comrades in arms and apart from some rifles with very little ammunition, we had a few rocket launchers, mostly without the rockets to fire from them; there certainly were no fieldworks of any significance and in fact as soon as we saw the first American tank, we all surrendered'. Words to that effect from Karl; it was the perfect squelch, the Colonel was appalled, he just did not recover, there was no rebuttal and the remainder, except Karl, did not know where to look, let alone say anything. The next day in the airport lounge, I spoke to the Colonel and after the smallest of small talk, wished him bon voyage, before he joined the DC6B which would take him to Port Moresby, to Canberra and then back home, as his tour of duty was finished. I didn't mention armoured tactics, neither did he. Normally such visitors sent a note of thanks for being looked after; I never heard from him. Talk about being dead unlucky; a chap has this simply marvellous war story, no doubt well honed over the years, travels all the way from the USA, reckons it's safe to tell it to this group; and lo, you meet your nemesis in the form of a 'National Guardsman' in a little old out of the way town called Lae!

Really, sometimes it turned out to be much more than just another day in the life of a PNGVR Rifle Company!



NGVR-ANGAU and PIR Plaque dedication—Australian War Memorial, Canberra—15 May 2007.

(L) Paul E Nerua—PNG Consul General Brisbane; Colonel Ben Norrie PNGDF Attache Canberra with Major Bob Harvey-Hall. Colonel Ben Norrie was formally Rifleman Ben Norrie of 1 Platoon A Coy PNGVR when Major Harvey-Hall was the Company Commander. It has been many many years since they last met.

OC of A Company which was to be made up of Company Headquarters and one Platoon at Lae and Platoons at Bulolo and Wau. In October of that year, the first OC held a meeting at Lae to gauge the response of the Administration and citizens to the proposals. Harry said the response was lukewarm from the Administration. Although the 3 Platoon Wau took its first recruits in June 1951, including two Lieutenants, it stayed in place for a short period only; Bulolo never got off the ground. Later on I was part of a recce group which looked at reviving Wau, which in effect was only a pipe dream.

Lt John McKean was another popular resident and the only other commissioned Officer in A Company. John served in the Middle East and on return to Australia, joined the Parachute Battalion, which never went on operations as such; he was a Pharmacist with the only chemist shop in the district.

At the first parade I attended, about two weeks after my arrival, the OC decided I would be the CSM; there was no paperwork on me and HQ PNGVR only found out about my existence after the Major informed Port Moresby of his intentions; my posting to PNGVR as a Warrant Officer Class 2, came through from 25 Battalion, Darling Downs Regiment a couple of months later. I had qualified for subjects A and B for First Appointment with 25 Battalion, sat for subject C in Port Moresby (with Peter Harbeck and Peter Broman) and was appointed by the Governor General Sir William Joseph Slim as a Lieutenant in the Active Citizen Military Forces of the Commonwealth, on the fourth day of December, 1953. Anyway, in the absence of John McKean who had sold up and returned to Australia, I was appointed to administer command of A Company just after being commissioned.

Other names were recalled on that night and early morning, and most of the following would have got a guernsey: Jim McKinnon was a WW2 veteran, having served in the Middle East and New Guinea. Jim roamed the district, he was a gold fossicker, owned a trade store somewhere up country, consequently, he was not a reliable attendee. In those days if we got a dozen attendees on the week end and fifteen on Tuesday nights, we did well. John and Jimmy Bretag were early enlistees, the brothers worked at Comworks; Val Burke also worked there, he and I played early morning golf during the week, and he was also a groomsman at my wedding. Jack Bax, another veteran, from Vacuum Oil, Bevan Murphy and Mick Botterill, both from Comworks, the former served in the Merchant Marine and the latter in the British Army and Europe, Ray Dalton from Vacuum Oil, another veteran; Alan 'Yippy' Jensen, young Doherty and Walters, their first names elude me, Jim 'Pud' Horton from Qantas, Kel Chew, Frank Cleal, Trevor Iles, Doug Laws, John Dale, a Korean veteran; my brothers John, Rod and Chris, John and Ray Batze, Stan Carswell, Bruce Inch, Don Chester-Woods of Customs, ex British Army, Malaya and known as Diwai; Leo Conlon, of the Meteorological Bureau, Tom Collins of Civil Affairs, Brian Pierce of South Pacific Welding and Karl Asschhoff who worked for Tom Richards, a Surveyor, and the Kelly brothers Tom, John and Laurie, amongst many others, were all part of the local CMF fraternity.

