

HAVE A LAUGH

Army Ducks "Swamp"

Courtesy of Swamp Productions, Everton Park.



"Paddy was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and he couldn't find a parking space anywhere. Looking up to heaven he said, "Lord! Take pity on me. If you find me a parking space I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of me life. I wont play Golf on Sunday, and will give up me Irish Whiskey and me wicked ways ". Suddenly and miraculously, a parking space suddenly appeared. Paddy looked up again and said "Never mind Lord, I just found one."

PNG Snippets.....

Steamships Trading Company's property division has commenced on a Kina 200 million construction of the **Papuan Hotel and Apartments** in down town Port Moresby. The new complex will sit on the site of the old original Papuan Hotel between Mary and Douglas Streets. The complex will consist of 20 stories, 156 rooms and apartments, office space and Hotel guest facilities. (11/6/08)

SP Brewery has been awarded the Grand Gold Medal for its South Pacific Lager at the annual Monde selection in Vienna, Austria. SP has won this award for 3 years in a row, 2006, 2007 and again in 2008. PNG was among 23 other countries that were awarded high international quality awards under the 'beer' category. (12/6/08)

SP Export Lager will soon be sold in Australia from the end of June. The recently Gold Medal awarded SP Lager will launched at Queensland's Gold Coast on 23 June 2008. SP General Manager Stan Joyce, said that the Brewery has invested Kina 90 million to increase its production capacity for the next three years, in order to meet the overwhelming demand for PNG's internationally recognized beers.

A **tiny parasite** which has already destroyed bee populations around the world, has now been discovered in Papua New Guinea and threatens to decimate our food, coffee and honey industries. The tick-like parasite called "Varoa Destructor" jumps on the back of bees, and, once in the hive, the mites feed on the baby bees till the hive eventually dies out. The mite has been discovered in the Eastern Highlands and in the Madang and Morobe Provinces. The mite is not found in Australia or New Zealand at present. If bees dies out in PNG, many crops will fail and this could lead to food shortages.

MEMBER EMAIL ADDRESSES

In order to increase and improve on communication between the Association and its members, your Executive Committee is requesting members to submit their current EMAIL ADDRESSES so that information can quickly be relayed around the traps. If you wish to be included on our Association email network, please email your name and email address to:-

pngvr@optusnet.com.au

Your email address will only be used by your Association to communicate information to you.

Col Gould—Secretary

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

All correspondence to:-

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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 54 JUNE 2008



President's Update

The finding of HMAS Sydney earlier this year has re-opened other un-resolved or not located maritime tragedies vis the sinking of the hospital ship Centaur off the South East Queensland coast and the Japanese prison ship Montevideo Maru in the China Sea. Two members of our Association Cynthia Schmidt and Clive Troy are coordinating the establishment of a "Finding the Montevideo Maru Foundation" and the circulation of a petition to the Commonwealth Government for funding the operation. Our Association supports this enterprise, however, those members who wish to get directly involved please contact either Cynthia or Clive.

Please don't forget the Montevideo Maru Memorial Service to be held 10 am, Tuesday 1st July in the Hall of Memories, Brisbane Cenotaph followed by morning tea in nearby RSL rooms. Cynthia has arranged for the Service to be videoed by John Schindler, a documentary maker and whose family is also entwined in this tragedy. This is to be a segment in his documentary about the Montevideo Maru tragedy which is for the "Finding the Montevideo Maru Foundation". Rudy Buckley will be attending and be part of the service and documentary. Please advise if you are attending so we may select the appropriate size venue. We need as many as possible to attend.

Incidentally, John Schindler is donating a DVD copy of his documentary "Unsung Heroes". It tells the stories of Operations Rimau and Jaywick in the famous small motor vessel "Krait".

I discovered there is also a Montevideo Maru Memorial at the Repatriation Hospital, Bell Street, Heidelberg, Victoria as well as Ballarat memorial which was dedicated in 2004.

Former NGVR soldier, Sergeant Neville Swanson died on the 9th of April with his funeral on the 11th April 2008 at the Mt Gravatt Brisbane Cemetery, attended by 4 Committee members. The short period of notice did not allow a mail-out to members. Paul Brown ably assisted the service facilitator with our "Poppy Parade" segment.

Regrettably, Harold Osborne ex-NGVR passed away in Melbourne on 29th April. Advise with little detail was recently received so the Association was unable to assist the family in any way. Those who attended the May 2007 dual plaque dedications ceremonies in Canberra will remember Harold proudly wearing his slouch hat with the Bird of Paradise in its puggaree.

The Museum is consuming much time and resources of the Committee, particularly those of Curator John Holland. No recent information has been received about the possible relocation of the Museum to a new site on the former Wacol Army Barracks site. Tom Dowling has organised steel for a ramp at the Museum pending confirmation of delivery and construction timetable. A DVD of the "promo" of the "Gallant 500 Project" which was originally produced in VHS tape format was purchased for Museum display purposes as well as 4 DVDs containing the full footage recorded at the time, for research purposes. John advises he has purchased a glass fronted cabinet which will be utilised as soon as locks are installed. Good job John. Snappy Tom Dowling is smiling again with his new camera which was donated by King & Co Property Consultants. A map cabinet has also been donated and this will assist the preservation of larger prints, maps, photographs and other documents.

The Milne Bay Museum, Toowoomba has generously given our Museum a copy of its Acquisitions programme. All we need is a workable computer with accessories and a reliable operator to put it to good use. Can anyone help? We are also seeking a DVD player to use with our TV monitor to allow research and showings of our Promo and other documentaries held.

