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

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Members and Friends,

Welcome to our first HTT issue in 2011. I trust you have survived the recent adverse weather events. Please contact one of your committee members if you were affected as we are unaware of any member or friend who was.

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society has achieved a few worthy benchmarks over the past couple of weeks: the Australian War Memorial Advisory Group met and confirmed the availability of the site; acknowledged the budget of \$400K for the project of which \$170k has already been collected; agreed on a shortlist of nationally recognized artists to be approached to design the MvM memorial; agreed scheduling for the project based on the dedication date of 1 July 2012, the 70th Anniversary of MvM's sinking; and the AWM confirmed that the Society may use the Donation Gift Recipients status (DGR) of the AWM's trust fund for donations. More details about this are available in the February issue of the Society's newsletter.

The site is situated near the top of the stairway behind the "Weary Dunlop" statue in the courtyard between the main AWM building and new restaurant – a prominent and worthy place for the MvM Memorial (see page 11 for photographs of the site). A shortlist of 6 prominent artists/sculptors, considered the best of the times, will be immediately approached to indicate their availability and invited to submit conceptual drawings from which the successful artist will be selected, after which working drawings, budget and construction schedule will be finalized. This should take about 4 to 5 months. However, before the artist may be commissioned to do the work sufficient funds to cover the cost must be in the bank. Fortunately, a professional fund raiser and ex-PNG kiap, John Hocknull, a Brisbane resident, approached and was accepted by the Society to assist in this major fund raising project, work of which has already commenced. Therefore, at this initial stage, if you know of anyone who might consider assisting with corporate or even personal sponsoring, please let me know. **If the MvM Memorial is to be completed in time for the 1 July 2012 dedication, the \$400k must be in the bank by, or close to, the 30 June 2011.**

A few important names have been seen in the media lately, two of which have PNG backgrounds. These are: the new Tasmanian Premier, Lara Giddings who is the daughter of Rick Giddings, a member of PNGVR in Goroka back in the 60's and 70's. He joined as a recruit and was a Platoon Commander when PNGVR was disbanded in 1973. Rick went to PNG as a kiap and ended up as the Magistrate in Goroka (for those interested, an article written by Rick, "An Olfactory Assault at Camp Casey", appeared in HTT Vol 63); and **SAS Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith**, 32,

was awarded the Victoria Cross, Australia's highest military honour, by Governor-General Quentin Bryce at a full military ceremony at Perth's Campbell Barracks on Sunday 23 January 2011. Ben Roberts-Smith was awarded the VC for most conspicuous gallantry in circumstances of extreme peril on 11 June 2010 during the Shah Wali Kot Offensive in Afghanistan.

Together with the Medal for Gallantry he won in 2006, the VC makes him the most decorated member of the Australian Defence Force.



The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott and Chief of Defence Force Angus Houston. Also attending were Corporal Roberts-Smith's wife, Emma, and parents, Sue and Len Roberts-Smith, his brother Sam and grandparents Brian and Fae Holloway.

Brian Holloway CBE QPM was the last Australian police commissioner of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary when PNG Independence was proclaimed in 1975. His courage, demonstrated over many years, contributed to the peaceful transition to Papua New Guinea Independence. Brian originally joined the South Australia Police Force as a Cadet in 1943 coming to Royal Papua Constabulary & New Guinea Police Force in 1948 (later RP&NGC, later RPNGC). He served widely throughout PNG.

Len Roberts-Smith RFD QC held various legal positions with the Crown Law Department, Papua New Guinea, from 1970. He became the Chief Crown Prosecutor and PNG's first Public Prosecutor under the new Constitution after PNG Independence in 1975. He married Sue, the daughter of the then PNG Police Commissioner, Brian Holloway CBE QPM.

Len, a retired major-general and former Judge Advocate General of the Australia Defence Force, was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1989 – the same year he returned to private

legal practice as a Barrister in Perth. He was formerly a Justice of the West Australian Supreme Court and retires as head of the West Australian Corruption and Crime Commission on 31st January 2011. Ben's brother, Sam, has also won his fair share of accolades and is now singing full-time with Opera Australia in Sydney. The VC Citation is too long for this update but it may be read in newspapers and in the next edition of "Una Voce", PNGAA's journal from which this has been extracted.

Finally our website www.pngvr.com is again live and it's text is being upgraded as I write. More photographs are to be added, preferably colour, but not many wartime photos were and for that matter neither were PNGVR's, at least ones which need to be included. The site is very flexible and can be readily altered and enlarged. It may have an interactive section but we have no one to manage this in the longer term. The programme and initial set up was done free by webmaster, Jay Donaldson, whom we will publicly acknowledge and present our letter of appreciation at a suitable occasion, while the loading of the site was achieved by David Chitham, King & Co's IT specialist. Until we can make a suitable arrangement, King & Co will continue to host this work, but this can not continue into the future.

2011 has started auspiciously with good old Australian traits being demonstrated community wide during the recent adverse events. Our programme for the year was mapped out by the Committee at it's December meeting and these will be promulgated when the details are finalised for the specific events. Generally our activities are similar to last years with much focus on our Museum, continued good communication with our members and friends through our Harim TokTok, and our Anzac week reunion and march. A new activity which you may wish to pencil into your diary is the first weekend of July, the 2nd and 3rd when a Montevideo Maru Memorial Luncheon is to be held on the Saturday at the National Press HQs in Canberra when our Patron, Major General John Pearn will be the guest speaker, and a combined Memorial Service in the main Chapel at Duntroon will be held on the Sunday. Full details will be available soon.

Phil Ainsworth - 1 February, 2011

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NGVR / ANGAU DAYS
Sgt Thomas Albert KEENAN

NG 2110
NGX 360

I was born on 24/2/1921 in the Shire of Belmont on the South Eastern side of Brisbane, before the Greater City of Brisbane was formed.