I reminded the gathering that I had hosted a welcome in the Lae RSL to a Army Colonel from the US Embassy in Canberra, and as the senior, albeit part time,

distance of Lae and it was these excursions that A Company patrols, mainly under Sgt Mal Zimmerman and directed by the Company Commander, endeavoured to track and interdict. Success rate was low, some A Company patrols did observe the 'enemy'; however the SAS were and as they remain today, in their element. Never the less, it was good training.

One would not expect the RSL President to know that many members of PNGVR put in hours of study, preparing themselves for promotion examinations; theory and practical: the latter was designed mostly as a Tactical Exercise Without Troops (TEWT). A typical example was the PNGVR TEWT, Exercise KAPIAK (named after the breadfruit tree) over the weekend 28/29 November, 1970, mostly at Nadzab, in which PNGVR candidates were examined in the field for promotion to Sergeant, Warrant Officer and First Appointment to Lieutenant. Such activities were planned by senior PNGVR ARA staff; the last two Commanding Officers also made use of the Battalion 2IC in the planning phase and used the latter, as did previous COs, to also manage the examination board, assisted by PNGVR CMF officers, with some ARA Warrant Officers. On top of this work load, some Officers and NCOs attended 10 day courses in Australia, sometimes as part of promotion examinations, sometimes as part of keeping abreast of military matters, relative to the role of PNGVR, whilst some Officers volunteered for full time duty in Malaya, Hawaii and Vietnam. All in all, a more than reasonable amount of the volunteer's time was spent in such activities.

Having diverged to support a point made by Norm Osborn, it is worthwhile to know what else he had to say on that day in the life of A Company PNGVR. Norm said "The PNGVR is not merely a training unit. In the last war, the NGVR as it was known was of considerable use to this country. When the Japanese attacked Lae, the male civilians, instead of panicking, were already members of NGVR and made an orderly retreat to Jacobsen's plantation, and later out to Yalu, across the Markham River and on to Bulolo. Right through this campaign, the NGVR patrols held the territory on the other side of the Markham, forcing the Japanese to go over the mountains from Salamaua to Bulolo where they almost defeated themselves because of the length of their supply lines".

The Post-Courier article went on to say "the final parade of A Company was held in drizzling rain at the parade ground off Huon Road. Mr Osborn, Lt Col Peter Cole, commanding officer of PNGVR and Maj Bob Harvey-Hall took the salute from the 58 men".

The Post-Courier picture accompanying the article showed the CQMS of A Company, S/Sgt Noel Serafini, saluting, as he passes the dais. Not shown in the photograph was the Officer Commanding, Lt Karl Franz Josef Aschhoff. Karl Aschhoff told me he had become OC by default: Major Laurie Kelly and Lt Peter Barlow had transferred to Australia some short time before the parade. Karl had qualified for first appointment during Lt Colonel Bishop's time as CO PNGVR and he had said to the CO that although he had qualified, he did not wish to become an officer as he was quite satisfied being a Warrant Officer. Colonel Bishop respected his wish and told Karl not to get too comfortable being

a Warrant Officer, "as soon as the need arises, you will be commissioned". The need arose during 1973, when Lt Colonel Cole was Commanding Officer.

After the parade, we adjourned to the A Company Mess for heaps of finger food, lolly water and other types of drinks. It was a low key affair, the CO made a short speech, thanking the blokes for a smart turnout and for their involvement in the life of A Company in particular and PNGVR in general. No one wanted to be the first to leave, which meant a long day. I recalled starting out at Emery Haus, where we paraded under the haus and in the attractive gardens, in which grew several types of wonderfully varied types of hibiscus and crotons; that was opposite the Training Depot, across Huon Road.

We graduated to the large Administration owned building which became the Training Depot, thanks in a large part to the Morobe District Commissioner Horrie Niall, (ex-Major, ANGAU); we recalled the thousands of United States communication forms stored in the building (we made use of many of those message books with the inbuilt carbon paper) and the many lengths of marsden matting, most of which disappeared quite suddenly just prior to the building being handed over to PNGVR. We also recalled we managed to retrieve some of that versatile so called 'matting' for the Rifle Range; the latter came after protracted discussions between the Area Command Garrison Engineer, Capt Giles and the local Administration. Early days, for quite some time, the Rifle Range was a significant part of the A Company ethos; being able to fire weapons such as the Owen SMG, the Lee Enfield .303 rifle and the Bren LMG and use it as a base for week-end bivouacs, was a boon; it also meant being outdoors after what the blokes mostly termed boring Tuesday night parades. The completion of the range came at a crucial time, it meant we could better retain the interest of the members, as well as attract a few more recruits.

