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VOLUME

62

DATE

JUNE 2010



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

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Welcome to HTT number 62.

Although we did not have the numbers this year for our Annual Regimental Dinner, the ANZAC weekend was most successful. About 15 members and friends turned up on Saturday 24 April at the Museum Open Day for a sausage sizzle, socializing and a look round, and we had 65 on parade at the ANZAC day march and 90 members and friends were in attendance at the Victory Hotel reunion after the march. In between the marching and reunion, a solemn commemoration ceremony was held in the Hall of Memories, Brisbane Cenotaph for the 80 known members of NGVR lost during the war.

Curator John Holland organised the Museum inspection and Secretary Colin and Curator John arranged the march and reunion with assistance on the day from Treasurer Doug, Bruce Crawford, Mike Griffin and Paul Brown. The NGVR ceremony was organised by Paul Brown with assistance from Mal Zimmermann during the Service. Thank you Committee members for managing these functions to the amazing high standard, which we all expect, but take for granted. While costs have grown, the organisers managed to keep the price the same and balance the books. Well done!

It was great to see some faces which we have not seen for sometime, the Kenna's from Warrnambool, Karl Aschhoff from Charleville, Ivan Old from NSW and many more. Karl was in particular fine mettle singing "Lille Marlene" and a clean, 1 Platoon, A company song with Mal Zimmermann.

Much work is going on behind the scenes by the "Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society". On the afternoon of Monday 21 June, a motion will be

put to the House of Representatives.

The following has been extracted from the mid May MvM newsletter:

"The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society was established to ensure national recognition of Australia's greatest maritime disaster, a tragedy of war that cost more than 1,000 lives and affected many thousands more. Contact the Society at benelong@bigpond.net.au.

"...it is a debt of justice to pay superior honours to men who have devoted their lives in fighting for their country...(Pericles' Oration p34).

At last count, 230 people had registered to be at Parliament House in Canberra on Monday 21 June - the oldest aged 97 - for the passage of the historic parliamentary resolution.

Catherine King MP has now tabled the motion in words proposed by our Society. And it reads, that this House:

- (1) Expresses the gratitude of the Australian nation to the service personnel and civilians in Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands for their services in the defence of Australia during World War II.
- (2) Expresses its regret and sorrow for the sacrifices that were made in the defence of Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands and in the subsequent sinking of the Montevideo Maru on 1 July 1942.
- (3) Conveys its condolences to the relatives and loved ones of the people who died in this conflict.
- (4) Conveys its thanks to the relatives for their forbearance and efforts in insuring that the nation remembers the sacrifices made.

Senator Anne McEwen, one of our few parlia-

mentarians who have a real passion for PNG, is sponsoring the motion in the Senate on the same evening it passes through the House of Representatives.

We still don't know in what precise context the motion will be raised or at what exact time on the Monday afternoon. Minister Alan Griffin's office is working on this in conjunction with Parliamentary officials. But, as we've advised previously, you should arrange to be at Parliament House no later than early afternoon.

The motion and the subsequent function represent significant actions by the Australian Parliament.

Some information you may find useful:

We are encouraging veterans (and family if they desire) to wear service medals. Spouses are welcome to attend, so long as they register. There is no charge. The Society will hire buses to ferry people from where they are staying in Canberra to and from Parliament House.

Andrea Williams is managing registration and logistics.

Email: andrea.williams@bigpond.com.

The next Association activity is our 1 July Service at the Shrine of Memories, Anzac Square, Brisbane to commemorate the sinking of the Montevideo Maru with the loss of all 1053 Australian and Allied service personnel and civilians on board of which at least 34 were NGVR personnel. Please be there at 9:45am for a 10am start. Association dress is Anzac Day dress with full medals. This service is open to the public. A morning tea in adjoining RSL rooms will follow the service.

Phil Ainsworth



This photo was taken by Ken MacGowan in Murray Barracks at the commencement of the May 1959 PNGVR camp held at Goldie River: front row from left to right are B Wish-Wilson and Graeme Blanch;

Back row from left to right are Noel Kenna, Kevin Shorthouse, Bernie Gough and Bruce Crawford.

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CONCLUSION OF HARLEY ARMITSTEAD'S STORY AS TOLD TO BOB COLLINS

I then go to Wau and Tsilli Tsilli

I was called into Wau with Bill Bloxham, ANGAU, and whatever I was supposed to do changed swiftly, as I had only been in Wau for a couple of days when I was ordered to Tsilli Tsilli in the Watut River Valley with WO Fox, ANGAU.

While I was at Tsilli Tsilli two American B25 bombers came in – the first of a fleet of new aircraft destined for Port Moresby. They had a cannon in the forward turret and were considered to be so secret that we had received a signal not to approach the planes. I was standing on the end of the strip trying to signal them to land on the correct section of the airstrip but, unfortunately, they decided to land on the side of the strip which was all mushed up with rain and they both came down and sat on their bellies.

I then sent word out to the local villages and about 50/60 natives came in. Overnight the meris plaited long ropes out of lawyer vine while the men dug trenches in front of the aircraft – about 40 feet (12m.) long – the width of the wings. We then, meris and all, dragged the planes up on to firm ground. We refueled the planes and the pilots then wanted to test them before setting off to Port Moresby. They took me up in one for a ride and I thought I might fall out at one stage – the pilot twisted it almost inside out and only stopped when I warned him that if he did any more aerobatics I would be airsick.

Later that day they asked me where Port Moresby was. I advised them that the best way was to go straight out to sea and follow the coast around. About two or three days later in came one of our planes. When it landed a group of Yanks got out and explained that they wanted to pay back the natives for their help in freeing the B25s. They had brought over a DC3 fully laden with food and supplies – even including sponge cakes. The next week another came in – very generous people the Yanks.

