




HARIM TOK TOK




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

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

The AGM was held at Greenbank RSL Sub-branch midday Saturday 17 October. The meeting was not well attended which suggests that either the day, time of day or the location was not suitable. Your feedback is sought so the Committee may make more suitable arrangements for AGM 2010.

The previous committee members were re-elected for 2010 except for Gerry McGrade who, regrettably did not stand due to other commitments. It may be good to feel that members are happy with the work undertaken for them, but disappointing as the Association needs new blood in the Committee to ensure continuity in the longer term. The meeting also reappointed, by resolution, our Patron, Major General John Pearn for 2010. We are indeed fortunate to have a person of such high esteem supporting our Association.

This is the Christmas and second edition of the HTT in the guise of the new format. I trust the content is sufficiently varied and interesting to you. It is planned to publish six editions per annum. It is disappointing our website is down at present but it is hoped this can be rectified in the near future. Association activity since the AGM has revolved around our Military Museum at Wacol (the Curator's report is elsewhere in this edition) and the Montevideo Maru Memorial Committee.

I trust you had the opportunity of viewing "The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru" documentary on the History Channel on the 11 November. It was an outstanding tribute to those who died on the MM and it was fitting to be shown on Armistice Day. I was fortunate to be invited by the Producer, John Schindler to a private viewing at Foxtel head office in Sydney prior. At this showing, I was privileged to meet two remarkable Australian men who, as POW's, survived the Burma Railway and being sunk by a US submarine. Both are in the documentary. They were on board either the Rakuyo Maru or Kachidoke Maru en route to Japan to work in underground coalmines. After about five days adrift on debris, they were rescued by one of the submarines which participated in the attack - the submarine surfaced practically next to them to recharge batteries, some 50 miles from where the sinkings oc-

curred.

A full uncut version, about 2.5 hours long, (the Foxtel version was only 1.5 hours) DVD will be available early February 2010 for \$35 from the Secretary, Colin Gould, PO Box 885, Park Ridge Q 4125 or email pngvr@optusnet.com.au. Send your cheques to the Secretary .

The Producer of the documentary, John Schindler, is generously discounting the price to \$20 for our museum, which will use the \$15 discount per DVD for maintenance of the NGVR & PNGVR Military Museum at Wacol.

If you are not already a "Friend of the Montevideo Maru" you should be one by emailing or writing to Keith Jackson at benelong@bigpond.net.au or Keith Jackson at Jackson Wells, PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089. . Becoming a friend is free and you will be distributed the monthly MVM Newsletter which will keep you up to date on this activity.

MMMC Patron, Kim Beazley and Chairman, Keith Jackson met with Veterans Affairs Minister, Alan Griffin in Canberra on the 17 November to discuss the Montevideo Maru Memorial Committee's proposal. In addition to Kim, Keith and Alan, Major General Paul Stevens, Director of the Office of Australian War Graves, and Lauren Walker, an adviser to Greg Combet (Minister for Defence Personnel) and other members of Alan Griffin's staff were present.

This is Keith Jackson's brief summary of the meeting:

1. A National Memorial - Govt policy is that there should be private as well as govt funding for memorials. Govt supports an MVM memorial and has approached AWM which has also expressed support. Cost (shudder) \$500K-\$1M. The govt will help with seed and top up funding (more about these in a later communication). Civilians will be included in any AWM memorial. As a result of our submission, the AWM Council has decided to include a permanent MVM display in the WW2 galleries, which are now being revamped.
2. The ship becoming a War Grave - Very favourable response. Govt will begin examining how to achieve this.
3. The Working Party - Govt is willing to be represented if we establish it. DVA

facilities will be made available for meetings if required.

4. Finding the Nominal Roll of the POW's on the ship - Records are being searched - not sure how energetically. I mentioned the recent possible "find" of a translation. Great interest in this. There is a person who will take responsibility for liaising with us on this in Combet's office.

5. Overall, A positive meeting. Govt will not throw lots of dollars at us unless we can show we are also a contributor. This is our challenge. There are now good contacts in the bureaucracy that we should build upon.

2009 has been a busy year for the executive. I wish to thank each and every one for his untiring effort in best representing the members and friends of our Association. As this is the last edition of the HTT for 2009, I extend to you and your family my best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. If I do not see you beforehand, I will hopefully see you in 2010.

Phil Ainsworth

22 November, 2009



PIR Anzac Day, Sydney, 2009

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**CONTINUATION OF CARLO CAVALIERI'S
WARTIME EXPERIENCES AS TOLD TO
BOB COLLINS**

Over the Mountains to Bena

The three of us went over the Finisterre Ranges to Bena Bena, near Goroka. I took my horse with me, but, at about 8000 ft, we had to cross some logs over a fast flowing creek and the horse could not make it. I left him there, and, no doubt, the local natives had plenty of meat for a while after we left. I had a difficult time getting carriers to go over the mountains. Paul Fryberg then said to me "Would you like me to try?" I agreed. I don't know what magic wand he waved but we got carriers, thanks to him.

We crossed the mountains at about 10,000 ft, proceeded down the side to the Markham Valley, went across it and on up to Bena Bena.

Coming through the Markham Valley we just missed a large Jap force which had come down the Markham Valley from Kaiapit. This force had come from Madang to Lae.

It was at a Mission station between Bena Bena and Kainantu that I had an unpleasant experience with some bottles which I thought contained beer. The Mission station was deserted and I scrounged around a bit and found some 26 oz. bottles, which I thought contained some home-made beer. I scoffed one of these as I had not had a bottle of beer for some months. Unfortunately for me it contained yeast, which the Mission station had obviously been keeping for bread baking.

Well I had had a few doses of Epsom Salts up to then, as that was the norm in those days. However this yeast went through me quicker than any dose of Epsom Salts.

For the rest of the day I hardly pulled up my trousers when I had to drop them to go again – what an experience.