My father, who had been born at Camara in the North Island of New Zealand, migrated to Australia and worked his way across the country to the mines in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, in Western Australia. He had been working in the mines in Kalgoorlie but had suffered an accident in a mine explosion at the 'Sons of Gwalia' Mine. He had bones broken in his elbow and had a plate in his head where a piece of scalp had been removed. He was told by the Doctor "Frank, if you go around to a place called Brisbane – I have just had three months there – it has the perfect climate, and you should live for a few more years – probably three of four, but at least two.

So he sold up what he had and came to Brisbane.

He had been a timber man, all his life spent falling trees. He was what the West Australians called a 'Jarrah jerker'. When they fell a Jarrah they had to jerk the bark off it. Most of the Jarrah in those days went to London for use as wharves and also to pave streets, because of the waterproof qualities of the Jarrah.

He was employed clearing the land where Carindale now is, for Baines Wool Scour. They had some 700 acres of land on the North side of Old Cleveland Road, and 900 acres on the South side. They were being cleared for resting paddocks for bullocks and sheep.

When he finished the 700 acres he went up to Mt Isa and was a contract underground timber man doing all the roofing and shoring up of the underground mines.

We stayed in Belmont, as dad owned a house there.

When he came back from Mt Isa, where he considered he had been earning good money, he was told "Frank, what you have been earning is chicken feed compared to what you could earn in New Guinea. There is a mine there called 'Golden Ridges' up in Wau where you could earn really good money. So off he went.

I had finished High School by then and was working at Bretts Plumbing – I was interested in learning a Trade. However the Unions ruined that as, an approach to the Industrial Court on the basis that employers were using Apprentices as Tradesmen resulted in the stipulation that for every Apprentice Plumber there had to be two fully qualified Journeymen on staff. This was in the mid 1930's and my hopes of securing an apprenticeship were ruined by that.

So I wrote up to dad to the effect that "I'm in a dead end job here – sorry I left High School". He wrote back to the effect that if I wanted to take a punt he would pay my fare up and provide my Bond, which was required for entry into New Guinea on those days. He further stated that wages and conditions were excellent in New Guinea

so I jumped at the chance.

The Early Political History of New Guinea.

When New Guinea was discovered by early navigators, the Queen of England gave half of the new country to Holland and half to Germany. Before the 1914-1918 War Queensland had sent a party up to the Island and annexed part. This became Papua – so New Guinea had three countries ruling parts – Holland, Germany and Australia.

During the 1914-18 War German New Guinea was occupied by Australian troops and after that was administered as a Mandated Territory under the League of Nations.

It is interesting to note that, after WW1 when New Guinea was being administered by Australia, it became obvious that the wheels were just not turning correctly, and the reason was that the Germans had just left their plantations and business, with no logical successor to ensure the smooth continuing of industry. So the Administrator, Sir Ramsay McNicol (we used to call him Sir Ramsay McMuddle) wrote to all the previous German residents and welcomed them back to New Guinea. Many came and the economy got started again.

One of the rules at the time was that the only people actually allowed to own land in New Guinea was the Administration. Any tribal areas were recognised and the occupants allowed to do the normal things necessary for existence but land sales to individuals were not allowed. If any land was to be sold then the parties would agree, the Administration would approve the contract but the land would then belong to the Administration and the expatriate purchaser would be granted a lease.

Then based on Queensland forestry experiments they introduced a rule that if any trees were removed then four small trees had to be replanted. Experience had shown that if four trees were planted then one would reach maturity in 50 years time.

There were no Taxes in New Guinea at the time except for a Poll Tax, which every person had to pay annually, and Import Taxes on all good imported into the Territory. As this did not produce sufficient to run the Territory a Gold Tax was introduced, and 5% of the income received from gold mining was to be paid to the Administration, whether you were a large or a small miner. This was called the Gold Moratorium

My trip to New Guinea.

I went up on the Burns Philp ship the 'Macdhui' in September, 1939.

We left Brisbane in the late afternoon and were only passing the pile light at the entrance to Moreton Bay when a loud speaker on deck started "Attention! Attention! Everybody attention! We have a stirring and very disappointing announcement to make. The Prime Minister of England gave Germany 24 hours to withdraw all troops from Poland. They have not done so and England has declared war on Germany. The Prime Minister

of Australia has also declared war on Germany. From now on the lights will be switched off on board ship and full security will be adopted.

This was difficult for me as I was down on deck C and with no lights had to feel my way downstairs to my cabin, after seeing to the two ladies I was to be sitting at the table with who just about adopted me for the trip. Luckily for me they were wives of fellows working for Bulolo Gold Dredging and, having a bit of money, were travelling in cabins at deck level.

The next morning when I came up on deck everyone was very worried. One chap asked me how I felt and in answer to my reply "Well, not very good. They switched off all the lights last night and I couldn't find my way to my cabin" said "Is that all you are worried about – what about tin fish". I replied "What about tin fish?" He was astonished "Don't you know anything? There are submarines out there who shoot torpedoes, called tin fish". That's what everyone was worried about.

We went north inside the Barrier Reef because of the submarine danger as far as Townsville, and I recall one of the ships crew standing on the forward section of the ship signalling where the dolphins who were in front of us were going and the ship followed them, as it was believed they were guiding the ship in to deep water. At least this was told to me by one of the passengers. I still don't know whether he was pulling my leg or not.

Between Townsville and Port Moresby I was approached by one of the stewards, who asked me whether it was my first trip and called me Sir. Well I was impressed as nobody had ever called my sir before. He asked me whether I was a bit flat tack for money and explained about the custom of tipping the stewards. He was very friendly and told me to keep what money I had, to enjoy a few drinks on the boat, but not to worry about tipping any of the staff – he would speak to them and make sure it was all right.