The Americans had not long left Tsilli Tsilli which they had been using as an airbase for the parachute landing which took back Nadzab, in the Markham Valley. It was about three days from Wau and we left with police-bois and carriers. About two days out my knees gave out and I rested for a couple of days before proceeding on to Tsilli Tsilli. When I arrived WO Fox was not there as he had been ordered out somewhere and I never saw him again.

My task at Tsilli Tsilli was native rehabilitation and this included patrolling the area and census taking. Aircraft could have landed at Tsilli Tsilli but it was quicker to air drop, so the first thing I had to do was to organise drop zones so we could have native food dropped and I always had to be on site when the drops occurred or there would have been nothing left. I also asked to patrol the Wampit Valley and carry out similar tasks, and spent most of my time there out on Patrol. On each patrol I would be accompanied by 3 or 4 police bois, and my own carrier line. I would enter a village and call for the Luluai (headman), inspect any Administration records

they had, check on the hygiene situation, find out exactly how many people still in the village and then oversee the distribution of food which I had either left or had dropped. I would then update the census book for the village.

At one time I was ordered to go down to Amami Village on the Markham River to check on the movement of Japanese coming down from Shaggy Ridge and the Ramu Valley into Kaipit. It was felt that they were assembling for an attack to retake Lae which had just fallen to the Australians. That night the Markham was well and truly down so I sent half a dozen Police Bois posing as local villagers over the River to get information. They reported that 'planti Japan man ikam – 200 – 300 nau more. Planti more ikam long tomorrow too'. There was a Signals group already there when we got there and they had told me that I would never get any information on the Japs when I arrived. I told them not to worry but I would get the information alright. So they sent the information to Port Moresby and promptly departed back to Tsilli Tsilli. I stayed for another three or four days monitoring things and then returned.

My orders were not to cross the Markham until Lae had been taken. Lae had been recaptured by Australian forces on 16th September, 1943. I went down to Lae by crossing the Markham River and going to Kaiapit, then down to Nadzab.. It was while I was out on patrol from Kaiapit that I found 4 brand new American Jeeps in the bush. One of the natives on patrol with me showed them to me and our big problem then was to get them across the Markham. One of the natives suggested we build a bridge, but I then realised he meant just a pontoon of logs to float them across. This we did, but were then faced with a cliff on the other side that went almost straight up. We drove the jeeps into Lae, with bois pushing them for the last few miles when we ran out of petrol. It was close to Christmas time by this and the Americans in Nadzab had a plentiful supply of liquor.

I go on Leave and return to Garoka (now Goroka)

I proceeded on leave from Lae and it was in September, 1944, that Clare and I were married.

On completion of leave I returned to Lae. From there I was airlifted into Goroka. It was while I was in Lae that I was commissioned as a Lieutenant. I had a spot on my lung and every time I had been medically examined this was raised and I was told that I could not be commissioned. Anyway while I was in Lae I was called up to a field telephone and advised that I had been appointed Lieutenant. In reply to my query "What about the spot on my lung?" the reply was "Just shut up about it!"

I had a number of tasks to perform at Goroka:-

- i) Supply vegetables to the 700 troops in Kainantu.
- ii) Supply vegetables to the Australian and American hospitals in Lae and Madang
- iii) Carry out census patrols in what is now known as the Eastern Highlands
- iv) Together with Adrian Leydon (ANGAU) map sections of the Eastern Highlands



Harley and Claire on their wedding day

a little over 5,000 feet, but there was not a lot in the way of recreation.

The census patrols were mainly carried out in the Goroka and Bena Bena areas and, at one stage I spent quite a lot of time in the Finintique (about 4 hours walk South East of Goroka) area patrolling and carrying out census. The going was tough with a lot of narrow slippery trails to follow and I suffered a lot of falls and twisted knees and ankles. It was not uncommon for me to be carried back to base on a stretcher. I am sure it was because of my ANGAU days that I suffer the problems I have today. At this stage (early 2005) I have a fused spine and my legs do not work properly - as a result I am wheelchair bound.

On one patrol into the Bena, to a village called Kafu-Neveviga, down towards the Kukuku country, I had a team of about 8 Police boys under the control of a Sergeant as well as carriers. We had all our weapons locked up in Patrol boxes, which was normal procedure on these patrols. It was against policy to show the locals our firearms. Just out of the village one of the Police boys was hit with an arrow in the arm. Before I could gain control the Police boys had broken into the weapons boxes and opened fire.

During this episode the Police boys threw me to the ground and partially covered me with grass so that I could not be seen. It was nearly the end of my military career as, for a while, I was facing court martial. However the fact that a number of Patrol Officers had been attacked in the same area previous to my patrol saved me.

Then Adrian Leydon and I were ordered to locate suitable villages and show the natives how to grow coffee. No doubt this was because I had an Agricultural Degree from Gatton. We had to locate suitable areas, clear appropriate ground, find suitable, preferably relatively young people, and show them how to establish a nursery, germinate seeds and plant the seedlings. After the War they would be shown how to harvest the crop and the Government would purchase the produce from them.

The following is an extract from the book "The Money Tree - About Coffee in Papua New Guinea" by James Sinclair.

"In February, 1945, Lt R.J. Stevenson, Patrol Officer, visited villages in the Agaravi language group locating more coffee plots. Perhaps the most significant coffee extension work was done by H.J. Armitstead. P.O. (Patrol Officer) Aitchison said in his memoirs "I was fortunate to have Harley Armitstead and Adrian Leydon who worked with him during 1945. Harley was a graduate of Gatton Agricultural College, who had experience on a Markham plantation - Schindler had agreed to establish a school to train local boys in coffee cultivation and I had Harley and Adrian search for boys between the Purari - Chimbu Dividing Ranges and the Markham Valley, wishing to learn about coffee - 10 to 14 years of age were most suitable with parents consent.