The Association's most important activities were successfully held during ANZAC week, commencing with the Association Dinner on the 23rd April 2008 at the Victoria Barracks Officers/Sergeants Mess with guests Keith Payne VC, his wife Florence, Lieutenant Colonel Jethro Usurup and our patron Major General John Pearn in attendance. This was a well attended and most enjoyable evening. ANZAC day activities commenced with the march with nearly 100 members on parade. The march was headed by ex PNGVR soldier and retired RPIR Medical Officer Lieutenant Colonel Jethro Usurup. Our turnout was at our usual high standard and we were fortunate to be led by a brass band, thus we were all in step and felt good about the march. This was followed by our usual short but poignant NGVR Memorial Service in the Hall of Memories in Brisbane Cenotaph led by Paul Brown and Mal Zimmerman. The post march reunion was held on the first floor of the Victory Hotel. The late change of venue was due the Exchange Hotel closure for refurbishment. Surprisingly the premises were more than adequate and given the joviality of the occasion it must be regarded as a very successful function. It was great to speak with our out of Brisbane members. One issue often mentioned was the need for better communication and more regular issues of Harim Tok Tok.

In response to this request the first monthly email letter was distributed on 11th June to about 30 members for whom we have email addresses. To get on the distribution list just send me or Colin your email address, or if you do not have one, get your son, daughter or whoever can reliably pass on information to you to send his or hers email address together with a name to whom it is for. Please also include whether you approve of your email address being distributed to our other Association members to facilitate communication between members.

On Saturday 17th May 2008, 24 members enjoyed a day's bus trip to the Toowoomba Milne Bay Museum, a pleasant luncheon at the Toowoomba City Golf Club and a visit to the Oakley Army Flying Museum. Our military training put us in good stead with everyone turning up at 08:00 sharp to catch the bus at the Wacol Museum. Many thanks to Paul Brown and John Holland for making the day run so smoothly.

A very enjoyable and cool Bush Dinner for over 40 members and friends was held on Pam and Barry Wright's Jimboomba property on Saturday 14th June. A big thank you to Pam and Barry for their kind invitation as well as Bob Collins and the many others who assisted in preparing and dismantling the paraphernalia necessary for such a successful function. Guests included John Wong from 1 Commando and Phillip Bradley, author and military historian. Speakers were Bruce Crawford who spoke emotionally about his family's visit to Gallipoli on Anzac Day, myself about our monthly email newsletter, Phillip Bradley reading his book about the Japanese landing at Salamaua and Colin Gould

updating all on PNG activities, particularly the Mt Hagen Chapter.

Phillip Bradley spoke to us last at our 2006 Dining Night in Long Tan Sergeants Mess. Phillip has written two books, "On Shaggy Ridge" published in 2004 and "The Battle for Wau" launched on the 23rd May 2008 at the Duntroon Officers' Mess by Lieutenant General Stephen Leahy. Unfortunately due to the short notice and it being our Association Dinner Day, no one from the Association could attend. Phillip is now researching his follow up book "From Wau to Salamaua". Michael Mc Kernan, military historian recently reviewed Phillip's latest book in the Canberra Times. Here are a few excerpts from that review:

"This is just as good a book as "On Shaggy Ridge" and it is now fair to say that in Phillip Bradley Australia has found another military historian of the very first rank.... Bradley's familiarity of the land over which the Australians fought around Wau is so strong, so developed, so intense that the reader can see what he has seen, can walk on the tracks that the Australians fought over, can live in the pitiless jungle that gave these men homes for months and years....unlike "On Shaggy Ridge" there is steel in Bradley's treatment of some Australian leaders. He has no time for the first Australians in command at Wau, Colonel Norman Fleay,..... You'll meet though, plenty of men to admire and marvel at..... Bradley's eye for the detail and the right quote almost never fails him..... all the elements of good military history can be found in this book: a good and clear narrative, character aplenty, a well developed sense of place, an agile understanding of tactical and strategic complexity, and a strong sense of the ambiguity of life and war. Thrown together with important contemporary and modern photographs and clear and frequent maps, this is truly a book to relish".

Additional items which deserve mention include;

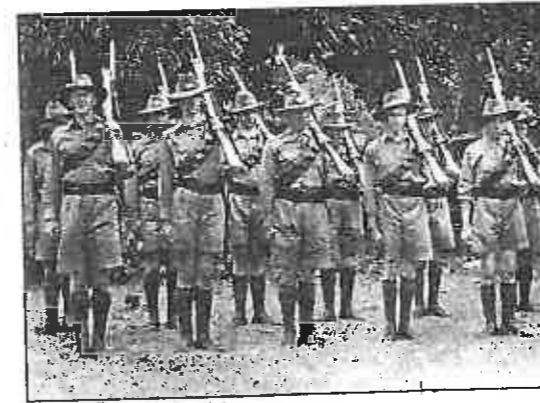
1. New Association T-Shirts and caps are now in the Q Store, thanks to Jessie Chee's efforts. The "xxl" size shirts are still to be received. These items may now be purchased from our Secretary Colin Gould.
2. Arrangements are being made to have a PNG Remembrance Day plaque to be installed on the base of the South West Pacific Memorial statue in Anzac Square Brisbane. This is a heritage precinct so many protocols need to be followed. The PNG Consul General Paul Nerau, the RSL International Relations Officer John Burgess and BCC Heritage and Parks Architects are providing support. Hopefully on the 23rd July 2009, we will be able to hold a memorial service in Anzac Square in remembrance of all personnel who have served in PNG.

SUSPECTED STOLEN NGVR MEDALS FOUND

Rifleman H J Beckett NG 4002

- Reported MIA 22/1/42 believed to be a POW
- Reported lost on the 'Montevideo Maru' 1 July 1942.

(As reported by the North Shore Times Newspaper May 2008)



Pte Beckett was married to Leah Victoria Beckett, of Chatswood, who died in 1992.