I found a small amount of gold at the Mission station while I was scrounging about– it was alluvial gold and must have been collected by the natives in the area. I still have this small amount – I took it home to my mother on my first leave to Sydney and was amazed to find many years later that she still had it.

Captain Hamilton was in charge at Kainantu, near Bena Bena, and I knew him from the old days.

The other two were flown out from Bena, but I stayed on.

There was nobody in Bena Bena at the time I arrived as the Officer-in-charge at the time was away on patrol. I completed my written report and left it at his hut.

After the War I was with Jack Steeples in the Hotel in Bulolo, and a chap came in (he had been awarded a Mentioned in Dispatches during the War). He started telling a storey about patrolling to Madang, Bogadjim and Saidor and crossing back over the mountains- it was word for word out of my report.

He was a tall bloke – well over 6 feet (I am not very tall at

all) but I had to front him and I said "You got that story at Bena Bena didn't you? You didn't actually go on that patrol". His response was a bit of bluff and a comment along the lines that he was there too. All I could think of at the time was ' why lie about what you did?'

There was not much at Bena Bena at the time. Danny Leahy was still in the area, and we had a few talks.

It was at Bena Bena that we managed to get the radio out of a Mitchell B25 Bomber, and have it repaired. We sat there and listened to the Coral Sea Battle. The language was out of this world, but we could hear the pilots talking to one another etc.

About a week later I took control of about 1,500 Chimbu natives and started erecting some thatched roof huts for troops that were due to arrive at Bena in the near future.

One of the things I proved on this extended trip was that all waterproof watches leak. I mentioned that I had a good Swiss watch, but, walking through the kunai and water any watch will go rusty inside after a while.

About this time I found out that I had been promoted to WO11 (Warrant Officer Class 2)

Back to the Markham, Onga Village

There was a lot of Japanese movement up and down the Markham at that stage and unknown to us, of course, the Americans were planning their occupation of Nadzab in preparation for the Australian 7th Division landing, which was to push on to Lae.

On 10th March, 1943, I was sent to Onga Village, in the Markham Valley to establish a telradio station and report on Japanese movements in the area. I was given a Sergeant to assist me, (he had just come up from Townsville) and we had a telradio.

We set up our camp in the hills overlooking Onga Village. It would have been too dangerous to move into the village itself as Japanese patrols regularly went into the village on their way up and down the Markham.

After I had been withdrawn to HQ at Bena again the Sgt was awarded a Military Medal as he had moved his telradio station down much closer to Onga Village, where, I believe he would have been more effective as he would have been closer to where the Japanese troop movements were happening.

There had been rumours of large forces of Japanese, up to 150 strong, moving from Bogadjim across the Finisterres and down to Lae. I did find that there was a Jap party about 90 strong in the Kaiapit-Sangan area, and reported this. It was thought at the time that the Japs might be moving forces into the upper Markham in order to make a move on Bena Bena.

It was while I was here that WO11 Harry Lumb, NGVR, was killed. He was unfortunate in that he was on patrol and ran straight into a Jap patrol. They had obviously just crossed the Markham to the Western side and nobody knew they were there until Harry ran into them, between Kaiapit and Onga. I later had the unpleasant task of having to disinter his body for burial in Lae.

It was while I was here that the natives gave me a message from the Japs to the effect that 'They were coming up to Onga to get Masta Carlo'. Naturally there were a lot of the natives who had thrown their lot with the Japanese, and it must have been one of these who reported me to the Japanese, together with my name.

Our resupply at Onga was very irregular. From time to time we received a resupply from Bena Bena but you never knew when it might arrive, so we lived off the land a lot.

Different Officers brought in a resupply and then they would go off up or down the Markham. I never knew where they were going and they never told me. This was OK by me as we had to maintain security and it was better that I did not know.

There was only one other ANGAU bloke that I knew of in the area and that was a Captain De Haviland, who had been a District Officer in Wau before the War. There was a funny incident before the war in Wau, when the Police Inspector was on leave and a young lady had been murdered with an axe. De Haviland was the senior Officer in Wau, and heard the evidence, and for some strange reason threw it away and allowed the native who was being charged to go free. There was a lot of innuendo stuck with him for years after, as the case had never been solved, but I worked close to him on a number of occasions in ANGAU.

Leave in Australia

After Onga I was due for leave. This was 19 months after I had been called up and was in August, 1943. I walked from Onga to Bena Bena and was flown out for leave in Sydney where my mother was.

I always felt that one of the benefits of being a Warrant Officer was that, on leave, I could wear shoes instead of boots, and wear a cap instead of a slouch hat. It was interesting that, in those days, a WO11 could wear a Sam Browne belt, but not the strap. A WO1 could wear the full Sam Browne with strap. We also got free tram and rail passes while on leave.

We had a bit of a lurch coming back from leave. We would go to the Railway Station and head straight for the 13th carriage. If it was full we would then get another day on our leave having to come back the next day. This went on for a few days and someone must have woken up because suddenly there were plenty of vacancies and off we went on the train to Brisbane.

A Volunteer Mission which never came off

At this time 5 of us volunteered to parachute into Tsili Tsili to report on conditions and the Jap situation. This was in preparation for the landings at Nadzab for the march on Lae by the 7th Australian Division.

As it happened we were loaded onto a Landing Ship Tank, which, instead of taking us to our destination, proceeded to Milne Bay.

We sat at Milne Bay for nearly 7 weeks before we could get out again. What we did not realise until it happened was that the attack on Lae by the 7th Australian Division

from Nadzab airstrip and 9th Australian Division from a Beach landing North of Lae was being carried out and all aircraft and landing craft were required for the attacks and all shipping was also tied up resupplying these two Divisions.

It was while we were in Milne Bay that I got into a big game of cards. There were 7 of us Australians and a number of other Americans. We were playing a game where the aim of the game was to offsuit the cards. There were three packs of cards used and, at the end of the night, I scooped the lot. I ended the night with something like 300 pounds which was a huge amount of money in those days. I had a big argument with the paymaster when I went to put it into my paybook. He claimed that he could not put so much money into my paybook but my argument was along the lines that I wanted a written guarantee from him regarding the money if he would not.