We ended up with 13 boys from Asaloka, Bena Bena,

v) Again together with Adrian Leydon locate suitable villages and show the natives how to grow coffee.

I had planted gardens down the sides of the airstrip at Goroka and we had a constant stream of fresh vegetables for both i) and ii) above, and for ourselves.

One of our early tasks was to build a road from Goroka to Kainantu. We used local natives and this was eventually achieved, although I must admit it was a pretty rough road. However we had to have a reliable method of getting vegetables to Kainantu, and we used to send them down by jeep and trailer. These were the jeeps I had found while out on patrol from Kaipit and I had them flown in. Any time we were advised of any visiting VIPs we would change the signs on the jeeps, using special stencils we had made. If an Australian top Brass was visiting we would have them with USA signs, and if someone from the US Army was visiting we would have Royal Australian Air Force signs etc. At one stage a visiting American queried the jeeps. I thought to myself that the game was up but admitted to having 4 of them. His reply astounded me "Well, they look as though they are due for replacement - I'll see what I can do". Sure enough, a few weeks later 6 brand new jeeps arrived by air from Madang.

At a later stage we connected Goroka with Kainantu with a phone line, the cable being souvenired from the leftovers at Tsilli Tsilli aerodrome, which by now had almost been abandoned and was being used mainly as an emergency strip.

I might add that, at this stage, Goroka was starting to develop as a Rest and Recreation Centre for the Americans. Rest centre is understandable, with Goroka at an altitude

Kafe, Hote, Agaravi, Gatsup, Goroka and Wonenara. They were taught mostly by Jim Leahy in the planting to marketing, including all procedures, for some months before returning to their villages with a supply of coffee seedlings. In November 1944 Armitstead spent 18 days on a patrol to Seigu, Goroka, where a native hospital had been located. The purpose of the patrol was 'Location of coffee plots adjacent to villages' and to instruct and encourage native villagers in coffee planting. Coffee plots were established at Aifua, Kami and Mohbita No 2. Visiting the area a year later Armitstead reported that the seedlings planted on his initial visit were 'doing well'.

During December Armitstead made another coffee patrol accompanied by Schindler through the Bena Bena district and the villages South of Goroka. Village coffee plots that he was supervising - 17 in all - were inspected and advice given about proper drainage, weeding and shade. They selected 194 villagers from the Bena Bena - Goroka area to work at Aiyura (Government experimental agricultural station) to gain experience with coffee.

In January 1945 Armitstead then submitted a 'Coffee Report' on the plots at Kafagumarigi, Kami, Mohoveto West, Arufa No 1, Arufa No 2, Kaiufa, Metihausa and Hopigaiufa. The size of the blocks ranged from about 300 to 500 trees and most were found to be progressing satisfactorily. Armitstead concluded his report by saying he recommended that for next season's planting it would be advisable to construct nurseries in the respective areas to be planted to alleviate transport difficulties such as loss in transit. It is suggested seed could be obtained from Aiyura and Wau for this purpose.

Armitstead extended coffee planting to the Finintegu area and, early in 1945, he accompanied Lt A.J. Leydon, Officer in charge of the Henganofi Patrol Post, on a patrol to select 'suitable plots for coffee growing in Garfatina, Kamantina and Dunantina Valleys'. Plots were established at two Police Posts and at Kompari Village. Others were prepared at Meni-ina and at Yanofi. Armitstead had previously located another near the Henganofi post.

In a letter to the author dated 3rd June, 1994, Leydon recalls that it was Armitstead who actually selected the sites for the coffee plots 'He was the expert' says Leydon 'and being the local Patrol Officer I organised the village owners of the land to do the work'. Leydon says in his Patrol report "The object of the patrol was to select three plots in each valley- a sample nursery was also selected at Henganofi. It was desired to select a suitable youth from each village looking after a plot to be sent to Aiyura Agricultural Station for tuition in looking after the coffee. Some youths were selected and the remainder will be selected during my administrative patrols of the area. Natives were informed that the coffee was their property and they would receive the profits when the coffee was sold'.

When this project was finished I was sent back to Lae

Finish of the War and Discharge.

I was out at the ANGAU camp at Malahang, just outside Lae, when the War was obviously at it's end, together with 165 other ANGAU personnel. A large group of us

received orders to proceed to Bougainville. In my opinion The Commanding Officer of ANGAU, Brigadier Graham, who had been a bowser boy prior to the War, just wanted to keep his important job, so I jacked up. I was threatened with disciplinary action but called the others together and we all agreed to stick together and not to go. In the end the DAQMG (Number two in the Lae area for the Army) became involved. I had known him before the War and phoned him about 10am one day. At 2pm a staff car arrived to pick me up and take me into Lae. We had a discussion and he agreed to look into the matter.

The end result was that, when I arrived back at Malahang Camp I was advised that I was leaving on an aircraft at 4.30am the next morning for Australia and discharge. I later heard that General 'Red Robbie' Robertson, Commander of the Lae area, had told Brig. Graham that "There was a ship in Lae the next day bound for Australia, and 165 ANGAU personnel had better be on it". When that ship eventually docked in Sydney I met all my old mates again, but by that time I was a civilian again - they all thanked me for what I had done.

By the time Clare met me at Redbank I was a civilian again. She wrote to me as a soldier on board ship but I had been discharged by the time I saw her.