I had never been away from home before and thoroughly enjoyed the luxury of the shipboard cruise, although getting used to the water sloshing one way and then another in the bath was a bit difficult.

At Port Moresby a chap by the name of Thompson got on board to go to Samarai. Everyone called him 'Tiny' but he must have been about 20 stone. I met him in a Hotel in Port Moresby when he realised that I was on the ship and we had just ordered a beer and introduced ourselves when someone came into the Hotel yelling "All passengers for the Macdhu, you have 10 minutes to get back on board – it's leaving early". I had finished half my beer and left the rest, and, as we were walking to the wharf Tiny said "That's good – it was my shout next)

The reason it left early was that a cyclone was expected and, as Port Moresby was landlocked, the Captain wanted to get out into open water. When the cyclone hit Tiny, who it turned out had been a Master at sea, gave me some really good information about managing life on board the ship and took me up onto the boat deck, which was not allowed normally. He showed me how to hold onto the 'rat' lines, which had been put out for safety, and took me fore and aft to see how the ship was handling the

huge waves

It was an awesome sight to see the huge waves washing first of all over the bow, and then over the stern as they sometimes washed back on us. The waves whipped up by the cyclone looked like hills in front of us and we ploughed into them one after the other.

When I eventually went to go down to my cabin I found that the three chaps I was sharing with were all sick. Tiny suggested I stay out of the cabin as it was not a good idea to stay in the same cabin as sick people as soon the sickness would become contagious (he meant that if you watched people being sick long enough you eventually became sick yourself). Accordingly I went back with him on top.

At one point in time he said "In about 15 minutes we will be out of this – we will be in the eye of the cyclone, but watch carefully as we will be "shit on from a great height". He would not elaborate further and, sure enough, in 15 or 20 minutes we came out of the wind and rain into a perfectly still area, a strange yellow coloured sky, but almost no wind. Incredibly enough from nowhere hundreds and hundreds of birds came out of the sky, landed on the ship, and literally covered it in bird manure. Tiny explained that they were caught in the eye of the cyclone and would only answer the call of nature when something large enough to land on also came into the eye and they could get their claws around something.

We went back into the lounge (I would call it the bar, but the ship called it the lounge). There was a lady sitting there who introduced herself as 'Tiger Lil', a well-known figure in those days but I had never heard of her. She started off by telling me a story about her bridge game only a few hours before. Apparently one of her opponents, a lady, had not played with her partner, a male, before. When he excused himself and went to the toilet she said to Tiger Lil "Well, if he has gone to where I think he has, and if he's doing what I think he'd doing – it's the first time I have known what he'd had in his hand since we started playing".

For the rest of the trip she was very friendly towards me, but a lot of the other ladies on board looked down their noses at both her and I.

By the time we had got to Samarai the cyclone was long gone. I could not believe how clear the water was at Samarai, as you could look over the side of the ship and look down to the bottom of the sea, some 40 or 50 feet below. You could watch the fish swimming along in shoals, and it was a beautiful spot.

We only stayed a short time in Rabaul, as Burns Philp, the owners of the ship wanted cargo picked up at Linden Hafen, down the coast of New Britain, and I only had a short time in Rabaul to have a look around. However I enjoyed some of the tropical fruit, including one I had never come across before, five corners, a bit acidic but with a great taste. A plantation owner on board told me that if you had fruit salad of pineapple, paw-paw and bananas, you had a gooey mess, but if you put five corners with it you had a beautiful fruit salad.

Linden Hafen had no jetty so getting ashore and back on board was not easy. A small launch would come alongside – the gangway would be put down, and we would climb down and then have to judge when to jump on board the launch as it bobbed up and down in the waves. As we motored towards the beach the native crew member would cut the motor at the right time and we would run up on the beach. I had never struck such a situation where, just as you were about to step on board the launch, it would either rise up several feet higher or settle down several feet lower.

From Lindenhafen we went to Salamaua, where I was to disembark. Again leaving the ship was by way of launch and I had to judge just when to step into it.

Arrival in New Guinea

At Salamaua I was met by a Malaysian who was singing out "Paging Mr Keenan, Paging Mr Keenan". I had never been called Mister before and thought "I don't know any Mr Keenan, but then woke up and answered. He was quite surprised to find that I had arrived with only four small ports of luggage, but announced "Ray will be pleased". He took me out to the airstrip and introduced me to Ray Parer, one of the better known aviators up there at that time.

Ray told me that my father Frank had arranged for him to pick me up and take me to Wau. Ray had a leather coat on, and I would not have remembered that fact, except that, when I got to Wau, dad met me and asked whether Ray was in his leather coat which, apparently, had been given to him in England by Royalty. Ray had taken part in one of the England – Australia air races in the early thirties and was beaten because, in Indonesia, he had trouble with a wing, and by the time it had been repaired the eventual winner had 5 hours start on him.

Just as I was about to get on board another car came rushing up and out got a very large man. "Ray! Have you got any room on board?" Ray said yes, leaned out the cockpit window and said to one of the ground staff "Right! Throw out two bags of rice". I thought he was kidding but later realised that was the way flying was done up there in those days.

When I got inside another passenger was the Catholic Priest from Wau. We took off and several minutes later I heard a whistling noise and the Priest picked up what looked like a funnel, first of all put it to his ear, then started talking into it - he was communicating with Ray who was up in the cockpit. The priest then turned to me and asked whether I had flown in New Guinea before. In response to my no answer he said "OK! What I want you to do is to take that side of the plane – I will take this side – and just listen. When the engine noise changes, (and he gave some demonstrations as to what he meant) yell out and tell me". I was listening away and sure enough, shortly after the engine noise changed. I called out to him and he immediately whistled into the funnel and yelled out something. I asked "What's going on?" to which he replied "We're listening to echoes. We're completely clouded in, between mountains, and the only way to know where we are is to listen as the engine noise

echoes off the mountains if we're too close". A little later again I advised him I could see some pine trees and he replied "That's good! If you can see them Ray can see them too". When he then advised me we were to land uphill at Wau, I thought to myself that he had been having a go at me all this time, but sure enough, he was right and we landed up hill. I couldn't get out of the aircraft quickly enough as soon as it came to a halt.