Mr Maciejak found the medals on his fence in Lincoln St last Wednesday, when he took his dog for a walk.

"They were just sitting there, not wrapped up," he said. "At first I thought they were children's toys. But as soon as I picked one up and felt the weight of it I realised they were real.

"I felt goosebumps on my arms. I think they may have been stolen - and that the thief had a conscience."

He immediately took the medals to Chatswood Police Station where police are following all avenues to locate the owners.

The original certificate of issue from the Australian army was with the medals.

"It's so strange as they have no pin with them - it looks like the ribbons have been cut," Mr Maciejak said.

The NGVR was an Australian militia unit of unpaid civilians working in New Guinea.

They were thrust into the front line when the Japanese entered the war after their attack on Pearl Harbour, on December 7, 1941.

The NGVR fought in the Battle of Rabaul, on the island of New Britain, in the Australian Territory of New Guinea in January, 1942. They fought alongside the

1400-strong Australian Army garrison known as Lark Force.

Further research by the *North Shore Times* revealed Pte Beckett was among a group of who surrendered to the Japanese and were put on board Japanese troop ship *Montevideo Maru* on June 22, 1942.

The ship headed for Hainan

Island but, nine days later, was torpedoed and sunk by US submarine *Sturgeon*.

Anyone with information about Private Beckett's family can contact the *North Shore Times* on 9414 1374.

A CASTLECRAG resident who found World War II medals dumped in his front yard has vowed to find their rightful owners.

Jerzy Maciejak is taking on the cause because of the sacrifice his relatives made in World War II.

"I am originally from Poland and half my relatives died fighting," he said. "I know what these medals mean."

The medals were awarded posthumously to Private H.J. Beckett, a member of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR).

They are the 1939-45 Star, Pacific Star, War Medal and Australia Service Medal.

Michael Howard

howardm@leadernewspapers.com.au

A BOX Hill Digger's final act on land is helping quash conspiracy theories about Australia's greatest maritime disaster.

Cpl Barry O'Neil threw his personalised handkerchief to a 12-year-old Rabaul local, Rudy Buckley, before being forced on to a barge to be taken out to Japanese transport ship, *Montevideo Maru*.

It is believed Cpl O'Neil was among more than 1000 Australian prisoners of war and civilians on board the Japanese ship who were killed when it was torpedoed by US

submarine *SS Sturgeon* at 2.30am on July 1, 1942. The ship was sunk off Luzon, in the Philippines, where it remains undiscovered.

More than 60 years on Mr Buckley has revealed the handkerchief that's been in his possession since that fateful boarding in Papua New Guinea. "I folded it up and kept it in an old biscuit tin, wrapping it around other souvenirs like medals and badges," Mr Buckley told the *Leader*.

"They were just memories of the war and of our soldiers. I've heard some stories about how (the ship was sunk) and some saying it didn't happen. That makes me angry. It happened, I was there."

The name on the handkerchief (B. O'Neil) and the service number (VX 19523) led researchers to infantryman Barry Richard David O'Neil, who enlisted in Box Hill on June 6, 1940. He was the son of Box Hill couple William and Laura O'Neil.

The search has begun to find the descendants of Cpl O'Neil who is believed to be the only Digger to leave a legacy of proof that he boarded the *Montevideo Maru*.

Box Hill North researcher Maxwell Hayes, who has spent a decade researching the wartime disaster, said "it's like a jigsaw puzzle and we are putting the pieces together".

"There are conspiracy theories that they weren't on there. But I've been researching this for 10 years and that handkerchief has led us to concrete proof," Mr Hayes said.

"It's the first positive sign that at least one soldier was on it and we can assume the rest were on it."

Pressure has been placed on the Federal Government to launch a search for the *Montevideo Maru*, similar to the hunt for the recently discovered *HMAS Sydney*.

In April Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said he would consider an appeal to launch a search. The Department of Environment and Heritage was unable to confirm whether any action had been taken.

The 'Montevideo Maru'

Handkerchief inscription (see below)

Our thanks to member Max Hayes who has been actively researching this issue and to member Rudy Buckley who donated the handkerchief to the NGVR / PNGVR Military Museum.

Story by Leader Newspapers.





ROYAL PACIFIC ISLANDS REGIMENT

FROM THE HISTORY BOOKS...

- **New Guinea Infantry Battalion** formed March/April 1944. Re-named *1st New Guinea Infantry Battalion* (1 NGIB) 9 September 1944; Disbanded June 1946
- **2nd New Guinea Infantry Battalion** (2 NGIB) Formed 26 September 1944, disbanded June 1946
- **3rd New Guinea Infantry Battalion** (3 NGIB) Formed June 1945. On 7 March 1947 became "A" Coy 3rd New Guinea Infantry Battalion; Disbanded November 1947.
- **1st Papuan Infantry Battalion** (1 PIB) Commanding Officer appointed 27 May 1940. Disbanded August 1946. Also referred to as the " PIB "
- **HQ Pacific Islands Regiment** formed in November 1944. Disbanded 1946. Re-raised 11 March 1953

These units were considered part of the Australian Military Forces, and its members were entitled to the following campaign medals:- The 1939-45 Star: The Pacific Star: The British War Medal 1939-45 and the Australian Service Medal.



Capt. Keith Payne, VC. OAM. DSC. (Rtd) and Mrs Flo Payne attended the Association's 2008 ANZAC Regimental Mixed Dinner Reunion at the Victoria Barracks Officers/Sergeants Mess, Brisbane on 23 April.

Former members of the PIB, NGIB and PIR are invited to submit short stories of their Service recollections for this newsletter. Digital copies of photos welcome. Please submit by (1) email in WORD format to pngvr@optusnet.com.au or (2) by mail to PO Box 885, Park Ridge, Queensland. 4125.