I made a big mistake on discharge by not having a thorough medical. As a result of this none of my back, hips and knee problems were ever recorded on my Medical papers, and I had a lot of difficulty in getting the problems recognised by Dept of Veterans Affairs. I ended up having both hips and knee joints replaced at my own expense. I progressed from a 10% disability pension to a 40% disability but only after a lot of time and effort fighting the department. I am now 100% Extreme Disability Allowance, after having my spine fused 5 years ago (1999).

My Discharge Certificate Q3692 reads -

NG 2279 Pte J.H. Armitstead NGVR Discharged from the Militia Forces at Brisbane 14.6.1942 to join the AIF. Total service 144 days Full Time Duty including Active Service 174 days.

My Discharge from ANGAU Certificate No 29416.

Certificate of Service as an Officer QX 32730 Lt J.H. Armitstead 1,347 days. In Australia 314 days, Outside Australia 933 days from 15.6.1942 (the day after I was discharged) to 18th March, 1945.

Description of Officer. Height 5' 9" Eyes Blue. Hair Light Brown Scars on Chest.

My Record of Service book contains a number of items in red ink written off marked 'Lost in Action'. This was just a way of getting new issues when you needed them.

Return to Civilian Life

I had an immediate offer of employment from Peter Jensen, whose plantation I had left to serve full time duty with the NGVR. He offered to pay my fare up and excellent terms and conditions of pay etc. However I had had enough of New Guinea and declined.

My first job was with Commonwealth Rehabilitation

Training Service. I joined them in 1946 and stayed about 12 months. I then transferred to CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) at Gatton where I stayed about 6 months.

Then I moved back to Warwick, having purchased about 24 acres with a very dilapidated house on it. I was a bit worried when Clare and I came over the hill to the land and the house, as I was not all that sure she would stay in it - I was thinking to myself "There'll be a bust-up for sure here". The house was so bad we used to put sheets of galvanised iron under the rotting floorboards to strengthen them. However she is made of sterner stuff and we commenced a poultry farm on the land. Eventually we also built a new house in which Clare and I still live.

We have four children:-

Judy, now an Industrial Chemist

Lionel, now an Industrial Engineer, married with three children.

Sue, now a Chef, married with three children.

Christopher, now in charge of Inghams Poultry Division, Darwin, married with four children.

We built up quite a big business and created two records:-

- Claire was the first female chicken sexer in Queensland

- We built the first chicken abattoir in Queensland.

Eventually Warwick developed to a stage where the houses came down over the hill from the Railway line and people started to complain about the smell of the chickens. The chicken farm had grown to such a stage that we then had to make a decision as to whether we expanded (which would mean moving) or sold. We had a family conference and decided to close down. I would not agree to the re-zoning of our land for development as I like my space, so we sold the chickens and then had a clearing sale and sold all the plant and equipment - every bit of it - I believe the crowd was in such a buying mood that day I could have sold a set of false teeth if I had one. Inghams purchased the abattoir and offered my son Christopher a Management position with them.

So concludes the story of a remarkable man—what he achieved both in his military service and his civilian life deserve congratulations.

Unfortunately Harley passed away on 19th Dec. 2009 and never saw his story in HTT.

His story was recorded by Bob Collins

I took my wife to a restaurant. The waiter, for some reason, took my order first. "I'll have the steak, medium rare, please."

He said "Aren't you worried about the mad cow!"

I replied "Nah! She can order for herself."

And then the fight started



Harley on his 90th birthday in 2007

A Marching Song of the NGVR

It is titled "The New Guinea Swoopers"

Shivering on the mountain top, sweating by the shores,
Treading over country that we've never trod before.

We wander on in sun and rain, and sometimes 'neath the moon

Although we smell, we know quite well, we'll get our wash-wash soon.

Cause we're distinct from everyone, not Bombardiers, or Fusiliers or Troopers,

When we're near a crowd, we'll shout out loud,

We're Bill Edward's own New Guinea Swoopers.

As sung by Tom Keenan whose story yet to be told.



Flashback. 172341 Pte Lawie D.C. (Don)

Don writes. "Yes! That's me. Original was a slide taken by Maj. Alf Clarke, OC, D Coy at the Mt Ambra camp, 1964 (the first one). The pipes were a big hit with the locals who used to follow me around whenever I played, flicking their fingers and going "ting-ting" as they did. I used to play Reveille about 0530 and also played the

Retreat for Flag-Down at last light each day. I have a beautiful b&w photo of the Duty Sgt lowering the flag with the Guard at Present Arms, the thatched huts and distant mountains in the background. I have a colour photo of this one mounted in a frame with the badges of the units with which I served (PNGVR, RAE, 51 RQR) I used to have my medals in it too but I now have too many for the little frame.

I was awarded the National Medal for a combination of service in the CMF and SES. I now have 10 years SES service and am eligible for Meritorious Service Medal. Some of our members who serve in the SES, Firies, Ambos, etc. may not be aware that the 15 year requirement for the National Medal can be achieved by adding the years in the different branches of service.



Lowering the flag at sunset. Mt. Ambra 1964
Guard at the Present and Don playing the Retreat



Mal's three grandchildren marched with him again this year and certainly captured a lot of media attention.

Wayne Bensley could not make it as he was involved in the Sir Roden and Lady Cutler Foundation wheelchair Roll from Perth to Sydney.

Peter Porteous

PIR Sydney Anzac Day Report

On Friday 23rd April I attended the Anzac Day Service at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Concord NSW as a PIR representative. It was a beautiful day and we were addressed by group captain Greg Sutton of the RAAF giving his impressions of the Bomana War Cemetery in Port Moresby.

Boys and girls representing Concord West public School and Trinity Grammar School entertained the large crowd with songs and hymns.

The memorial is looking beautiful at the moment and I would encourage every member to pay it a visit when you are in the area.