Talk of the Rifle Range would have inevitably led to 'Buster Parnell' who was developing a farm almost parallel to the Range site which included chickens and that he was far from satisfied that his chooks would lay eggs if soldiers started firing weapons. He was correct, the Range was very popular and Buster sued the Administration and the Department of the Army; after more than a few years he was reimbursed, however not to his liking. This matter remained a case of "which came first, the chicken or the Rifle Range"? The episode resulted in many visits by Mr Parnell to talk to Myself as the Company Commander and extra visits by the CO from Port Moresby to talk to Buster. The South Pacific Post and later the local newspaper, although at times giving us good press, supported small business above 'the Army', which meant bad PR for PNGVR and Area Command.

Still on the Rifle Range; the Kelly Brothers planted peanuts between the mounds, which were very popular for a short time until Area Command put a stop to that idea. We held week-end bivouacs at the Range and on one Saturday night when the A510s were set up, and someone was fiddling, we unaccountably made contact with a US Marine combat unit on operations in Vietnam. John Jameson, the RMO, was with us for that week end, he often attended Tuesday night parades at the Training Depot.

Some one would have mentioned Bill Guest who lived with his wife Pat and daughter Annette in Emery Haus, which for sometime was the official ARA Warrant Officer's residence; Bill was a WW2 veteran and a member of the famous 39 Militia Battalion and that led to recalling the various WO Instructors, the first being WOs Holden and Oldham who arrived in Port Moresby as early as September 1950 and provided assistance at Lae. Bill Shillaker planned and accompanied about twenty A Company members on a Easter long week-end bivouac at Salamaua where we fired a 3inch mortar and used the misfires to get a large supply of fish for ourselves and the villagers: as a result we were popular with the locals, who during the planning stage were 'up in arms' to the Administration about having us in their area. There were four Harvey-Halls on that exercise and the WO Instructor made sure we were on different crews during the firing. Taffy Reece, all the way from the British Army of the Rhine to Northern Command for a short time, then on to Lae as WO Instructor. He reckoned he came from the trying pan to the fire, said in his Welch lilt. Good blokes, who were part and parcel of the life of A Company PNGVR. We certainly spoke of an ARA Corporal, attached to A Company, he was the resident bomb disposal expert, who for over two years destroyed many and varied unexploded devices throughout the Morobe District. In that vein the Corporal was very popular and was given a donga in Bagtown, the single quarters mostly for Administration staff, adjacent to where the Lae RSL club was later built. He was a very nervous fellow, an inveterate gambler, who, along with the majority of blokes, liked more than ale or two; his specialty was Rhum Negrita. And there was Corporal Tom Foster, ARA Storeman, who was there when I became the CSM in 1952.

During my first April in Lae, I, accompanied by the ARA Corporal and some A Company chaps, including Stan Carswell and Don Coffee, followed the Buang River to Mumeng, then to an American Lutheran Mission, at Boana, where on Easter Sunday we helped the mission staff, including children, assist the Easter Bunny in finding well hidden easter eggs in the beautiful grounds. This particular mission and locale features in the Peter Ryan book, 'Fear Drives My Feet'. The walk was a good test of endurance and gave me a chance to have my first go at navigation in rain forest; mind you, the track was well defined, however it was a challenge to be able to say, with as much confidence as possible, "we are here"; it was just plain egg, not Easter egg, I had on my face a couple of times. It also set me thinking about what one should carry in a haversack and how the contents should be packed, to ensure a balanced load and how to improve my navigation skills.

I recalled that when I arrived in Lae in February 1952, I was warmly greeted by the OC of A Company, Major Harry Thompson MC; he had won his MC during the fighting in Syria, he was with the Signals Corp; Harry worked for Post and Telegraphs in Lae, he was a well known and liked fellow. He was one of the first to apply to enlist when recruiting for A Company started in April 1951; he told me he was rejected because of his age, he was then 44. He was subsequently given the appointment and retired in 1955. Harry Thompson was the second Officer Commanding appointed to A Company; in 1950, the Commanding Officer designate of PNGVR, Col N R McLeod appointed Major C MacFarlane MC,