3. Member Les Irvine has written his memoirs of his service in ANGAU which should appear in a future issue of the Harim Tok Tok. Les has recently returned from an interesting two week Rotary visit to Rabaul and Port Moresby.
4. Bob Harvey-Hall is still receiving copy from members for his history of PNGVR. Bob is writing the book in chronological order and seeks further articles from members as soon as possible. Bob intends to complete the first draft in the last quarter of this year.
5. Bob Collins has approximately 40 personal stories from NGVR and ANGAU soldiers for publication. Due to the difficulty of receiving funding, this is likely to be produced in a CD format with limited distribution. Anyone with ideas please contact Bob.
6. Secretary Colin has recently received approximately 19 medals for our Papua New Guinean ex PNGVR comrades. Unfortunately this years trip for PNG Remembrance Day in Papua New Guinea will not be going ahead, however arrangements will be made to ensure safe delivery of these medals to the various recipients. We are actively seeking further comrades so they may receive medals for which they qualify.

7. As you are aware Mal Zimmerman, ex-WO2 from A Company has been endeavouring to locate our Papua New Guinea comrades around Lae area to form a Chapter of our Association, to date with little success. Tim Vincent who resides in Wau, and to whom we regularly speak is assisting Mal by arranging announcements on the Lae NBC radio station and through the Churches. Tim's wife has a trade store and hostel in Wau and Tim, amongst other things, is handling the logistics end of Black Track and Bulldog Track walking parties.

- 8 Our Museum continues to go from strength to strength. If you can spare an hour or so from time to time to help our Curator John Holland and his small band of volunteers maintain the Museum, please give John a ring on 3375 5484 or just email pngvr@optusnet.com.au

Please remember the following coming event;

01st July 2008 – Montevideo Maru Memorial Service

Phil Ainsworth

NGVR & PNGVR Ex-members Association,

June 2008.



MONTEVIDEO MARU MEMORIAL SERVICE

Members and guests are invited to attend the 66th Anniversary Memorial Service of the tragic sinking of the Japanese Naval Prison ship, 'Montevideo Maru' on 1st July 1942, with the loss of all 1035 Australian and allied service personnel and civilians including members of the **NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES** on board

DATE: Tuesday 1st July 2008 **VENUE:** Shrine of Memories, ANZAC Square, Brisbane
TIME: 9.45 am for 10.00 am Service - to be followed by morning tea at 10.30 am

Members are requested to support this important event.—ANZAC Day Dress—full medals

VALE **Sgt Harold Osborne**
NG 2252 NGX 375



*Sgt Harold Osbourne
At the Australian War
Memorial - Canberra
15 May 2007*

Harold was born in Cairns on 28/7/1917. His father had come down from New Guinea, served in the Army in WW1 and then invalided out of the Army after severe illness. When 6 months old Harold went to join his father in Rossel Island, 250 miles S.E. of Samarai – his mother was the first white woman to live on the island. His schooling was at Daintree, Nth Qld, and then Sydney. When WW11 broke out he tried unsuccessfully to join the Air Force, the Navy and the Army, but was rejected because of a heart murmur. Harold went to Bulolo in 1939 to work for Bulolo Gold Dredging as a truck driver, but was employed as a dredge hand on No 3 dredge at Bulwa. He joined the NGVR there together with Buster Mill, the Keenan brothers, Dud Baldie and Tom Lega. After Rabaul fell in Jan, 1942, he was called up for full time service and spent time patrolling the Buang Ranges and down the Frisco River and also on drome guard at Bulolo. At Oitbanda, on the Watut River, he ran a stake through his foot and was evacuated by walking to Bulldog across Kukukuku country. At Bulldog he met some 1st Independent Company reinforcements going to Wau, so he volunteered to guide them, and back he went. He then volunteered to take on dispatch riding between the Markham and Bulwa (where the 2 main NGVR companies were camped), but on taking up his duties he found that his horse had been eaten by the soldiers and had to then carry dispatches by foot. After more service at Bulwa and Ballams he was unofficially attached to the Australian Service Corps at Skin Dewai, ensuring rations went forward for the 2/5th and 2/7th Independent Coys. He was reposted there after the battle for Wau and the 17th Brigade, AIF, were pushing towards Salamaua. He also acted regularly for ration and ammunition air drops to forward troops. After leave where he spent most of the time in bed with malaria, he was posted to ANGAU and was one of the early arrivals in Finschhafen from where he was evacuated to Lae with mumps. On return to Australia he again suffered from severe malaria and was eventually discharged from the army medically unfit. He served for 1147 days – 342 days in Australia and 829 days Overseas. The 24 days discrepancy was time he had been AWL. After the War Harold opened a photographic business in Cairns, but several years later the studio was destroyed by fire – this was the second time Harold had lost everything he owned – the first time was when Wau was torched during the War. He then moved to Melbourne where he worked as a proof reader and editor for newspapers and magazines. His wife Jean was killed in a motor accident in Melbourne some years ago and he leaves two daughters – Deirdre and Glenys. Last May, aged almost 90, Harold towed his caravan from Melbourne to Canberra to attend the dedication of a plaque at the War Memorial for NGVR/ANGAU. He passed away on 29th April, 3 months short of his 91st birthday.