Anzac Day was a different affair with a cold wind blowing down George St but a few hardy souls turned up. The only WW2 veteran to march with us was Roy Sheargold who was in a wheelchair pushed by his grandson. (photo on left)

Other members to march from PIR were Peter Porteous, John Symonds, Mal Robinson and Russell Wade.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES

UNIT HISTORY 1950-Mar 1053

By Lt Col N.P. Maddern MBE

Continued from last issue.

RECRUITING - LAE.

During (Easter) weekend 23 – 26 Mar 51, CO & QM PNGVR proceeded to LAE. The task was to make preliminary arrangements for recruiting, particularly publicity and accommodation for training and stores.

CO PNGVR was met at the airstrip by local dignitaries including the State President of the RSSAILA, Mr G. WHITTAKER. The District Commissioner was not present. He was annoyed that Army representatives should disturb the Administration during the Easter holidays and even refused accommodation and messing at the Administration Travelling Officers Bungalow.

The RSSAILA members were suspicious and unfriendly. Their main interest was in the PIR and the statement was made that "if the Army does not appoint experienced Territorians as Officers and NCOs the RSL will withdraw its support".

It is of interest that in all Army activities, during the next two years, the RSSAILA made little or no attempt to be of assistance. Meetings were addressed by CO PNGVR and at different times by Maj Gen F C SECOMBE CBE, Maj Gen R. KING CBE DSO and the Honourable the Minister of the Army (Joe FRANCIS), but none were productive of co-operation. Destructive and ill informed criticism seemed to be the keynote, stemming, not from the rank and file of the organisation, but the State Executive.

There is no record of the RSSAILA ever having produced a single recruit for the PNGVR or having offered any encouragement to potential recruits.

The District Commissioner, Mr H. NIALL MBE, states without hesitation that he "hates the Army". His actions have never belied the statement, even to unnecessary persecution of two unfortunate 1 Aust Bomb Disposal Section NCO's.

Arrangements proceeded for the commencement of recruiting on the advertised date (7 Apr 1951).

Training and Stores accommodation was by courtesy of the Department of Civil Aviation, an organisation which never failed to assist where possible. It occupied the old Qantas mess on the West side of the airstrip.

On 4 Apr 1951, CO & QM PNGVR again arrived in LAE, accompanied by the RQMS and SSgt. The latter men were to remain in LAE as instructors until RABAUUL project commenced. The Director of Public Health (Dr J.T. GUNTHER) and the BGD Coy resident medico (Dr. C GUNTHER, not related to JTG) both flew to LAE for the recruiting.

The Press, Radio and circular campaign was sufficient stimulus to produce 24 recruits on the afternoon of 7 Apr 1951.

Accommodation arrangements for the PNGVR, made initially with the District Commissioner in LAE during the Easter visit and followed up during the second visit, are of interest.

CO PNGVR went to the DC's office at 0900 hrs Easter Saturday. He made no reference to the formers rudeness the previous day, but gave details of his task.

He mentioned that arrangements had been made in PORT MORESBY for the Army to take over LOT 4 in the LAE town plan – possibly the best available lot and, in fact, such arrangements had been made by Lt Col N R McLEOD.

The DC was advised that the lot had just been inspected and that it was excellent for the purpose.

An hour later the DC contacted CO PNGVR and informed him that he had a better plan, he would hand over to the Army EMERY House and a large black iron building adjacent. The buildings were inspected immediately and CO PNGVR enthusiastically accepted the buildings and two areas of adjacent land for a parade ground.

The DC mentioned "minor" difficulties. The land and buildings belonged to the Forestry Department.

Under the terms of sale Mr EMERY had unrestricted use of the black iron building for storage purposes until Feb 1953.

CO PNGVR contacted Mr J. McADAM, Forestry Dept, on his return to PORT MORESBY. He learned from Mr McADAM that Mr NIALL, DC LAE, was his bitter enemy.

After a lengthy discussion, CO PNGVR agreed to relinquish his non existent right to the two acres of land (which were required for a forestry experimental station), in return for the EMERY House and black iron building.

Mr McADAM accompanied CO PNGVR to the Department of Lands, Survey and Mines where a handover was drawn up and a telegram sent to the surveyor at LAE (Mr Brooke WEBB) to survey the PNGVR area.

A letter was sent to Mr NIALL informing him of the handover.

During the visit to LAE for recruiting the following week, CO PNGVR contacted the local Forestry representative, Mr NIALL and Mr Brook WEBB and arranged for all concerned to be present on the Tuesday at 1400 hrs for boundary definition.

Mr NIALL did not turn up and QM PNGVR was instructed to collect him, which he did.

Mr NIALL witnessed the definition of boundaries and was requested to send a copy of the survey to PORT MORESBY during the following week.

After several letters on the subject had been sent to Mr NIALL the Government Secretary PORT MORESBY directed him to produce the plan.

The Government Secretary then wrote the memorandum handing the property over to the Army. Fifteen months and many letters later, EMERY House was finally handed over by the District Commissioner.

By letters to Mr EMERY who was then resident at KINGSTON, S Aust, and his agents – Messrs DUNCAN & ROEFOD, RABAUUL, liaison visits to owners of gear stored in the black iron building and on examination of litigation proceedings by the Agents against Mr NIALL for forcible entry into other buildings to which Mr EMERY had rights of occupation until Feb 1953, CO PNGVR obtained a waiver of rights from the Agents in Sep 1952.

Mr NIALL then became solicitous of the PNGVR's welfare and advised against occupation of the building in view of the litigation.

A Coy PNGVR took possession.

ANZAC DAY 1951.

PNGVR paraded in LAE and PORT MORESBY on Anzac Day 1951.