Anyway he eventually agreed to put the money into my paybook, and this was part of the money I used to stay in Sydney for so long after the war. One of the Australians put up a great argument after the game about being given another chance, but, after lending him some money and winning it back again, I ended the game. At this time I was on a hiding to nothing, lending blokes money to try and win something back from me. I never got paid the money I lent to them, only won it back again. My luck was definitely in that night.

As soon as we could we got out of Milne Bay, but by this time Lae had fallen, and the Japanese were retreating over the mountains towards Sio, Saidor and Mandang. I ended up in the Ramu Valley.

Kaiapit

I went to Kaiapit, in the Markham Valley. Mainly I was recruiting native labour for work in the Headquarters area in Lae, and for carrying purposes as the 7th Australian Division pursued the Japanese over the mountains towards the North coast. The Americans used to give me aircraft when I wanted them. I used to work closely with the Americans and their Commander Capt Vambredar was very co-operative. He used to supply me with a light plane to go up into the mountains to recruit and send DC3's for the labour lines to be flown out from Kaiapit.

Our HQ did not seem to appreciate the ease with which I could obtain American aircraft but it was very effective. Having me fly into the mountains saved a lot of time walking in, and sending DC3's straight away for the labour lines saved a lot of desertions from the natives, not all of whom were willing recruits. Only having to walk down the mountains and fly up was a lot more acceptable to me as well.

Another thing that assisted me in getting their co-operation was the fact that I supplied those planes that came in to Kaiapit with fresh vegetables. These were difficult to obtain through normal Army sources, so the pilots were always willing to give me any priority they could.

It was about this time that I was promoted to WO!

(Warrant Officer Class one) – the equivalent of a Regimental Sergeant Major.

Ramu Valley

At the time the battle of Shaggy Ridge was still taking place I was actually in the Ramu Valley but the battle for Shaggy Ridge was carried out in the mountains overlooking the Ramu. A Militia Unit, the 11th Carrier Company was taking over from the 7th Division in one area of the Ramu Valley where I was, presumably to release the 7th Div soldiers for action higher in the mountains. They were a Militia Unit but I considered them to be of a very high quality and they had a lot of game young soldiers.

My first job in the Ramu was to find a missing Unit of the 7th Div. This unit was about 90 strong and were missing from the earlier battles prior to Shaggy Ridge. Being the only ANGAU bloke in the area at the time it fell to me to go and find them, as I could liaise with the natives and speak Pidgin English.

The natives told me where they were and, as I was approaching them I hear a lot of firing going on. Naturally I was a bit hesitant to go close as I was not sure whether they were in contact with the Japs or just what was going on. As it happened they were not in contact but were pretty jumpy (being lost and separated from their Parent Unit for quite some time would not have helped) and by this time they were just firing almost at shadows. It occurred to me later that they could well have been firing just to make themselves feel better – in a situation like they were in the sound of firing makes you feel more secure. Even so they were apparently nearly out of ammunition.

Anyway I made contact with their Officer, a young Lt., and actually said to him “Look mate! It’s all over up there now and you had better get your men back” I showed them the route to get back to their Parent Unit but did not accompany them.

Strangely enough I never heard a word about this incident again.

Then I went back to the 11th Carrier Company, and one of their junior Officers, a Lt and I led the first patrol from Shaggy Ridge to Bogadjim.

The purpose of this patrol was to confirm that the Japanese were, in fact, retreating towards Madang. Rumour and information available from the natives pointed to this but we were asked to confirm it. It was true.

One of my previous NGVR colleagues told me how, in his opinion, I was a fool to go down, and would never come back. I said to him “Don’t worry! I will bring you back a coconut”. And I did.

There were only a couple of shots fired on this patrol. The Japs were in a bad way and falling back to Madang as fast as they could, leaving dead bodies behind them as they went. They were in a terrible condition. Our role was to find out where the Japs were heading for and what physical condition they were in, so we did not look for firefights but rather avoided them if we could.

We went into one former Jap position and there were



Lt Carlo Cavaliere on leave in 1945

some beautiful fine tools there, files, fine pliers etc, which we could use for day to day repairs. But the most beautiful thing of all were the big bottles of Saki they left behind. The Japanese had put a fairly rough truck road through and we followed this most of the way – it was in very poor condition with little maintenance having been carried out on it.

It was here in the Ramu that two well educated native women were sent to join the Lik Lik Doctor and myself. They were from Madang, had been well educated in Missions, and were keen to get home to see how their villages and relatives were. It was known that, as soon as Shaggy Ridge fell, we would head down to Madang and had to take them along.

My role in the Ramu was to rehabilitate native gardens in the area and I was accompanied by a Medical NCO whose role was to find out the general health position of the locals and to provide medical support where he could.

Establishing the native gardens was not totally successful. Most of their gardening was carried out in the hills where fighting was still going on and I had men to teach, rather than meris who usually did all the gardening.

I found an old engine, which I managed to get going again by making up a carburettor out of a .50 calibre bullet shell with holes pierced in it. There was a bit of trial and error getting it to work, as it kept cutting out on me, but I eventually did. This was used as a water pump to irrigate their gardens. At least I gave them the idea how to water their gardens from the river without too much manual work.

At one stage I rescued an American fighter pilot, a rather large man, who had bailed out of his Mustang over the Ramu and I had to cut him down from the trees where his parachute had been caught up. We were having a chat and I asked him what it was like to land the Mustang as it had a rather large motor in front of the pilot’s seat.

His reply staggered me “I don’t know! I have never landed one. Every time I have gone up the oil line has burst, thrown oil all over the windscreen, and, with no oil pressure as well as no vision I have had to bail out”. I must say he enjoyed having a few rums with me while I was getting him back to his Unit.