Ray, the pilot, later commented to me "In New Guinea you fly by the seat of your pants. Maybe in later years we will have something to help us but not now".

Commencing work in New Guinea

Golden Ridges was my first experience in an underground mine.. Instead of putting a shaft down from the top of the ridge, the Company went in from the side of the road which ran up from Wau to Edie Creek, and had only gone in about a couple of hundred yards when they hit the mother lode – the same one that Edie Creek had hit on top of the ridge. Dad took me into the mine to see if I was comfortable working underground. I was with him at Golden Ridges when there was a 'guria' (earth tremor). There was a number of what was termed 'greasy faces' where the rocks were a bit softer and ground together and made a terrible screeching noise. Sand and small pieces of rock fell from the roof and dad, in answer to my question "What's up?" said – "Oh! that's only just a guria". Seeing my reaction he asked "What's up! My timberworks quite reliable".

Dad saw that I was not happy working underground and suggested I go down to Bulolo and look for a job. I duly went down, was directed to the Guest house and the proprietor, Mrs Minnie Simpson, offered to allow me to stay at the Guest house and carry me until I found work.

After I had been there a few weeks she asked me, in view of the fact that dad was a timberman, whether I knew anything about cutting down trees. When I replied 'Yes' she asked if I would mind cutting down some firewood. I jumped at that. There were two big trees up the slope and I went up to those. At this stage I didn't know anything about the planting of four trees for one. I borrowed a 'pushim igo, pullim ikam' crosscut saw, some plumb axes and some wedges. I was right then, put the cut into the trees and felled them exactly where I wanted. One of the shortcuts I had learned from dad about handling timber was to cut a log into lengths of about 18 inches and drove a spike into each side. Then you put a rope around the spike and have the bois make a game of running the blocks down hill while about 8 of them hung onto the ropes to stop them getting out of control.

Not long after that the Forestry Inspector came through, saw the two stumps, and began asking who had cut them down. He had some strong words with the Batze brothers who were running the mill and, of course, they didn't know what he was talking about.

Eventually he spoke to the General Manager of Bulolo Gold Dredging about it. The GM spoke to Minnie Simpson and she told him I had done it, but to supply her with firewood. His reaction then was to ask what I was doing

in the guest house as that was for Bulolo Gold Dredging employees. She told him that I was staying there awaiting work with BGD and was just doing some work to help pay for my board.

I had been going around to the General Manager's office at Bulolo Gold Dredging several times a week asking after work. I used to see the Assistant Manager and was being told 'No work', although I knew from the grapevine that there were vacancies.

His reply was "Looking for work! What's going on here – I have something like 8 vacancies I can't fill. That *** Assistant Manager – he's probably holding them for his relatives in Sydney".

There were two happy outcomes from this incident – Minnie got her firewood but eventually had to pay the forestry department for it, cheap enough at what she paid, and then she told me "Tom! Get your bags packed because in 40 minutes you are off to Bulwa to start work".

A funny incident occurred while I was waiting on the verandah for my lift to Bulwa. A car came past, the driver looked at me and screeched to a halt. He came across and said, in a heavy American accent "You must be Tom. Goddam, when I first saw you I thought you were my kid brother, and I thought 'How dare he come here without notifying me first. We don't do things like that in Texas". He was boiling; Jimmy Trammel was his name and after I told him I was waiting for a lift to Bulwa to start work he said "Yes! You are coming down to work for me – jump in."

At Bulwa he introduced me to Ah Poi, the Chinese person running the mess there, and while I was there he mentioned that Ah Poi was a very versatile person and made clothes etc. I took the opportunity to order then and there some work clothes. As I recall the shorts cost two shillings and sixpence (25c) and a shirt three shillings and sixpence (35c). Ah Poi was a happy sort of a bloke with a friendly smile and was always helpful. After being introduced to him I thought to myself "I'm going to like working here" and I did. I then settled into the single men's mess. It was very comfortable with a hot water swimming pool, library, tennis court and excellent meals.

I started work on Number 4 dredge as an oiler on the stern of the dredge. After about three months I had received two statements of my account from Alan Moore, Manager of the Bank of New South Wales at Wau, where my wages were being paid in and I couldn't believe what I was being paid. The day after I started work it commenced raining heavily and the Watut River came up in flood. Jimmy Trammel had me working extra time on board to make sure everything was ok and at one stage I did a 30 hour shift, earning time & one half and double time etc.

The comparison was that a fully qualified plumber at Bretts Plumbing where I was working only a few month before was being paid 5 pounds (\$10) a week and that was considered top dollar in Australia, I was a sheet metal worker working on a guillotine where your fingers were always at risk on 17/6 per week (\$1.75) and that

was a dead-end job. When I worked it out I was banking something like 20 pounds (\$40) a week above what I was spending – even the headmaster of a big school would have been lucky to earn that.

I had not long settled into Bulwa when, to my surprise, brother Jim turned up from Australia and started work for Bob Griffiths on No 3 dredge. About a month after that my other brother Frank arrived and commenced employment on No 3 Dredge also. No 3 dredge was located closer to Wau than to Bulwa. In due course both of my brothers joined NGVR.

I did not spend a lot of time at Bulwa as some sort of mishap occurred on No 7 dredge and the Skipper of No 4 dredge was transferred to No 7 to sort the problem out. He had me transferred with him and so I left my new mates at Bulwa as No 7 dredge was half way between Bulolo and the Bulolo power house.