In PORT MORESBY 74 members were on parade. They paraded with the Royal Papuan Constabulary and the infant PIR, which had commenced recruiting and was already building the cornerstone of a fine unit at TAURAMA.

CO PNGVR accompanied by His Honour, the Administration Colonel J.K. MURRAY to the RSL Club, Ela

Beach, after the parade. At the Club CO PNGVR and Col MURRAY were attacked by a drunken ex soldier, who was forcibly removed. Apparently the carnival atmosphere in the Territory bred such behavior, since it was unusual for CO PNGVR to appear at any RSL Club in the Territory without some unpleasant incident with inebriated and disgruntled ex soldiers. These conditions do not apply in other clubs.

MESSING PORT MORESBY

From 15 Apr 1951 until 3 Jul 1951, all ARA PNGVR members in PORT MORESBY lived at Murray Barracks and drove 5 miles each way three times per day to meals at KONDOBU.

There was no Mess staff provided for on the establishment and in the early stages in Murray Barracks, no mess building available.

The long drive for meals was still the case when GOC N Comd came to PORT MORESBY in Jun 1951. His opinion was that the PNGVR members should eat at PIR TAURAMA, an eight mile turnaround and, even if we formed a mess, we would not get a cook.

On the other hand the Brig Adm (Brig WHITE) sent a cable instructing CO PNGVR to form Officers and Sgts Messes. There seemed to be some misunderstanding of the conditions under which we lived and worked.

A combined mess – Officers and OR's – was formed and members contributed towards the cost of a native cook boy until the issue was fought out. Eventually a native cook was authorised.

MURRAY BARRACKS

The next task was to shift the centre of activities in PORT MORESBY from KONE DOBU to Murray Barracks. The Department of Civil Aviation had been compelled to terminate the permissive occupancy in favour of the Department of Public Health Infant Welfare Clinic.

Murray Barracks comprised 604 acres between the 3 and 4 Mile on the ROUNA Rd. It was being used mainly as married quarters by the Civil Administration, but the commonwealth Department of Works also maintained workshops and quarters. The Posts and Telegraphs Department had one section, which they still occupy.

The area to be resumed by the PNGVR included eight buildings:- 7 married quarters - 1 Dept Works Mess.

Over the years, the area had degenerated to a slum, overgrown with kunai grass and littered with debris.

The Administration had ten weeks' warning, but ten days before the people were to move out, they received notices to quit, with the terse statement "no alternative accommodation is available". The PNGVR took over three buildings only and two years of constant prodding produced all but one of the remainder.

Murray Barracks was later to house HQ Area Comd Papua New Guinea, PNGVR and all dependents of ARA members.

The major task was to improve the area. Most of the work was done by the ARA men themselves, with pick, shovel

and demolition tools. At least one load of rubbish daily was removed for three months and cleaning up continued intermittently for two years.

In Jul 1951, beautification works, including the planting of hundreds of trees, commenced.

It was a source of constant wonder that the area had been permitted to degenerate to a conglomeration of shacks, surrounded by rubbish, and with ducks and fowls penned beneath houses.

The only parallel case perhaps was the entry of the Darwin Mobile Force into VESTYS MEATWORKS in 1939, when an accumulation of 20 years of goat droppings was the only obstacle to clean living.

RECRUITING RABAUL

The RQMS, WO2 HOLDING, accompanied the stores shipped from LAE for the opening of recruiting in RABAUL. WO2 OLDHAM, a WO2 instructor who had to date been retained in PORT MORESBY on account of his general instructor worthiness, was sent to LAE to take over A Coy PNGVR.

WO 2 HOLDING met CO & QM PNGVR and SSgt NEEDHAM at the airstrip on 1 May 1951. He apologized the lack of transport for the CO, but stated that his request to the A/District Commissioner for a vehicle to meet CO PNGVR had been met with the reply "can't the Army hire taxis".

WO2 HOLDING already had made tentative arrangements for the loan of a Copra drying shed at the back of the Hotel Cosmopolitan as stores and training accommodation.

CO and QM PNGVR visited the hotel manager and discussed this accommodation with him and several directors. They agreed to permit the unit to use the shed for three weeks then to charge a nominal rental.

Six weeks later the hotel sent in a claim for 6 weeks rent at 10 pounds per week. The shed was evacuated and the claim was NOT paid. The hotel tariff was 30/- per day. Obviously NEEDHAM and HOLDING could not afford it and QM PNGVR was dispatched to the A/District Commissioner to arrange messing at the Administration mess. The two men intended to sleep in the shed.

CO PNGVR received a ring at the ASCOT HOTEL from the Administration Chief Clerk to the effect that the Army was responsible for its own messing. CO PNGVR instructed him to put the line through to the A/District Commissioner who was informed of that. CO PNGVR had no transport in RABAUL because the Army had flown the RABAUL jeep into MT LAMINGTON. Therefore, whenever CO PNGVR required transport in RABAUL from the Administration he would get it

Messing for Army personnel was provided under an agreement made with the Administration. The two men would have their first meal at midday and would eat at the Administration Mess thereafter.

He would be in his office at 1330 to see CO PNGVR

Any attempt at co-operation with the Administration in RABAUL (LAE and WAU also) has met with frustration.

During the next few days arrangements for recruiting proceeded. A publicity campaign was carried out.

On 4 May 1951, 22 recruits were enlisted during the afternoon. They were examined by Dr. R K WILSON, PHD RABAUL, who had been a combatant officer in the British Army 1917-1946 (Lt Col).

Training commenced on the following morning, culminating in a march down MANGO Avenue, which was responsible – because of the fine show – for several more recruits enlisting.