LEST WE FORGET

VALE **Sgt Neville Charles SWANSON**
NG 2422 NGX 418

Neville could well be called a B4 as both his father and grandfather lived in PNG prior to WW11. Neville was born in Charters Towers, Qld, on 19th Oct, 1914, but went to PNG as a baby. Both his grandfather and an uncle disappeared in PNG whilst prospecting. The uncle could speak some 18 different dialects on the Papuan side of the border. Neville was educated in Port Moresby primary school and completed his schooling in Townsville. His son went to Wau primary school. He worked in North Qld for a few years on tobacco and cane farms and went back to PNG aged 21. He learnt to cook spaghetti and pastas whilst working for Italians on the cane farms. He worked as a Cadet Miner at Mount Caesar on Misima Island and moved to Edie Creek in 1938. He worked underground at Edie Creek and Bitoi River. Neville enlisted in NGVR on 6th Jan, 1942, and the first question asked of the group was “Who hasn’t fired a rifle?” He was posted to Mubo, and, in addition to carrying out the normal patrols conducted by NGVR, he assisted in the cookhouse – much sought after because of the different foods he could cook. Neville was at Mubo during both Japanese attacks on the place – the NGVR and 2/5th Independent Coy inflicted heavy losses on the Japanese during the first attack. After 8 months in the Mubo/Komiatum area he was sent back to Wau where he almost died as a result of some mysterious fever and was evacuated by having to walk over the mountains to Bulldog, during which time he was confronted several times by Kukukuku natives, canoe down the Lakekamu River, and then go by coastal schooner to Port Moresby. He was evacuated from Port Moresby to Townsville, and Carlo Cavaliere (NGVR) was on the same hospital ship.

FROM OUR PNGVR COMRADES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Mt. Hagen:- In 2005, a number of former members of ‘C’ Coy PNGVR formed what is known locally today as the C Coy PNGVR Ex Members Association, with the majority of their member from Mt Hagen and Banz Platoons.

Members meet regularly in Banz, not far from the home and coffee plantation of their former Company Commander, the Late Major Peter Harbeck, ED. In 2006, on PNG Remembrance Day—23 July—Col Gould and Bruce Crawford, were proud to be able to present the first batch of *Australian Service Medals 1945-1975 with PNG clasp* to former members of C Coy. Since then, efforts have continued to seek out additional PNGVR members, many of who would be entitled to the new *Australian Defence Medal*. Some 15 new awards have been received and awaiting dispatch to Mt Hagen.

Under the guidance of foundation Secretary, former Corporal Patrick Amberye and their Executive, the Mt Hagen chapter is slowly growing in strength. There are over 70 members in the Association including:-

Patrick Amberye; John Bak; Aua Boma; Samuel Dum; F Gari; Peter Kia; Raphael Kona; M Kond; Ginga Koor; Tom Kunump; Barnabas Laka; Donatus Mamp; Kulie Mond; Issac Nange; Michael Ninji; Palme Koimo; Piapoin Rangup; Don Remi; Daniel Takendu; J Waibrum; Andrew Wilkie; Isac Neneng; Louse Unn; William Dop; John Bak; Titus Yama; Peter Ug, to name a few.

In a recent letter from Secretary Patrick Amberye, in Mt Hagen, I quote“*Happy greetings from ‘C’ Coy 8 & 9 Platoon Members specially to you and the rest of our PNGVR Comrades in Australia.*”

Wewak: Not to be outdone by their Mt Hagen comrades, former members of PNGVR in **Wewak** have formed an Association, the majority of members being ex ‘D’ Company (**Wewak & Madang**) living in the East and West Sepik Provinces as well. Earlier this year, they had some 50 former PNGVR members including:-

Gabriel Kovingre; Alouis Nakoi; Theodore Zuvani; Jacob Huandu; Gabriel Jomboho; Albert Sako; John Yauiga; John Narik; John Manisek; Joseph Pupoata; Joseph Mai; Joe Bais; Joe Saruan; Matthew Bagem; John Kulam; Kendowai; Manintuo; Michael Kon; Aniel; Mundu; Wia; Sunpuk; Wirwa; Yeguiab; John Alman; Martib Waramaga and Kamagai Benny.

Secretary of the Wewak Association is Joseph N Pupoata, MBE. who was a member of D Coy and attended the last parade in 1973.

I will ask both Associations for a list of their members, which I am sure many of our Australian members who served in those two Companies between 1963 and 1973 will recall. (Col Gould)

Mixed Field Dining Night Jimboomba Sat 14th June, 2008

A group of 42 sat down to the usual superb setting for the 17th mixed field dining night. The evening was brought forward from late July in order to avoid the extremely cold temperatures at that time of the year, but, unfortunately, we managed to pick the coldest night of the year so far -- we seem to manage to do that annually. For those who arrived earlier than 5.30 to enjoy some conviviality with former comrades the bush setting was just magnificent. Recent rains had greened up the area and the large number of grevillea and other natives which had been planted were in full bloom to create a great atmosphere. Visitors who came to the dinner included representatives from the National Servicemen’s Association, 1 Commando Association, and the Australia PNG Association as well as author Phil Bradley. The food was up to its usual standard thanks to our new Chef, Phillip. He advised that the occasion has such a reputation with our Caterers, The Golden Roast, that many of their chefs request to be allocated to the night. Our previous Chef, Murray, catered for 15 of our dinners. The meal was up to its usual standard, the port was successfully passed, the toasts were proposed, the port passed several more times and then Association Committee member Bruce Crawford gave a short address on his Anzac Day visit to Gallipoli, Association President Phil Ainsworth gave a short report on Association Activities and author Phil Bradley gave an address on his recently released book “The Battle for Wau”. More conviviality followed with the bonfire being lit about 9.30 and another very successful evening slowly drew to a close with those present enjoying a glass of whatever around the bonfire and the pot belly stoves. The next Mixed field dining night will be held on **Sat 11th October**. For anyone who has not attended one of these evenings they are great occasions. To the best of our knowledge nobody else puts on an evening where you can sit comfortably at a table with white tablecloths, candelabra, mess silver etc., and have a semi-formal dinner in the middle of a bush setting. We look forward to your company at the October Dinner – put it in your diary now.