Tom Keenan
At the museum 2006



Joining New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR)

I joined NGVR shortly after it was formed. Many of the other blokes I worked with were convinced that sooner or later the Japanese would enter the War and all seemed to think that it was better to be prepared than to be sorry.

Warrant Officer Class 1 Umphelby came to Bulwa and gave us a good pep talk and about 8 or 9 of us joined from Bulwa. Those I recall were Harold Osborne, Nev Bensley and Dud Baldie (he later left New Guinea and joined the RAAF).

One by one we went to Bulolo to Dr Carl Gunther (NGVR) to have a medical. After that we were taken back to Bulwa and were sworn in.

My brother Jim was knocked back medically on two occasions, but he waited until Dr Gunther had had a few

drinks one evening and then went for another medical. He passed this time.

Doctor Noel McKenna (NGVR) was the Administration Doctor for the whole of the Morobe District and Dr Gunther was the Bulolo Gold Dredging Doctor. Between them they later 'wrote the book' on how to treat Scrub Typhus. It was called Japanese River Fever then because it affected the kidneys and your skin turned yellow with jaundice.

Dr Gunther advised me when I had my medical that I was a bit of a risk, medical wise, with malaria as I had had four attacks while working at Bulwa. However he assured me that they had plenty of drugs with which to combat it and it was not a problem. His comment was that if my ears did not roar when he gave me a dose of quinine I was not getting enough of a dose.

To be continued.

This is Tom's story as told to Bob Collins

PAPUA NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES

UNIT HISTORY 1950-Mar 1953

By Lt Col N.P. Maddern M.B.E.

Conclusion

HQ AREA COMD PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

HQ Area Comd Papua New Guinea was formed at PORT MORESBY on 3 Dec 51. A separate narrative covers its activities to date.

The additional staff allocated was one Garrison Engineer, Capt A V GILES, followed by a DAA&QMG Maj W F ROBESON, but not until Jun 52.

Otherwise all appointments were filled concurrently by PNGVR (depleted) ARA Cadre.

This headquarters was responsible for:

- a) All married quarters and furniture
- b) All movements, including dependents
- c) Legal, medical, dental.
- d) All construction work for the Territory
- e) ARA enlistments
- f) Liaison with other Departments
- g) Acquisition of land.
- h) All bomb disposal (1 Aust BD Section under comd)
- i) Rifle Clubs and ranges
- j) All Area pay arrangements.

HQ PNGVR had been carrying these responsibilities from its inception, but the commitment became a major one as more and more dependents arrived to fill the emergency

quarters in Murray Barracks resumed from the Administration.

The formation of the 'separate' headquarters merely gave PNGVR staff additional specific appointments, e.g. CO PNGVR was at one time concurrently:

- a) Area Comd
- b) DAA & QMG
- c) CO PNGVR
- d) Adj PNGVR

QM PNGVR had a similar collection of appointments, later the responsibilities were increased

- a) Supply arrangements
- b) Vehicle repairs
- c) All claims

It is a matter of pride that HQ PNGVR has fostered PIR in the early stages, taken over all stores from 1 Aust War Crimes Section to permit its early disbandment, assisted 1 Aust Bomb Disposal Section, and finally sponsored HQ Area Comd Papua and New Guinea – a task which still takes three PNGVR ARA Cadre.

At times the many problems seemed insurmountable, but when RAASC & RAEME representatives arrived during Jan-Feb 1953, HQ Area Comd was a going concern with 24 ARA families in its care and most functions being performed efficiently.

HISTORIC PARADE

On 26 Nov 51, CO PNGVR commanded a combined PNGVR, PIR and Royal Papuan and New Guinea Constabulary Parade on the inauguration of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea Legislative Assembly.

The Inspecting Officer was the Acting Governor, General NORTHCOTT.

This inauguration was a great step in self government for the Territory and the Army played a leading part in the ceremonial attending the inauguration.

KOKODA TRAIL

At Dec 51, no white man had traversed the historic KOKODA TRACK since 1946. Even then, the patrol officer had penetrated only half way.

Some had attempted the feat and turned back.

During the Xmas period 1951, CO PNGVR led a party of 19 over the trail. It was a harrowing but satisfying experience since the track had not been kept open and its condition was a mystery.

Signs of the great struggle over the trail remained.

The party took 6 ½ days PORT MORESBY to KOKODA.

During Easter 1952 the trail was traversed KOKODA – PORT MORESBY in 5 ½ days. CO PNGVR again accompanied the party. The going was easier since ADO KOKODA had had the native villages clear the trail on

the KOKODA side of the Owen Stanley Range. The first party had to cut the trail on this side during the previous attempt.

The aim was to stimulate an interest in "Jungle walking". It was not successful.

JUNGLE TRAINING

Unit members have approached jungle training with enthusiasm. Much has been gained from the experience, but the turnover in personnel is too great to permit a thorough grounding.

The training emphasizes the necessity for perfect physical fitness. In fact, the aim in all jungle training should be "To train men to maintain themselves fit to fight under tropical conditions", with all that it implies. If men can maintain themselves fit to fight under tropical conditions, the greatest problem in the jungle warfare is overcome.

Most of the complaints which lead to a high sick wastage are easily prevented. The exhaustion which follows rapidly upon prolonged exertion in the mountain and jungle can be overcome by a high standard of fitness and careful husbanding of energy. Adequate rest is essential and men must be trained to make themselves comfortable.

The Army mosquito repellent has been found unpleasant to use and only moderately successful. An improved repellent would do much to increase efficiency.

In Jungle Training men fail in the simplest things, e.g. lighting fires from wet wood, preparing simple meals, making comfortable beds and adjusting their gear for comfortable marching.