As in PORT MORESBY and LAE, Captain S.T. BENDALL and WO2 HOLDING performed a Herculean task in producing, from a conglomeration of boxes scattered in stores or still on the wharf, all the required equipment to outfit the troops immediately after attestation.

In RABAUL CO PNGVR discovered a strange order which was quickly remedied. Two young patrol officers, anxious to enlist, stated that there was an order, extract, forbidding their enlistment in PNGVR.

The two men were immediately enlisted and on his return to PORT MORESBY the matter was investigated and the Director of District Services and Native Affairs informed that such an order was unnecessary and would be disregarded.

VISIT TO WAU

CO, QM & RQMS PNGVR returned to PORT MORESBY on 6 May 1951, leaving the Orderly Room Staff Sgt as instructor in RABAUL.

Such expedients were necessary, sufficient instructors had not been provided and progress with the means available was essential. The charges of sloth against the Army had to be refuted.

On 11 May 1951, CO PNGVR proceeded to LAE, BULOLO and WAU.

Whilst recruiting in LAE, a telegram had been received from the president of the WAU RSSAILA Sub Branch.

“Come and recruit in WAU. You will get a good response here”.

Training was satisfactory in LAE and further recruits were being obtained. On 12 May 1951, CO PNGVR took the Dragon to BULOLO.

On his arrival at 1500 hrs, CO PNGVR was received with the utmost courtesy by Mr Largs BERGSTRAND, the Manager of Bulolo Gold Dredging Co.

Until 1300 hrs on the Sunday the following was accomplished:

- i) Discussions with miners in the mess re enlisting in the PNGVR.
- ii) Discussions with RSSAILA Sub-Branch officials.
- iii) A meal and discussion with Mr BERGSTRAND.
- iv) Tour of BULOLO.

The RSSAILA sub-branch Secretary warned against opening in BULOLO since very few men would enlist. Discussions with the men confirmed this. WO2 HOLDING paid a visit in Oct 51 and after a thorough investigation his conclusions coincided with those of CO PNGVR – BULOLO was a bad risk.

CO PNGVR was driven to WAU by Mr CAVANAUGH, the Forestry Department representative and taken to the home of Mr Jack GRAINGER, the WAU Police Officer.

Mr GRAINGER had been at the Golf Club when it was mentioned that CO PNGVR was arriving that afternoon. Mr SEALES comment, echoed by the RSSAILA Sub Branch president was “....MADDERN – he is not going to spoil my golf”.

CO PNGVR stayed at the WAU Hotel. He set about compiling a list of names of eligible young men.

The list when completed totalled 32, five of whom were average – but not too much so – and six of whom were miners from the New Guinea Goldmine at Golden Ridges.

Mr ELDRED, local president of the RSSAILA was much in evidence during the next few days. He was preoccupied chiefly with ways and means of acquiring arms for older men ineligible to enlist. These men would become a private army under Mr ELDRED.

He had produced a platoon Commander for No 3 PI PNGVR which CO PNGVR had decided to form at WAU.

CO PNGVR interviewed this Officer (Lt G CORLIS) at Mr ELDRED's home. After being assured that there was no other ex Army Officer in WAU, CO PNGVR agreed that Lt CORLIS would be PI Comd, and handed him AAF A28's to complete. Mr ELDRED instructed Lt CORLIS to hand the AAF 28's to him after they were completed, since as local president of the RSL, No 3 PI was to be right under his (ELDRED's) thumb.

Following on a long and tedious discussion with Mr ELDRED in an attempt to convince him that private armies were no longer in vogue, this apparently was Mr ELDRED's final attempt to salvage something from the wreck of his military ambitions.

CO PNGVR left WAU feeling that a platoon at half strength could be maintained in WAU and that recruiting could later be extended to BULOLO, which would produce recruits on the example set by WAU...

to be continued.....

My wife was hinting about what she wanted for our forthcoming anniversary. She said “I want something shiny that goes from 0 to 150 in about 3 seconds.

I bought her a bathroom scale.

And then the fight started...

CAMPING TRIP

Just a few notes on our Camping Trip to Kooralbyn commencing Wednesday Feb. 27th until Wed. March 3rd.

When I was invited to attend I became concerned about how my wife Heather would react. I knew she would miss me terribly so I told her that I didn't really enjoy the last camp as my Stretcher was small and uncomfortable and I preferred to stay home with her.

This must have confused her as the following Saturday she visited a BCF store and purchased a King Sized stretcher and Velour Mattress as a gift for me, and at the front door there was my bag lovingly packed by her. That was a month before the camp was due to start.

Heather has since assured me that in no way was she confused.

Now back to the Camping Trip.

All of our camping trips originate from Barry Wright's place. The planning starts with selecting a destination, the duration of the camp and the commencement date. Once this has been determined Barry starts planning the menu. The following is an extract from our camp menu.

Breakfasts – Bacon & Eggs, Omelets etc ,on toast.

Lunches – Sandwiches etc.

Dinners – Lamb Hot Pot Stoop, - Spaghetti Bolognese, - High Rise Ham & Potato Pie - Savory Steak Combo, - Marinade Pork Belly & Roast Verges. - ,Mini Lamb Roast & Verges., - Chicken Combo. & Rice, - Sausages

Sometimes Barry requests my HELP with tasting wines and port for the camp, and I do so very reluctantly as a good neighbor who is always willing to help with these difficult tasks.

Next comes the sorting out and loading of the camping gear, fridges and stoves etc into the three trailers and Barry's vehicle.

This camp was due to start on a Wednesday so Barry and I drove out to Kooralbyn on the Tuesday and erected the frame for the main tent. It is big enough to contain a small circus (e.g. all the guys) and requires a winch to raise it. I thought we had done a good job, however when we arrived back out there on the Wednesday Barry decided to move one end.