Another American pilot I went out to save unfortunately was dead, still sitting in the cockpit of his DC3 aircraft. I have never seen so much US money in all my life – his pockets were full of it. The US pilots used to be paid in cash, not in a pay book like we were paid, and this may have explained why they gambled so much. They had plenty of cash and nowhere to spend it. It was my sad

duty to bury him, collect all his personal belongings, including his dog tags and his money and take them back for on forwarding to his HQ. I actually kept his good fountain pen, and I carried this with me and used it for many years later.

It was while I was here in the Ramu that I met Capt De Haviland again. He was carrying out patrols in the area and I got him horribly drunk on rum one night and raised the question of the murder in Wau, but I got no information at all about it from him.

From the time I went to Bogadjim until I returned to Lae, I had hardly been in touch with ANGAU Headquarters. At the time we had no radios and our only methods of communication were notes or letters, or word of mouth via other ANGAU members or through the Army formations. This would have been a period of some months and, unknown to myself I was, at one stage reported missing. This information had been passed on to my mother in Sydney, but, fortunately, she refused to believe I was dead.

Even when I came back to Lae, nobody in the Army thought to contact my mother and tell her I was no longer missing. I was totally unaware of this and did not help by not writing to my mother, so she did not know whether I was dead or alive until I landed on her doorstep in Sydney, when I was next on leave.

Lae

From the Ramu I was posted to Lae.

I got into trouble a few times in Lae. A lot of it was my fault as I tried my luck from time to time.

Not being used to any regimentation at all I used to walk around in shorts, short sleeved shirt etc and this did not impress the base wallahs.

At one stage I walked into a transit depot with one of my native police bois and said to him "Go and find a bed over there". An RSM who had recently returned from the Middle East with the 7th Division witnessed this as well as me going up to Capt Horrie Niall and just shaking his hand and saying "G'day Horrie! How's things?" – no salute etc. The RSM took exception to this and Horrie had to smooth it over.

Horrie was interested to find out why I had not been Commissioned at this stage, but, of course, that was something I had no control over. One of my comments to Horrie went along the lines "Well, of course, I don't know, but I suspect that the 90 day wonder from OCTU (Officer Cadet Training Unit) who interviewed me not so long ago must have believed that, with a name like Cavaliere, I was an Italian enemy agent." I had actually had an interview along these lines but had not taken much notice of it, as I did not realise I was being interviewed for a Commission.

At one stage I was ordered by the same RSM to go down and supervise the unloading of a ship. I refused and the next thing I was fronted by a Captain. I said "Yes Sir! What can I do for you?" In response to his comment that I was refusing to supervise the unloading of a ship I replied that there must be some sort of misun-

derstanding, and off I went.

While in Lae I stayed at the ANGAU mess, which was not too bad. Fred Phillips was in charge of catering and he was an old friend of mine. As it just happens I had not long ago had his wife's initials tattooed on my upper arm while I was up in the mountains. He knew about this but we remained great friends

Carlo Cavaliere obtains his Commission

Horrie Niall arranged for me to be interviewed by General Milford, who was in charge of the Lae area. Before I went for the interview Horrie asked me specially to 'do the right thing' as far as protocol was concerned. This I promised to do.

It was at the time the 9th Australian Division were landing at Finschhafen, 4th September, 1943, that I saw General Milford in Lae.

The General spoke to me for almost half an hour and expressed his opinion about some of the Officers under his command, and how, in his opinion, some of them were using their position for personal gain in trading ventures etc, and how he considered they had dishonoured their Commissions.

His final comment to me was that he had no doubt I would do the right thing, and, of course, I agreed with him. He also promised that my Commission would be backdated about 9 or 10 months and this duly occurred. I was delighted with this as my pay then went up to 23/6 a day plus 1/6 a day tropical allowance. Naturally I was not promoted on the spot but had to wait for the paperwork to come through.

It was from Lae that I went to Australia on my second leave, which I spent in Sydney. I have described above about being reported missing, so you can imagine my mother's relief when I turned up on the front doorstep. It was not until she spoke about it that I was aware that I had been reported missing.

To be continued next issue

HISTORY OF THE MIXED FIELD DINNERS

In March, 1999, four members of the Association, Joe Fisk, Barry Wright, Norm Mundy and Bob Collins, held a camping week in the mountains behind Beenleigh. During the course of one dinner, for which the table had been set with Candelabra and white tablecloth, the matter of having ladies attend a similar future dinner was raised.

At the time the Assn was conducting an Anzac Day formal dining night at Victoria Barracks, organised by Bob Collins, but the feeling was that these would eventually become too expensive and a cheaper alternative was needed.

Bearing in mind that this was raised late in the evening, after a number of wines and ports, so the discussion ranged over a wide range of styles, venues, formats etc. It was recognised that, if these dinners were to eventuate

successfully, an area large enough to accommodate the dining marquee and annexe, parking facilities for guests, cooking and ablution facilities for those setting up the marquees would also be required together with camping facilities for those intending to camp overnight. Only a couple of weeks later Joe, Barry and Bob took a camping trailer down into Barry's backyard for some field trials. Barry received quite a surprise when it was pointed out that here, in his own back paddock was there a suitable area.

From that moment on, work commenced on clearing space for the building of a kitchen, toilets, shower etc. Over the years these have been improved on, some 600+ ornamental plants, shrubs and flowering bushes planted and couch grass grown where required.

For the first dinner everything except the tablecloths was hired. Over the past 10 years any profits from the dinners have gone into purchasing crockery, glasses, tentage, etc., and in improvements to the area – kitchen, shower, toilets etc., and now everything is owned. The State Emergency Services were most helpful in the early days and loaned tentage, chairs etc. With the purchase of, and recovering of our own chairs now, nothing is required to be borrowed from SES.

The dinners are held in a large marquee with tables set up in the traditional U pattern, white tablecloths and candleabra utilized and a Spit Roast is used for the meals. To date 20 dinners have been held with the largest gathering last June when 62 members and guests attended. Regular working bees are held at the site to ensure that all facilities are maintained and various improvements built as required. Running water is now available in several sites and electricity has been connected on a selective basis. Limited hot water is available.