Lt Col Maddern
with children,
Port Moresby.

Photo from your
museum

Discipline must be maintained under most difficult conditions – and it is never more necessary than in the jungle.

BEAUTIFICATION WORKS

In April 1951 the ARA cadre PNGVR commenced work in beautifying Murray Barracks. It had been regarded as a slum area and almost as a municipal junk heap for six years.

All ranks participated. Old buildings were demolished, gardens dug and grass cut.

In Jul 51, 600 peltifer trees were planted, including a 350 yard avenue to the headquarters.

Watering was done each night with the aid of a jeep and trailer filled with water and poured with buckets.

Officers and OR's worked together in a fine spirit of co-operation.

In Mar 53, the results of these labours are becoming apparent. Many of the total of 1400 trees have died, but many remain.

HONORARY COLONELS

The first Honorary Colonel of the PNGVR was Colonel J K MURRAY, Administrator. He resigned his appointment in Jul 52 on his return to Australia. The first park in MURRAY BARRACKS has been named the Colonel J K MURRAY PARK, in appreciation for his assistance to the unit.

The present Honorary Colonel is Brigadier D M CLELAND CBE, Administrator.

CITATIONS

QM PNGVR, Capt S T BENDALL and SSgt E W NEEDHAM, Orderly Room Staff Sergeant, have both been recommended for Awards.

These men have both worked extremely hard under trying conditions for two years, both on their own jobs and is sponsoring and fostering other units.

MARCH 1953

The PNGVR has a strength of 7 Officers (CMF) and 175 OR's. Its ARA Cadre is complete, but three have full time duty with HQ Area Comd. Instructors arrived Jan – Feb 53.

It has excellent training accommodation in PORT MORESBY, LAE and RABAUL.

It has rifle ranges at PORT MORESBY, LAE (being constructed) and in RABAUL they have the use of the range at KOKOPO (22 miles).

Radio communications with outcentres are excellent.

There has been no recruiting campaign for some months.

Training has been thorough under adverse conditions.

The unit can now be regarded as administratively complete for the time.

The unit can now be maintained – this has at times been doubtful.

Its strength will never exceed 200 all ranks and its strength will vary between 140 and 200.

Its biggest drawback will be in command. CO PNGVR currently has too many other responsibilities and can never do full justice to the unit while these remain.

The question of what positions should be filled by ARA or CMF staff is difficult. I believe that the positions of Commanding Officer, Adjutant, Quartermaster, PNGVR are more suited to ARA positions, although assistants from the CMF can be suitably trained. However whilst the CO, PNGVR, has the responsibilities of Area Commander, PNG, and control over the CO, PIR, as well, he could “never do full justice to either command”, and the solution would be to have a CMF CO, PNGVR, - preferably a permanent resident. This would have the effect of some permanency on the Unit. CMF Officers would find it extremely difficult to hold these positions whilst only being able to parade on a part time basis.

A new Comd Area Comd, Papua New Guinea, concurrently CO PNGVR, will be appointed shortly.

This report was submitted by Lt Col Maddern, MBE, shortly before his departure from PNG.. He was 31 years old when he took up his post as CO, PNGVR. He was Adelaide born, and a graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon. Early in WW11 he served with the Darwin Mobile Force, and later became the Adjutant of the famous “Sparrow Force”, trapped by the Japanese in Timor. He was captured by the Japanese in February, 1942, and he was taken to Singapore. He was awarded the MBE for his efforts for other prisoners. After the war he spent 3 years in Washington as a member of the Australian Military Mission. He left PNG to become Assistant Adjutant-General in Victoria.

He was replaced by Lt Col T.W. Young, aged 39, a Duntroon graduate also, who had served in the Middle East, Britain and New Guinea during WW11.

(This latter information supplied from information gained from extracts from the Pacific Islands Monthly held by your Association Museum).

I swear that this is a true Bundy Rum Fishing Story.....

BUNDY RUM (Bundaberg Rum)... Queensland's famous product! Forget Jamaica or any other rubbish! (For you o/seas people, a King Brown is one of the deadliest snakes on earth. Out of the world's top 10 Australia has 5)

I finally got around to going fishing this morning but after a while I ran out of worms.

Then I saw a King Brown with a frog in his mouth, and frogs are good bass bait.

Knowing the snake couldn't bite me with the frog in his mouth, I grabbed him right behind the head, took the frog and put it in my bait bucket.

Now the dilemma was how to release the snake without getting bitten.

I grabbed my bottle of Bundaberg rum and poured a little rum in its mouth.

His eyes rolled back, he went limp, I released him into the lake without incident, and carried on my fishing with the frog.

A little later I felt a nudge on my foot.

There was that same snake with two frogs in his mouth.

The Association Museum has a large number of pre-WW2 photos - mainly taken in Rabaul, Lae, Salamaua and the Wau/Bulolo/Mubo area. These are the areas where many of our NGVR personnel were living prior to the War



This is NG45 Sgt John Burch

Below is the Rabaul NGVR Vickers Machine Gun Platoon.



A group of NGVR at Rabaul dockside in 1940 ready to escort what was then classed as “aliens” of various European Nationalities who had been arrested and were escorted to Australia.

The Group consists of Guy Broad, Bill Hiencke, John Burch, Bill Washington, Bill Lannen, L. Trebilcork, George Clarke.

THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

A question often asked is if Australia has a Royal Australian Navy and a Royal Australian Air Force why isn't there a Royal Australian Army.

The Navy and Air Force are homogenous bodies while the Australian Army is an elemental organization made up of a number of Corps, Services and Departments.

Our Defence Force is based on the British system, where a person can enlist straight into either the Navy or the Air Force, however, one can not join the Army.