We finally overcame all problems with the expertise of Barry, Bob, Jack, Bernie, Kerry, Percy and myself. The placement and leveling of the dinner table required a prolonged discussion due to the fact that it is critical for the table to be level as you can fit more port into a level glass.

It is interesting to note that on these camps you notice that the important tasks become matched to the importance of rank. For example, - Major Bob Collins (washing up and wood chopping) – S/Sergeant Barry Wright (chief chef) and Corporals like myself {excellent supervisors}.

With white tablecloth and Candelabra in place and seating arrangements decided, it was time for informal chatting and several drinks and nibbles with comrades. Master

Chef Barry prepared an excellent meal, which was enjoyed by all, followed by the formal toasts and more port with the evening slowly coming to an end as all gradually drifted off to bed.

Next day-Thursday high winds and pouring rain meant all hands manning the tent and poles to prevent it blowing away. Barry even demonstrated his commanding army voice by alerting two of our guys that were swimming over half a kilometre away. They apologized for not responding immediately because they thought that Barry's first shouts were actually thunder. It was not a nice welcome for John Mc Grath who had joined us Thursday through till Saturday. We all survived but it continued to pour through the night and at some stage I woke to feel a light mist of rain blowing into the tent. My bed was placed second in line with Bernie's bed nearest the opening. I retrieved our clothes and towels from the line near the opening, and after observing that Bernie was still sound asleep, and based on the fact that I knew that he could swim, I decided not to wake him and went back to bed.

Barry swears that Friday morning he saw a wooden boat floating down the creek loaded with pairs of animals. (Not sure what he consumed the night before).

The day was uneventful apart from Bob and Bernie mumbling about how good it would be if they could play a game of golf. That is a game I have never tried but I believe that you bend over until you can place your balls on the ground and then you hit them with a club - they should then soar. (I bet they do).

Mary and Aldo joined us at the evening meal. They are a lovely couple and own the property on which we were camping. They allow us full use of their water supply and swimming pool and also electricity to run a couple of fridges. This makes meat and some drink storage a lot easier. We found it a bit worrying for, when discussing the weather with Aldo, he pointed out that he had seen similar downpours when our camp site was eight feet under water.

Saturday was spent relaxing, some swam in the pool while others partook of liquids and discussed earth-shattering topics. (Weather still bad) That night our Chief Chef served another excellent dinner.

Sunday could be summed up in two words - Bloody awful. The one highlight of the day was when Norm arrived about 13:30 hours. I have seen comradeship before but this time I was worried. I thought the guys were going to kiss him but after assessing the situation fully and taking into account his friendliness and handsome and dapper appearance, I realized that it had nothing to do with the above but in his hand was a **bottle of 21-year-old port**.

The weather remained unstable on the Monday and Tuesday, which between our daily swims, resulted in the consuming of more liquids and the sharing of more stories, which we all enjoyed. We did however decide to pack one of the trailers with non-essentials on the Tuesday and move it and Bernie's car to higher ground because of the slippery conditions negotiating the hill

between the creek and the road.

Summing up we had a great time with lots of laughs, tall tales and true, good food and comradeship. Now comes the difficult task of trying to lose the weight gained from all the excellent food and fluids consumed during the camp.

Ted Mc Allan

Below: 4pm Drinks, Kooralbyn



ANZAC DAY 2010. Above L. Gil Harvey-Hall, Paul Brown, Tony Boulter, Ralph Seeto.

Above R. Les Irwin (ANGAU), Rudy Buckley, Ian Thompson, Karl Aschhoff, Douglas Ng.

Below L. Kel Williams and John Holland catch a lift in a Jeep.

Below R, Leigh Eastwood & Les McAndrew



ANZAC DAY MARCH

REPRESENTING THE GENERATIONS

Wreath bearers for the NGVR/PNGVR Assn this year, 7 year old twins, Eloise and Isabella Crawford, are marking a distinguished three generation commitment to Qld community and their war effort. Eloise and Isabella are marching with their Grandfather Bruce Crawford OAM of the PNGVR.

Eloise is wearing their Great Grandfather Lt Comd Harold Crawford OBE., VRD, former Vice mayor and Leader of the Opposition in Brisbane who obtained his commission in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve in 1927 and who served in the Pacific theatre in WW2.

Isabella is also wearing the Volunteer Decoration of her Great Great Grandfather, Capt Henry Coxen, VD., Moreton Regt who obtained his first Commission in Qld in 1890 and commenced the mounted detachments at Rodney Downs and Beaconsfield Station during the shearer's strike of 1891. She is also wearing the medals of her Great Grandfather Capt Frederick Gray, RAE, who served in the Middle East in Palestine and Lebanon and subsequently as an Army Research scientist based in Nth Qld.

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FUNCTION DATES

Thur 1st July

Montevideo Maru Memorial Service,
Shrine of Memories, Anzac Square
Brisbane

Time 9.45 for 10.00 am Service

To be followed by morning tea

Dress—Anzac Day dress—full med-
als

To commemorate the sinking of the
“Montivideo Mauru” prison ship with
the loss of all 1035 Australian and
Allied service personnel and civilians
on board

Sat 9th October,

Mixed Field Dining Night—
Jimboomba

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

TO DAPHNE BURTON

ON THE OCCASION OF HER **100th BIRTHDAY**
13th MAY, 2010.

Daphne is the wife of Stan Burton, NGVR, whose story is being finalised for future publication.

Stan served with NGVR, New Guinea Air Warning Wireless and Allied Intelligence Bureau.

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We are still looking to cut costs of producing HTT and, if you have the capacity to receive it by email it will assist the Association in cutting running costs by up to \$1,500 per issue.

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Bob Collins – Editor.