All members should make the effort to attend a dinner and enjoy the relaxing, peaceful bush atmosphere together with the company of other Assn members.



FLASHBACK

30th May, 1970, RABAUL, PNG

Wedding Lt Douglas NG and Frances TONG

Guard of Honour provided by B Coy PNGVR, Rabaul.

NATIONAL ANTHEM OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

O' Arise all ye sons

O' Arise all ye sons of this land

Let us sing of our joy to be free

Praising God and rejoicing to be

Papua New Guinea

*Shout our name from the mountains to seas,
Papua New Guinea;*

*Let us raise our voice and proclaim; Papua
New Guinea*

Now give thanks to the good Lord above

For his kindness, his wisdom and love

For this land of our fathers so free

Papua New Guinea

*Shout again for the whole world to hear, Papua
New Guinea;*

*We are Independent and we're free; Papua
New Guinea.*

VALE - SGT IAN GRATTIDGE (Ex PNGVR)

I was contacted out of the blue by a former member of the Madang Platoon, (Sgt) Ian Grattidge. He was living in Toowoomba and had just learnt of the existence of our Assoc. He was very excited to make contact again with PNGVR after almost 40 years and was to join the Assoc immediately. Ian also had a long telephone conversation with Jes Hansford (our former OC). Ian, Jes and I all served together in Madang.

Regrettably, Ian suffered a sudden heart attack 48 hours later and passed away. He was 67 years of age and married with three children. His family told me that Ian was overjoyed to find out about the Assoc and wouldn't stop talking about his Army PNGVR days in PNG. Jes and I attended Ian's funeral representing the Assoc with a poppy parade and soldiers farewell.

Ian worked with DCA in Madang and after PNGVR, worked in PNG and parts of Australia and Indonesia.

Colin Gould

23 November, 2009

DID YOU KNOW???

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died as a result of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was called "Gentlemen Only Ladies Forbidden" ... and thus GOLF entered into the English Language.

Editorial: If we are to continue to publish PIR news and stories, it will be necessary for former members of PIR to supply me with relevant stories, together with pictures where appropriate.



Battle Honours

- Kokoda Trail
- Kokoda - Deniki
- Nassau Bay
- Tambu Bay
- Finschaffan
- Scarlet Beach
- Sio - Sepik River
- Bonis - Porton
- Kaboibus - Kiarivu
- Liberation of Australia new Guinea

South West Pacific 1942-3 (not on colours)

The following is taken from "To Find a Path Vol 2" by James Sinclair

ROYAL PACIFIC ISLANDS REGIMENT

The historical background to the raising of PIR during the Second World War, and PIR's service during that War, was described in Vol 1 "To Find a Path". It will be recalled that PIR was disbanded after the War ended, in 1946.

In 1950 it was decided to establish an element of the Australian Army in PNG. On 23 Nov a Raising Instruction was issued by Australian Army Headquarters authorizing the raising of a locally-recruited battalion. As a tribute to the meritorious service of PIR during the War, the new unit was given the same title "Pacific Islands Regiment."

The role of the new PIR in peace was to maintain forces in selected areas; to provide a basis on which additional units could be formed if required; to provide a medium for the study of tropical warfare; and to support the civil authority, if called upon, in the maintenance of law and order. In time of war, PIR would provide medium range reconnaissance patrols, garrisons for local defense, guides and advisors, and reconnaissance detachments for Australian Army units – precisely the role which PIR had made its own during the Second World War.

PIR was placed under command of Northern Command and recruiting began in early 1951. The initial enrolment was of one rifle company only, with the remainder of the battalion being raised in successive stages. The soldiers

were recruited from various PNG administrative Districts, while Officers, Warrant Officers and Sergeants were drawn from the Australian Regular Army.

Papua and New Guinea had been administered by Australia as two separate Territories before the War, from headquarters at Port Moresby and Rabaul respectively. When civil administration was restored after the War, PNG was administered as one Territory, from Headquarters at Port Moresby. It was therefore decided to establish PIR's headquarters near the seat of administration. A site for the barracks was selected at "Eggy's Corner", which had been occupied by 2/1st and 2/5th Australian General Hospital (AGH) during the War. This was given the title of Taurama Barracks.

There was no Army infrastructure of any kind in PNG at this time and initially the Administration acted as the recruiting agency for PIR. The first recruits – among whom were men who had served with PIR during the War – were enlisted on an equal numerical basis from Papua, New Guinea Mainland and New Guinea Islands, including Bougainville.

The Army advance party arrived in Port Moresby on 16 Feb, 1951. On 11 Mar PIR again became a unit in the Australian Army. Recruiting continued and by August, 1952, PIR consisted of Battalion Headquarters and four rifle companies. The commanding officer was Lt Col H.L. Sabin.

PIR was to this time based entirely at Taurama Barracks, but it had already been decided to locate sub-units at outstations. During August, 1952, the GOC Northern Command, Maj Gen V.C. Secombe, CBE, and Lt. Col Sabin, visited Vanimo, an Administration station in the Sepik District, on the north coast of the New Guinea mainland. A firm decision was taken to establish a company outstation at Vanimo. A Company moved to Vanimo in October, 1952. Vanimo was gradually developed into a permanent outstation and was continually manned from that date (from 1965 by 2 PIR).

A second company outstation was established at Nutt Point, Los Negros (a small island off Manus Island) during 1954. This outstation was first occupied by C Company, and in succession by other companies. In 1960 it was decided that the second PIR outstation would be better suited on the mainland. A site was chosen at Cape Moem, near Wewak, administrative headquarters of the Sepik District. A permanent barracks, sufficient for one company, was constructed and this was occupied by D Company in late February, 1962. Moem Barracks were officially opened by the then Minister for the Army, J.O. Cramer, on 16 Apr. Nutt Point was abandoned, C Company departing on 8 Mar, 1962.