Bob Collins.

Many of them stunk and had maggots in their wounds. Many times we had to trek through the jungle in mud and water up to and over our knees. Sometimes we had to cross fast flowing streams and would have to link hands to stay on our feet.

One day I had to pick up an unconscious soldier and take him to our Advance Dressing Station. During this time there were many air raid warnings and on our way back a 100 Jap air raid was in progress. I stood up in the front of the ambulance with the roof hatch open to have a look when, all of a sudden, everything opened up—our 3.7's AA blasted away as the bombs fell. I soon closed the hatch and sat down. The driver said to me "will I pull over into the bush?" to which I said "No! Go like hell". A US Lockheed Lightning aircraft got stuck into the Jap bombers, but they stayed in formation. A lump of shrapnel the size of a matchbox landed at my feet. Unfortunately the Lightning crashed coming into land to refuel and the pilot was killed.

The Jap bombers concentrated on the airstrips and the shipping in Milne Bay. One day I had to go to Gilli Gilli aboard a small boat manned by the RAN in aid of the ships hit in the harbour. A Naval man said to me "it's safer out here in the open water than on land". We were pulling dead and wounded sailors out of the water on the way to the ships. On going aboard these ships we saw men with shrapnel hits from head to toe. Sometimes it was hard to know if they were alive or dead. Those we found alive and conscious were given shots of morphine.

The air raids were headlined in the Courier Mail newspapers during April 1943, such as "Many acts of Heroism in Milne Bay Raid" and "Japs lose 30 planes—3 ships damaged".

From earlier battles there were lots of dead Japanese soldiers and our Army bulldozers had to cover them with soil. The stench was terrible. We treated wounded Japanese because we had to.

Our search lights were checked every hour during the day and every half hour at night because the power lines were being cut by Jap infiltrators. While I was in Milne Bay, the June 1943 Army Routine Orders advertised for volunteers to join a new and special unit called the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit—ANGAU. The volunteers had priority who were interviewed by a senior officer from ANGAU. I applied on the basis, that, if accepted, my unit had to release me and I would be given a months trial, and, if I did not measure up, I would be returned to my original unit, the 7th Australian Field Ambulance. There were three others from my unit who were accepted and we four boarded a DC3 and flew to Port Moresby on 26th July 1943—my very first plane trip.

After a short stay around Moresby I was placed on movement to Wau. While waiting for transport, I contracted dysentery and was admitted to the army field hospital outside Port Moresby, where I spent my 21st birthday. Someone else went to Wau in my place.

I was then posted to various areas around Port Moresby until I was sent home on leave after having served 12 months in New Guinea. On the 7th September 1943, a bomb laden American Liberator Bomber taking off from Moresby crashed into a convey of 4 trucks of Australian soldiers. Between 100 and 120 soldiers were killed.

My trip home was aboard a US Liberty ship "The Paul Chandler" which was on its maiden voyage. This ship was tied up in the boiling sun with its holds covered in tarps. There was a small opening for us to climb down into the hold allocated to us, where every inch of space had been taken up. At meal times, still in the hold, we would line up for a chunk of bully beef with a handful of dog biscuits. My mate and I climbed up onto the deck to see if we could find some space, but there was no space anywhere. I don't know how we would have fared if the ship had been sunk.

Some days later, on a Sunday afternoon, we steamed up the Brisbane River. People were waving sheets and towels at us from the windows of their homes. I felt like shouting for joy and had a lump in my throat. Later that day our convoy drove up Queen Street to the Exhibition Grounds transport depot and leave. It was great to see my family again.

On completion of my leave, I was sent to Townsville by troop train then by the ship "Taroon" to Port Moresby. I then flew to Lae and onto Finschhafen. After a short time at Finschhafen, I boarded a small ANGAU Water Transport boat and traveled to Lae. During the night I slept on top of 5 bags of rice which were alive with rats. Sometimes while camped at Lae, a DC3 would fly over low and drop the Courier-Mail newspaper almost at our feet, with a note inside "Best of Luck from ANA Archerfield".

At Lae I was taken to Nabzab airstrip to fly to my new posting at Aitape via Madang. After flying over enemy territory, we landed at Tadjji airstrip at 0930.

Apart from the RAAF, there were no Australian troops there except for about 15—20 ANGAU personnel, who were attached to two American Divisions.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE:-

Editorial note: Due to space limitations, the above article is a brief summary of Les Irvine's service recollections. The full story will be available in our NGVR/PNGVR Museum. We thank Les for allowing us to produce his war time service history.

By Jan, 1944, he was back in PNG and transferred to ANGAU. His postings were then – Trobriand Islands, Finschhafen, and then posted to 1st Regt, 1st Marine Division, at Cape Gloucester. At the time the marines were tasked with mopping up bands of Japanese and preventing them from returning to Rabaul. They used to go out on patrol about 100 strong and Neville accompanied them as guide and local native expert. His bog boast was that, during his time with the Marines, he was responsible for taking 61 Japanese prisoners (the marines would have killed them) and he was very proud of that. After the marines left Cape Gloucester Neville went to Manus Island and then was posted to Torokina on Bougainville where he supervised the exhumation of approx 2,000 US troops, then to the Solomon Islands where he supervised the exhumation of 25 NZ troops, whose bodies were taken to Lae. Then he was posted to Totokina again, this time with the Australians, and he supervised native lines carrying forward supplies and bringing back wounded. When the war ended he was on the Numa-Numa trail in Bougainville. After war's end he was involved in the repatriation of natives to their home villages, then went to New Ireland to supervise Japanese working parties repairing roads and other construction. He then went to Rabaul where the Japanese War Crimes were taking place and he came down with an illness caused by constantly drinking bamboo water. He was discharged on 12th Aug, 1946, having served for 1,630 days – In Australia 478 days and outside Australia 1152 days. During his ANGAU days Neville carried out a lot of trading in Japanese souvenirs and managed to leave the Army with quite a sum of money. He went back to PNG shortly after war's end and spent 20 years as an underground miner with New Guinea Goldfields. He left PNG in 1957 and never returned.