In the United Kingdom a person is enlisted straight into either a Regiment or a Corps, for example, the Royal Regiment of Artillery, the Grenadier Guards or the Royal Corps of Transport and recruit training is carried out by that formation - no one joins the Army as such.

The Australian Army's enlistment procedure is slightly different. Men and women wishing to become regular soldiers are enlisted into the Regular Army, trained at one establishment (1RTB) (1 Recruit Training Battalion) and then allocated to a Corps.

However people wishing to join a Reserve Unit are enlisted straight into the Corps or Regiment of their choice.

Under the British system, because there is no Army as such, Corps and Regiments may be granted the title Royal and this principle applies here in Australia too. The title was first granted to an Australian military Regiment in 1899, nearly two years before Federation, with the formation of the New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland Artillery Regiments into the Royal Australian Artillery.

The Australian Army was officially proclaimed in 1901 when Australia became a Federation and the new Federal Government took over the responsibility of Defence from the States. However, the States' various Regiments retained their titles and formations, and continued to look after their own recruiting and training.

In fact many Units in the Australian Army can trace their origins back into the 19th Century, to the colonial forces. 'A' Fd Bty, for instance, is the oldest Regular Army Unit, being raised in New South Wales in 1871.

The Australian Regular Army was formed on 30th Sep, 1947, from postwar Permanent Military Forces, which

include 'A' Fd Bty, 1 Armoured Car Sqn (now 1 Armd Regt) and the 65th, 66th and 67th Infantry Battalions (renamed the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Australian Regiment in 1948).

WO1 C.J. Jobson,
former RSM Ceremonial ADHG.

BEST COMEBACK RESPONSE

If you ever testify in court you might wish you could be as sharp as this policeman. He was being cross examined by a defence solicitor during a trial. The lawyer was trying to undermine the policeman's credibility.

Q. 'Officer—did you see my client fleeing the scene?'

A. 'No sir! But I subsequently observed a person matching the description of the offender, running several blocks away.'

Q. 'Who provided this description?'

A. 'The officer who responded to the scent.'

Q. 'A fellow officer provided the description of the so-called offender. Do you trust your fellow officers?'

A. 'Yes sir! With my life.'

Q. 'With your life? Let me ask you this then officer. Do you have a room where you change your clothes in preparation for your daily duties?'

A. 'Yes sir—we do.'

Q. 'And do you have a locker in the room?'

A. 'Yes sir!'

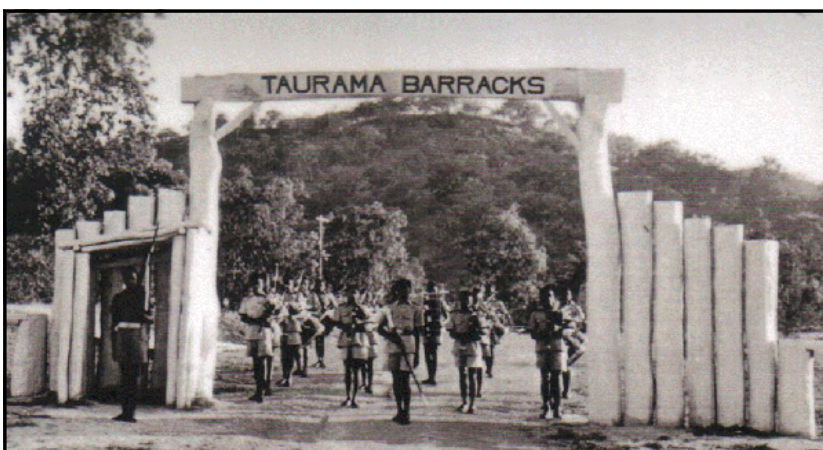
Q. 'And do you have a lock on your locker?'

A. 'Yes sir!'

Q. 'Now, why is it officer, if you trust your fellow officers with your life, you find it necessary to lock your locker in a room you share with these same officers?'

A. 'You see sir—we share the building with the court complex, and sometimes lawyers have been known to walk through the room.'

A recess had to be called because of laughter in the court.



Got my son an iPhone for his birthday the other week, and recently got my daughter an iPod for hers, and was really chuffed when the family clubbed together and bought me an iPad for my birthday.

*Got my wife an iRon for her birthday.
and then the fight started.*

PIR PIPES AND DRUMS

Can any member advise when and why this particular activity took place? Was this a regular event at some stage?



FLASHBACK—EARLY DAYS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Above. AGM at Long Tan Sgts Mess. L-R. Stewart Lewis, Bill McGrath, Joe Fisk.



Graeme Blanch and Alistair Martin. Alistair is now back in Australia after spending many years in the Solomon Islands.

Vale

Colonel Ken McKenzie DSM OAM

Passed away 21.11.2010

a former commanding officer of PIR, has died, aged 85. Ken graduated from Duntroon in December 1944 and served in 6th Division's Wewak – Aitape campaign. He then served with the Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. Ken was CO PIR from 1962 -65 based at Taurama Barracks. After a stint in Washington DC, he was deputy commander of the First Australian Task Force at Nui Dat, Vietnam. Head hunted out of the Army, he returned to PNG as Manager of employee and community relations at Bougainville Copper from 1971-76. Ken was twice married and was an advocate for Queensland RSL and a member of the RSL National Executive. He died at Greenslopes Hospital, Brisbane on 21 November, 2010.

Lt Col Clarence David Kayler-Thomson MBE MC

a former CO 4RAR and post war PIR officer died recently. A well regarded and highly respected officer, he served in the Middle East, fought on the Kododa Track, New Britain, South West Pacific, Korea, Malaya and Vietnam. He won his MC in Korea.

Vale

Lt. Mal Robinson 1PIR

Passed away 11.11.2010

Mal Robinson was a larger than life character.