To be continued next issue

My wife sat down on the couch next to me as I was flipping channels. She asked "What's on TV?"

I said "Dust."

And then the fight started.

**NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES CHINESE
AUXILIARY AMBULANCE DETACHMENT THE
STORY OF KAM-ON LEO CONTINUES**

The War Finishes

After the War it took a long time for the Chinese community to be returned to Rabaul itself. There were almost 90,000 Japanese Army and Navy personnel there and their repatriation to Japan did not commence until February, 1946 and was not complete until October, 1947.

The pre-war Chinatown area was occupied by the New Guinea Infantry Battalion, (N.G.I.B.) so a site at Matupi Farm, a former W.R.Carpenter & Co plantation was selected for the Chinese to occupy. The 850 Chinese remaining at Ratongor moved to Matapit Farm.

Major J.H. McGregor Dowsett was the 'Officer in Charge of the Chinese resettlement' and was extremely well respected by the Chinese Community..

We had to establish our homes in thatched kunai grass huts which had been built by the Japanese prisoners of war. Japanese labour was also used to fill bomb craters in the area and war stores were utilised as furniture (there was no other furniture available), bomb racks were used as tables and torpedo cases were utilised as containers. ANGAU (Australia New Guinea Administration Unit) issued rations as food was scarce.

Extracts from a letter written from the Chinese Camp 26.9.45.

"The Japs have been trying to shut us up in hell. Things have been very bad here but by working hard we now gain a foot in the world.

We have to plant for ourselves, as we received nothing from the Japs. Even when we worked for them, they gave us very little to eat. I used to bring with me some kau kau or tapioca to work. Our boys over 13 have to work as labourers for them. They gave us no medicine but a few swaps with the soldiers helped us a little.

At one time a company of Jap soldiers camped near us, and they have been trying hard to block our supplies. They have taken most of our farms which we depended on for our living. They stopped natives bringing food to us.

Although the war is over, I think we are still in danger, because there are many Jap camps around us. They hate us all the time, especially now, as we make good friends with the Australian Soldiers. They are jealous because the Australians are giving us food.

Chinatown was placed 'out of bounds' to Australian servicemen and this caused the Chinese traders to take their Japanese souvenirs to the Military Camps to sell – a brisk trade was always conducted".

I Become Sick and Hospitalised

Some months after the War finished I became extremely ill after one meal. I was chewing on some beetle-nut after the meal and my head started spinning and I was having all kinds of hallucinations etc. It must have been a type of food poisoning but, at the time I thought it was caused by the beetle-nut. I was in hospital for most of the next 12 months and my brother had to cook for me and bring my food to the hospital. My illness was never diagnosed (that I knew of), but for the 12 months I suffered badly from a 'kranky head' for the whole of the 12 months and was treated as a 'long-long' patient and only allowed out of the hospital accompanied by an orderly.

Post War

It was some two or three years after WW11 finished before work became available again.

I opened a Chinese Café in Rabaul and ran this for a number of years.

I was married in 1953 in Rabaul to Maria Wong, who came from Lae. She had been interned with the Chinese community in Lae during the War. It was something of an arranged marriage as my sister-in-law had acted in the role of a marriage broker.

My first child, a son, Vincent Gee Hong Leo, was born in 1954.

Maria and I moved to Lae then. Maria and the wife of Chen For, a businessman who ran trade stores in Lae were sisters and I moved to Lae so they could be close. I opened a Haus Kai Kai (Chinese Café) which catered for Europeans. There were still a lot of Americans in Lae at this time still carrying out war graves registration etc, and they were my main customers.

Rita Maria Leo was born in 1955, and unfortunately, my wife Maria died two weeks after a very difficult birth of a ruptured appendix.



Kam-On Leo with wife Rubi

In 1957 I married Rubi who worked for my brother-in-law Chen For, and she came to assist me in the Haus Kai Kai.

When the Americans left, my Haus Kai Kai lost the majority of its customers. I applied for and obtained the job as a builder at a new Coffee Plantation which was being

established at Aiyura, near Kainantu. I helped build both the plantation house and the coffee factory and outbuildings. Rita and Vincent attended the Mission school in Aiyura for the three years we were there.

After three years the carpentry work had been completed. My eldest brother, Kam Tai Leo, was in Port Moresby and he asked me to go there and build a house for him.

So I went to Port Moresby and built, first of all, my own house in Boroko and then a house for him, also in Boroko. I used to carry out my building during the day, working at night in my own Chinese Restaurant in Boroko. This was located in a section of one of my brother's houses. He had a large house which had a big store and also a restaurant included.

Anybody who has for years worked hard as a builder during the day and then run their own restaurant at night will understand why I sold the restaurant and opened a Trade Store in the mid/late 1960's near Koki Market. It was good for a number of years, but about the middle of the 1970's things started to deteriorate. I had a lot of trouble with the locals who, all the time wanted credit until their next pay day. There was a constant request for 'dinau' (loan), and, of course bad debts started to mount up. When I eventually refused to carry any more credit, the store was burnt down one night by the locals. They poured petrol all over the store and torched it.

This did not bother me that much as I was paid a substantial sum for Insurance and used this money to come to Australia in 1977.

We first of all stayed with a friend of Rubi's and later in a house that Rita had purchased at Salisbury. I eventually purchased my own house in Kingston where I now live.

My son Vincent is now a masseur in Rockhampton and has one daughter. Rita is involved with catering at Griffith University and has two boys and a girl.

Difficulty in having my war service recognised

After the War was over I was more interested in getting on with my life than in receiving any medals. However after I came to Australia I applied for but had my application for War Service rejected.

It was through the support and efforts of Lark Force Association, Victorian R.S.L. and Australian R.S.L. Headquarters in Canberra that I finally received the following on 20th June, 1993:-

Australian Army Certificate of Service & the following medals: 1939/45 Star / Pacific Star / War Medal 1939/45 / Returned from Active Service Badge.

I was also awarded the Papua New Guinea Independence Medal from the P.N.G. Government for my war service.