LEST WE FORGET

(Courtesy of Bob Collins - Vice-President)

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

Regimental Mixed Dinner Reunion 23 April 2008

49 Members and guests enjoyed the facilities and good food at the Victoria Barracks Officers & Sergeants Mess, Brisbane during the Association's 2008 pre- ANZAC Day Regimental Mixed Dinner Reunion.

Dining President was Phil Ainsworth and our special guests included our Patron, Major-General John Pearn, Capt Keith Payne, VC and Mrs Flo Payne, author Tom Richman and, from PNG, former PIR member (Dr) Colonel Jethro Usurup (Rtd).

Guests included:- Karl & Jenny Aschhoff, Owen & Joy Barry, Jesse & Mary-Ellen Chee, Alan & Lorraine Clayton, Frank & Judith Cleal, Bob Collins, Hank & Berry Cosgrove, Tom Dowling, Col Gould, Jessica Harrington, Bob & Dawn Harvey-Hall, Jack & Judy Hobbins, John Holland, Les Irvine, Brian & Nancy Jones, Jenny Jennier, Raylene Kerr, Ted & Heather McAllen, Ian Millard (Piper), John & Sharon Mudge, Norm Mundy, Jill & Percy Neville, Doug & Fran Ng, Glen O'Brien, Peter Rogers, DFC., Barry & Pam Wright, Mal & Marie Zimmermann.

National Servicemen's Band Piper, Ian Millard, provided a stirring Bagpipe background as the top table guests took their places followed by the Australian, Regimental and Papua New Guinea Flags.

Pre-dinner sherry, a 3 course alternate drop dinner, table wine and good Port was enjoyed by all. The end of dinner, "Kangaroo Court" was hosted by Dining Vice Col Gould.

Our 2009 Regimental Mixed Dinner Reunion will be held on **Thursday 23 April** in Brisbane. We would like to see more of our members attend this once a year function and ask that you place this date in your 2009 diary.

Our sincere thanks to the Officers & Sergeants Mess staff for their excellent catering and attention to all the finer details during the evening. Thanks also to Bob Collins for his pre-dinner menu and costs negotiations and to Paul Brown for bringing in and setting up all the flags and top table settings (Sword, Bayonet, Dinner Bell etc).

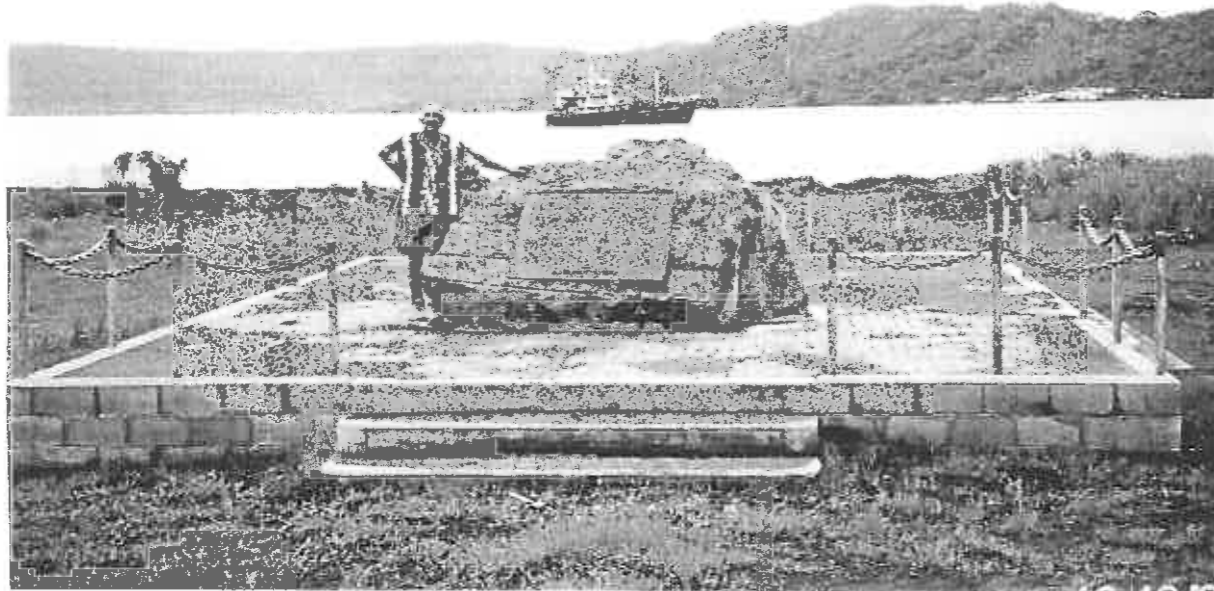
Col Gould—Editor



Left: Colonel Jethro Usurup from Madang & John Mudge, MBE. OL from Port Moresby.

Below: Brian & Nancy Jones





Montevideo Maru Memorial—Rabaul

After being dug out and tidied from the volcanic ash. - Photo courtesy 2/22nd Lark Force Association.

MUSEUM BUS TRIP

On Saturday 17 May 2008, 24 members and guests enjoyed a day long trip to visit two military museums outside of Brisbane.

Under the accurate navigation and driving skills of Paul Brown, the group visited the Milne Bay Museum in Toowoomba and the Oakey Museum of Australian Army flying.

In flight refreshments (cream biscuits but no tea or coffee) was provided by Tour Services Director, John Holland.