A "bushie" through and through, he hailed from the back of Bourke. After he was conscripted he trained at OTU Scheyville. A few weeks after OTU Graduation in early 1967 he was posted to 1PIR at Taurama Barracks until September 1968. The PIR blokes loved Mal. He would sing Slim Dusty songs to them. Slim was King! Mal was not that good a singer but he was loved by his men. At his farewell sing sing, it was put to him that if he stayed they would give him the whole of Great Britain to run his sheeps!

He married his sweetheart Nancy at the Kings School Chapel and returned to his other life as a grazier at his property, "Ellerslie" where he raised his family and became an active member of the PIR Association. Last year he marched with his three grandchildren on Anzac Day and proclaimed it "the proudest moment of my life."

Farewell good friend.



Lt Mal Robinson, 1 PIR, Circa ``1966

LEST WE FORGET

Vale

Graham Robert Hamilton, PNGVR.

Passed away 01.07.2010.

Graham died from metastatic melanoma, aged 64.

He was born and educated in the coal mining city of Cessnock, NSW. After working in the Commonwealth Bank he was interviewed by Bill Searle and accepted as a Cadet Patrol Officer in May 1964. With 29 other CPOs he arrived in Port Moresby and was posted to Milne Bay District. He loved the work patrolling nearly every village in the Raba Raba Sub District and reconstructing the Agaun airstrip, all under the guidance of Ross Johnson. Later postings included Rabaul, Lassul Bay, Yangoru (Sepik) and Wewak.

During his time in Rabaul (1966-68) Graham met his wife, Lisa, a mission teacher, and before the end of the year they were married in Sydney. They returned to Wewak where Graham was appointed as ADO Lands and patrolled along the Sepik River and the outlying islands.

Returning to Australia they moved to Canberra working in the Public then Private sectors. Both daughters, Kelly and Katherine, were born in Canberra. In 1974 the family moved to Newcastle where he worked in the Insurance Industry. He set up his own brokerage in 1978 and worked with his wife until it was sold in 2005 due to ill health. Graham loved golf and played until he could no longer enjoy it. He worked as a volunteer at the Hunter Region Botanical Gardens for 4 years with his beloved orchids.

Graham battled cancer from 1993, but 2008-2010 proved too much. A melanoma spread and infected his liver. In early 2010 Graham and Lisa set up the Hunter Region Melanoma Patients Support Group for men and women suffering from the terrible disease.

Graham desired to walk the track of the 2/22nd Bn, when they attempted the escape from Rabaul, through some of the areas he knew so well in the Baining, however illness always deferred the walk. Graham & Lisa returned to Rabaul in 1999 and again 2010, loving every minute of their time there.

He is survived by his wife Lisa and daughters Kelly and Katherine.

LEST WE FORGET



Graham Hamilton.

Anzac Day, Rabaul, 1967.

Photo courtesy of his wife, Lisa.

Kokoda Memorial Walkway Track News

On the 15th August I attended a ceremony at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway to mark the 65th Anniversary of Victory in the Pacific. The 2000 strong crowd was addressed by Lt General Ken Gillespie AO, DSM, CSM, and Chief of Army.

It was a spectacular day with a detachment from the Australian Light Horse Association and a strong representation from veteran Army Nurses Una Keast and Lorna Johnston.

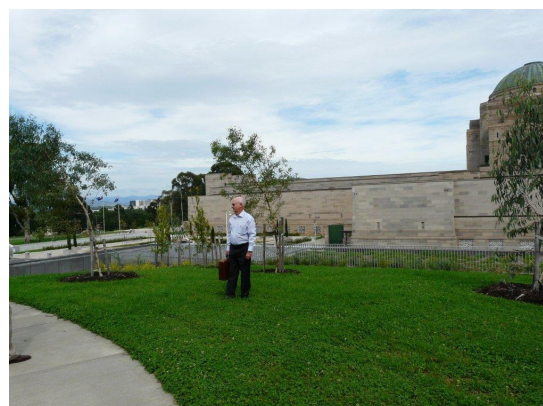
Ninety Five year old Lorna was the last survivor of the six army nurses captured in Rabaul and sent to Japan where she endured four years of forced labour.

On November 3rd I attended the 68th anniversary of the raising of the Australian flag at Kokoda.

Rusty priest and Charlie Lyn addressed the crowd and both made a strong case for November 3rd being as equally as important as the 25th April. They pointed out that the battle at Kokoda was where we fought for the first time for our own homeland and won. That alone should be enough to have the day officially recognised.

Peter Porteous - 1 PIR

Photographs - Montevideo Maru National Memorial Site, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT



Phil Ainsworth standing at centre of site with main AWM building and Canberra in background



Site above wall on line from centre of NSAA Memorial Fountain along middle of pathway with restaurant to the right.

FUNCTION DATES

Sat 5th February, 2011

Sat, 2nd March, 2011

Committee Meetings, Museum.

Sat 19th March, 2011

Mixed Field Dining Night

Jimboomba

There will not be too many more of these so make sure you are there for this one

ANZAC DAY

Monday 25th April, 2011

Come along and enjoy the parade and the get-together afterwards with your former comrades.

SAMARAI REUNION

The next Samarai Reunion will be held at the Ridges Oasis Resort, Caloundra, on the Sunshine Coast on the 7-9 September 2012.

If any members of our Association would like to receive further information and/or be placed on the Samarai reunion email list, please Contact Col Gould pngvr@optusnet.com.au and your details will be on forwarded to the Reunion Committee.

The reunion Committee have already started planning for the event to ensure a most successful and enjoyable occasion for all ex Samarai wan toks.

Regards

Col Gould

Ex Collector of Customs, Samarai, 1971-3

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bob-collins@bigpond.com

You can rest assured that your email address will only be used by the Association to communicate information to you.

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 Battalion

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