Kam-On Leo presented with Service Medals at Victoria Barracks on 20 June, 1993

Editor's Note: It has been a pleasure and a privilege to record the stories of the men of the NGVR who selflessly placed themselves in harms way as they served their country—in Kam's case an adopted country. However this story was in itself a challenge as Kam only speaks Pidgin, having lived in PNG for 57 years. My Pidgin is a bit rusty after 20 years, but with the assistance of Ralph and Lily Seeto another wonderful story was recorded.

THE RSL SALUTE

In London on Armistice Day, 1930, during the ceremony to unveil and dedicate the Cenotaph in Whitehall, a funeral procession accompanying the remains of the Unknown Soldier, which had arrived from France the previous day, was to halt at the Cenotaph during the ceremony before proceeding to Westminster Abbey for interment. The Official Party included the Empire's senior sailors, soldiers and politicians and as many Victoria Cross winners as could be assembled. The ceremony concluded with a March Past.

The Regimental Sergeant-Major of the Guards Regiment conducting the ceremony, faced with a gathering of highly decorated and high ranking military men (including the VC winners), all wearing rows of medals, decreed that all would salute the Cenotaph as they marched past by placing their hand over the medals, signifying that "No matter the honours we may have been awarded they are nothing compared with the honour due to those who had paid the Supreme Sacrifice".

The RSL of Australia maintains that tradition to honour the dead by placing the right hand over the medals (not the heart, but the medals) during the march past at a ceremonial occasion, or at a wreath laying ceremony.

I KNOW THIS LOOKS WEIRD. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOU CAN READ IT.

I cdnuolt blveiee that I cluod aulacity uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid. Aocodrniq to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttair in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitl raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mind deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig Huh?

NOTES FROM THE MUSEUM

Hello to all members of the Association and friends.

Over the past three years we have had a steady increase in the number of visitors to the museum:-

06/07 - 164 visitors / 07/08 - 195 visitors / 08/09 - 245 visitors

For this increase we have to thank a dedicated band of committee members who always make their time available to help conduct tours through the museum, night or day. I must also mention John Batze who always rings and offers to help when his health allows.

During the past year we have had groups from RSL Clubs, Probus Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Boy Scouts, History Groups and even opened the museum for a History group that used it for holding meetings.

Displays have been carried out for schools, a local library, Remembrance Day at a local centre, and for the Battle of Australia at Greenbank RSL. Greenbank RSL have been very supportive of our Association and museum – through them we were able to purchase a computer programme, thus enabling John Winterbotham to enter all our memorabilia on a data base. He and I had a couple of days training on the programme.

Visits to the museum have been made by the federal member in this area, Bernie Ripole, and the local Councillor for Inala, Milton Dick, – both men made small donations to the museum.

Mary from the Macarthur Museum in the city has donated her time to enter most of our books on the data base. To date we have 95 books, 45 tapes and DVDs and over 100 magazines in our library.

Some books are for sale:-

- 1 only "To find a Path Vol 2" \$60. A Post War history of the formation of Defence Forces in PNG.
- 3 only "Last Frontiers" by James Sinclair. Numbered Limited Edition. \$90 The Explorations of Ivan Champion of Papua
- 24 only "El Tigre" by Peter Stone. \$43. About Frank Holland MBE. Stories of Wartime rescue operations in New Britain. "Z" Special Unit Operations in Portuguese Timor and Borneo.
- 4 only "Flying in to the Mouth of Hell" \$20.

Donations We have been very fortunate to have as our sponsor King & Co Property Consultants, which has, over the past year made donations of a new camera, a fridge, toaster, polished kitchen table, chairs, 2 polished flag pole holders, a nest of 18 plastic filing drawers, a very large polished shelving system for display purposes and white shelving for displays.

Noel Brown from Greenbank RSL has donated a computer and printer

Brian Collin from Greenbank RSL donated a DVD player, tape and cassette recorder. Brian has been a huge help to John Winterbotham and myself with the computer programme. He carries out computer courses at the RSL.

Jesse Chee's nephew had a container surplus to requirements and donated it. This has made it possible to remove many items stored in the back room etc. and store them in the container. It is amazing how much we have collected over the past couple of years.

Barry Wright donated the visitors book from C Coy PNGVR, Goroka. It was in a sad state but with TLC is now on the top shelf in the display cabinet.

Norm Mundy donated the Admin Coy flag from Port Moresby. It

also needs some TLC and we may have to preserve it in a frame under glass when funds permit.

Bernie Arnold, from Adelaide, made a substantial donation of war memorabilia from the battlefields of New Guinea, a fair portion of which is now on display.

Jess Hansford, from Bungendore, sourced some mess silver which was to be dumped from Gallipoli Barracks – two candlelabra and 55 serviette rings.

Mal Bishop's uniform is now on display – thanks to his widow Micki.

Les Irvine, ANGAU, who attends many of our meetings and functions, made donations of photos of his time in New Guinea during the war, and his hob-nail boots and other memorabilia.

The late Bruce Inch donated his mess dress and miniatures. A manikin will be purchased to display such.

A fire hose and reel was donated by Alan Clayton, and, at the last Committee meeting a trench was dug, water pipes laid, and the hose reel connected.

A helmet donated previously has now been correctly identified as a Dutch East Indies Army helmet – previously we were under the impression it was Japanese.

Grant A DVA grant approved has been spent in framing flags, silk maps and photos and a small silk Rising Sun badge from Palestine.

Special Mention I would like to make special mention of two people.

First of all Jessica Harrington for all the hours she spends at the museum sorting out the boxes of photos and papers and then filing them. She has also performed a wonderful job in restoring the kitchen to order.

A special mention to Pam Wright for all the cakes and slices she provides when tour groups come, and never expects reimbursement – thanks Pam.