A great lunch was enjoyed at the Toowoomba Golf Club.

Both Museums are well worth a visit. The Milne Bay Museum, for example, has a mock walk through underground World War I trench and dug out display complete with officer's command post, aid post, complete with recorded machine gun and artillery fire to make a somewhat realistic display of trench warfare.

The Oakey Museum is a must for aircraft buffs.

As we came down the range in brilliant sunshine, we encountered the view of Brisbane under heavy dark and storm filled clouds with a lightning display. By the time we reached Redbank Plains, it was solid water, but it stopped at our Wacol Museum where our cars were parked.

Guests included: John Holland, Jessica Harrington, Phil Ainsworth, Doug and Fran Ng, Ken MacGowan, Col & Pattie Gould, Mal and Marie Zimmermann, Jesse and Mary-Ellen Chee, Norm Mundy, Tom Dowling, Barry Wright, Alan & Lorraine Clayton, John Winterbottom et al.



ANZAC DAY MARCH—BRISBANE—2008

A fine and sunny Queensland day, greeted marchers and spectators at one of the biggest ANZAC Day parades Brisbane has seen.

Some 75 members made parade looking splendid in our traditional ANZAC Day dress, with flags and banner, and led by our President, Phil Ainsworth. Our two young wreath bearers were the great grand children of former member, S/Sgt Stan Gould (Dec) - Joshua and Joel Gould.

We were very fortunate (and most grateful) to have a great band inserted into the parade directly in front of our unit. Bands are always in short supply during such large parades and we were very lucky indeed. Following the parade members attended our NGVR Memorial service in the Shrine of Memories.

With the loss of our long used post march venue, the Exchange Hotel, due to new owners and being closed for major renovations, the Manager of the Victory Hotel (across the road) kindly came to our rescue at the last moment, and

provided us with a room and bar for our usual get-together. Our sincere thanks to the Victory's General Manager, Function Manager and staff who made us feel most welcome.

Simply put, there was certainly plenty of drinks and heaps of hot and cold food this year. Our raffle for scratchie tickets was won by PNGVR member, John Grosse from Ballina. John advised that he scratched \$67-00. Second prize of scratchies was won by Mal Zimmermann. Money raised from the raffle will be directed towards our Museum. Thank you to all members who purchased tickets.

The highlight of the day was a fantastic musical rendition of that World War 2 favorite, "Lili Marlene " in both English and German, by none other than our very own Karl Aschhoff.

Well done Karl, Australia certainly does have talent.

Thanks to all those members and their guests who made the day a great success for our Association. To those behind the scenes with the day's preparations, I thank Paul Brown, John Holland and Doug Ng for their assistance.

Col Gould—Editor

ANGAU Service Recollections

Lesley James Irvine—Sgt QX 56932

Les Irvine was born on the 16 August 1922 in West End, Brisbane. He attended the West End State School, South Brisbane followed by the State Commercial High School in George Street in the City. Les grew up during the Depression and worked as a young lad to help out the family— fire wood collecting, news paper runs, horse and cart driver to name a few occupations. Between the ages of 11 to 14, a young Les who was in the Naval Cadets was given two pennies for tram fares every Friday night. One penny was for the tram fare from his home in West End to the Customs House, where he walked to the Naval Cadets in the Valley, and one penny was for the tram fare home from the Customs House to West End. On some nights Les would spend his second penny on an ice cream and walk home to West End.

In 1937 Les started work as an office boy with British Products Pty Ltd on the corner of Edward and Elizabeth Streets in Brisbane. He left in December 1941 to enlist in the Army. At age 19 my service number was QX 56932. I was initially posted to the large Chermside Army Camp with the 7th Australian Field Ambulance as part of the 7th Australian Infantry Brigade.

Some weeks later 24 trains transferred the 7th Brigade to Townsville. Our train comprised of two types of carriages— covered ones for the Officers, the Ambulance personnel and Regimental Aid Post (RAP) for sick soldiers. The rest were open carriages in which the soldiers traveled. Needless to say they were soon covered in soot, dust and rain. Our train trip to Townsville took 4 days where we were camped next to the RAAF fighter strip at Aitkenvale just when Townsville had air raids by the Japanese.

After some time in Townsville, we were issued with our jungle greens and boarded the "Katoomba" and accommodated in the ship's holds surrounded by boxes of ammunition. We travelled in convey with the HMAS "Vendetta " and two supporting destroyers. We arrived in Milne Bay, New Guinea, and, whilst standing on the deck waiting to disembark, we saw a formation of bombers heading in our direction. The ship's crew manned their anti-aircraft guns, fortunately it was a false alarm—the planes were ours.

We landed at Gilli Gilli and travelled by truck to our HQ. My B Company moved to another area to establish our RAP. Our meals for the next 3 weeks consisted of baked beans—three times a day. At one stage later, we were on two meals of baked beans a day plus a vitamin pill. We had many air raids, day and night, at the 3.7 inch AA gun alongside us, made sure we didn't get too much sleep. On one such raid, after the Japanese planes had passed overhead, we could see what looked like hundreds of lights falling from the sky. These lights were attached to miniature parachutes, one of which I acquired and recently donated to the NGVR / PNGVR Military Museum in Brisbane. This illumination was to light up the area for the Jap bombers which followed.

It rained so often that our cloths stunk and our boots grew "whiskers". Many times I had to go out in a four wheel drive ambulance in the middle of the night to pick up injured or sick soldiers and take them to our Aid Station. The RAAF did a great job especially during the Battle of the Bismark Sea. Beaufort bombers would be taking off around the clock, even in the darkest and wettest nights.

When we were camped at Milne Bay, the place was alive with rats, and even under your net you could feel them running across your body. We also had lots of Japanese prisoners from the Battle of the Bismark Sea.