Fund raising Much of the money to run the museum is raised by carrying out sausage sizzles outside the Greenbank RSL on a Saturday night from 10pm to 2.30am, and it is a long night for those volunteers who help. Most nights we clear \$400/500. Six of these nights have been conducted this year, raising over \$3,000, and without this fund raising the museum could not operate. Thanks to Bob Collins, Barry Wright, Bruce Crawford, Col Gould, Doug Ng, Jesse Chee and Mike Griffin. (Editors note – John organises these, making sure the bread, cheese, onions and sausages are available, as well as ensuring all cooking materials etc are also there on the night).

Volunteers We are always on the lookout for more volunteers. The willing few can always do with assistance, and anything you can do is appreciated, no matter how small. If you can assist please contact me.

John Holland – Curator

P. 07 3375 5484 M. 0449 504 058
E. newguineajohn@bigpond.com.au

INTERESTING WEB SITES

www.pngvr.com www.montivideomaru.com
www.pacificwrecks.com <http://asopa.typepad.com>

The following letter was received by the Association after a visit to the NGVR/PNGVR Military Museum for the first time by Association member Bill Bickerton, who, until he moved overseas, was a member of the Committee

Last week my wife Sawai and I were in Brisbane on a short visit from Thailand and had the privilege to make our first visit to the museum.

We were met by John, Tom, Paul, Mike and Barry. Thank you very much gentlemen for your hospitality, your enthusiasm and for sharing the morning tea with us. It was great to catch up with you – and my wife enjoyed the hugs.

The museum is fantastic and an absolute credit to all of our members who have assisted in creating this great memorial, which honours not only our old NGVR mates but also the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and the Pacific Islands Regiments members.

The history of our illustrious Regiments will be maintained in a dignified and befitting manner forever.

The museum memorabilia, including weapons, photos, written articles, medals, uniforms, equipment and other items are unique and specific to the Papua New Guinea campaign and to our Regiments. This magnificent display will serve to keep the legend alive for generations to come.

If you are a member or a relative of a member or an interested party I do recommend that you take the opportunity to visit our Museum.

My compliments to the Executive Committee for a job well done and my greetings to all of my old PNGVR mates.

Thank you again.

Regimental No. 860284

Lt. William (Bill) Bickerton (Ret'd) JP (Qld), HOSM (East Timor and Afghanistan)

Ex Support Company, Assault Pioneer Platoon Commander.

Pt Moresby. PNG

25th September 2009

bicko@cscoms.com

VALE - LLOYD WEAVER

(Ex PIR) 1917 - 2009

Lloyd Weaver MM died in the hospital at Boort, Victoria, on 26 May 2009; he was subsequently cremated. He was one month short of his 92nd birthday and a Memorial Service in his memory was held at Boort on what would otherwise have been that birthday.

Lloyd was born at Boort on 26 June 1917 (he always liked to joke that all the significant events in his life took place on the 26th day of the relevant month; this subsequently applied to the dates of his army enlistment, marriage and,

eventually, his death). He was the second son and fourth child of Percy and Annie Weaver, who farmed near Boort on a property on the Wychitella Road. Lloyd attended the Boort Primary and Higher Elementary Schools. Following completion of his Intermediate Certificate (nowadays Year 10), he left school to join his father and younger brother in working the property.

On 26 August 1940 he enlisted in the 2nd AIF at Royal Park. He was subsequently posted to the Artillery Depot at Williamstown Racecourse and then, on 2 December, to 4th Anti-Tank Regiment at Puckapunyal. He was promoted Bombardier on 25 April 1941; the following day he married Olive May (nee Armour) at Wesley Church, Melbourne.

On 23 May 1941, as a member of 16th Battery, 4th Anti-Tank Regiment, he shipped for garrison duty in Malaya on the troopship 'Zealandia'. The unit went into training at Tampin and in July 1941 he sustained an injury to his groin whilst attempting single-handedly to support the trail arm of the gun after the arm has slipped. He sustained a hernia and was obliged shortly thereafter to undergo surgery, performed at 2.10th A.G.H. The operation was performed by Lt. Col. Albert Coates. Unfortunately, complications developed and following a second operation and a prolonged convalescence, he was evacuated, first to Singapore and then, in mid-January 1942, to Colombo on the Indian troopship 'Talamba'. Whilst in Colombo, he spent some time with survivors from HMS's 'Prince of Wales' and 'Repulse' (the two British capital ships lost on 10 December previously).

Returned to Australia on another ship, the 'Stirling Castle', he was still classified as unfit, so spent some time in Heidelberg Military Hospital, Melbourne, before being reassigned to Puckapunyal, this time to 105 Anti-Tank (later Tank Attack) Training Unit.

Ironically, his injury in Malaya, and its aftermath, probably saved his life; he was a big man and, as he frequently remarked over the years, "the big men did not do well" at the hands of the Japanese. At Puckapunyal, he was billeted in his former hut and he describes his anguish at reading the names of the coves chalked on the hut wall; friends who were by now captive in Malaya. His one desire was to get himself fit again and then to get into action against the Japanese.

The next three years proved very frustrating. He was posted to 3rd Australian Artillery Training Unit at Greta, NSW, where, because of his persisting poor health, he served as a clerk. However, that proved a hidden benefit because, when the unit was wound up, he was able to 'mislaid' his own medical file and then be accepted for training at Cunungra Jungle Training Centre in Queensland. He did so well on the course, however, that he was retained as an Instructor for the next intake! Meanwhile, he applied without success for 'M' Force, 'Z' Force, the Commandos and the Paratroops.

To be continued next issue

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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.

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

All correspondence to:-

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Bob Collins—Editor



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FUNCTION DATES

Tuesday, 8th December, 2009

Museum visit - RAAF

Saturday, 21st March, 2010

Mixed Field dining night - Jimboomba

Wednesday, 21st April, 2010

Regt formal dining night - Greenbank RSL

Sunday, 25th April, 2010

Anzac Day - march in Brisbane; NGVR service at Cenotaph followed by the annual get together at the Victory Hotel

Thursday, 1st July, 2010

11am - Montevideo Maru Service, Brisbane Cenotaph