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

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

The Association's annual Memorial Service for those who died on the Montevideo Maru was held Friday 1 July in the Hall of Memories, Brisbane Cenotaph. About 35 people attended. Special guests included the Hon. Grace Grace MLA , representing the Premier and Qld Government, Mrs Helen Strange OAM, State President of the War Widows Guild of Australia (born in Rabaul and lives in Toowoomba), Mr Cyril Gilbert, President of the POW Association of Australia, Mrs Mavis Obst (her brother was a Wirraway pilot in Rabaul who was shot down and never found), Hank Cosgrove, President of the Australia and Papua New Guinea Association, Ms Sheila Corcoran (her brother was Thomas Plunkett who worked in the PMG Department and was on the Montevideo Maru), Mrs Cynthia Schmidt, Representative of the Montevideo Maru Association (formerly the Montevideo Maru Foundation) , Phil Ainsworth representing the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society and Mr Steven Steen representing the Salvation Army.

I gave the address because our Patron, was unable to attend. The last post and reville was beautifully played by Mr Steven Steen of the Salvation Army . The Service was followed by morning tea , provided by the Association, in the adjoining RSL meeting room. Paul Brown arranged and officiated the service. Thank you Paul and I congratulate you for making the morning so meaningful and successful.

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru hosted a 69th Anniversary of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru commemorative luncheon at the National Press Club, Canberra on 2nd July when 150 attended including the Hon. Peter Garrett MP, and General Peter Cosgrove. Our Patron Maj Gen John Pearn gave the main address followed by Peter Garrett.

Two originals were present: Lorna Johnston nee White, a former Army Nurse who was captured in Rabaul and spent the remainder of the war in Japan and Norm Furness who escaped along the north coast of New Britain. Norm is presently the President of the Lark Force 2/22Battalion Association . Lorna travelled from Auckland NZ and Norm from Melbourne for the occasion.

This luncheon was followed by a Memorial Service in Duntroon Chapel on Sunday 3rd July when a similar number attended . It was arranged by Defence Force clergy with the Tuggeranong Salvation Army Band playing many of Arthur Gullidge's compositions. A wonderful service in a beautiful setting followed by morning tea arranged by the ladies of Legacy in Canberra. Our member Don Hook, who resides in Canberra, made many of the arrangements for this successful weekend's commemorative activities . Association members present were Clive Troy, Don Hook, Charlie Nelson, Phil Ainsworth, and Patron John Pearn.

Left to Right: Phil Ainsworth, Charles Lepani (PNG High Commissioner to Australia) and General Peter Cosgrove at the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Commemorative luncheon, Canberra, 2 July 2011

Historic military events relating to PNG

Extracted from MD, newsletter of Victoria Barracks' Historical Society, Brisbane, Inc:

July

1, 1948 – Australian Citizen Military Forces re-established after WW2

2, 1942 – 7th Australian Brigade embarks for Milne Bay, Papua

5, 1865 – William Booth founds Salvation Army in London

6, 1939 – Defence Act extended to cover PNG for wartime service of conscripts and Militia

12, 1942 – Australian troops arrive in Kokoda, Papua

13, 1943 – Mubo, New Guinea, cleared of Japanese forces

18, 1945 – Llipem Wewak, New Guinea, cleared of Japanese

20, 1943 – Australian light cruiser HMAS "Hobart" torpedoed and badly damaged off San Cristobel,Solomons

21, 1942 – Japanese troops land at Gona, Papua

23. 1942 - PIB fired first on the Japanese near Gona (23 July now PNG's National Remembrance Day).

23, 1942 – Australian and Japanese troops clash for the first time near Awala Plantation, Kokoda Campaign

24, 1942 – Australian troops retire to Kokoda

24, 1945 – Private Frank J Partridge, 8th Battalion, AMF (Militia), VC at Bougainville

25, 1942 – First of three unsuccessful bombing raids on Townsville, QLD, by Japanese "Emily" flying-boats

26, 1945 – Allies issue surrender ultimatum to Japanese Government

28, 1941 – Some Australian Militia units called up for fulltime service

28, 1942 – Japanese forces occupy Kokoda, New Guinea

Recent deaths recorded

Leslie James Irvine - 16th August 1922 to 5th July 2011. Les was ex-ANGAU and served in several theatres in Papua New Guinea, For the past several years Les marched with our Association .This year Les travelled by Jeep but attended the reunion in the Victory Hotel. Les's funeral service was held on 12th July 2011 at Stafford Heights Uniting Church with 8 members of the Committee attending. The Editor holds Les's interesting story and this will be published over the next few issues.

Noel Tuckey advised the death of **Peter Petrides** on Monday 4th July aged 80 years. Peter was a member of PNGVR and Post Master in Madang. His service was held Wednesday, 13th July, St Andrews Anglican Church, Caloundra Qld. Peter Rogers attended on behalf of the Association.

John Schindler advised of the death of **Horrie Young** who participated in the 1943 "Operation Jaywick" , the Krait mission to Singapore. Post war, we understand he served in the PIR .

Jim Kellmorgen advised his father**, Fred Kellmorgen** died Sunday 24th July aged 94. Fred was the only surviving member of the 2/22 Battalion Band. He walked the length of New Britain ,crossed to the mainland then walked to Kainantu and Wau before getting a lift.

Obituaries on page 11 cover **Rev Allan McFarland**, our Association's Padre and **Michael O' Callaghan**.

Right - Left: Major General John Pearn, The Hon. Peter Garrett MP, General Peter Cosgrove, Lorna Johnston, Norm Furness and Phil Ainsworth - taken by John Pearn, 2nd July, National Press Club, Canberra on occasion of the 69th Anniversary of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru

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NGVR/ANGAU DAYS

Thomas Albert Keenan

As told to Bob Collins

ANGAU (Continued)

To describe the country I quote from one of the official writings of Australia in the war of 1939-1945, 'The New Guinea Offensives' by David Dexter

"One of the most difficult and unpleasant areas ever to confront troops lay before the Australians. It posed an immense supply problem. Endurance and determination in generous quantities were needed from the troops themselves, while a high degree of ingenuity was required from those responsible for planning and organization. The troops found it difficult to find enough unpleasant adjectives to describe the country, which, for the most part, consisted of rugged mountains clothed with dense, almost impenetrable jungle, and in the higher areas with moss forest. Occasionally hills covered with kunai grass, such as those in the Snake Valley, stood out against the jungle background. Gloom and eerie stillness, clouds which frequently descended upon the mountains, rain, towering trees and drooping vines, which shut off the sunshine when it did eventually break through the clouds, sodden earth and rotting vegetation, all combined to add a touch of the primeval to the battlegrounds of this part of New Guinea. When the wind blew it raised a sour unclean smell of decay from the vegetation which, season after season, rotted in the all-pervading damp. Clothing was perpetually wet with rain and perspiration; the ravages of insect pests, notably mosquitoes and leeches, were enough to call out the blasphemous superlatives of the sorely-tried Australian Soldier.

The tropical rains of many centuries had cut deep ravines and, as a result, any movement entailed constant negotiation of watercourses and steep descents on tracks hardly meriting the name, with correspondingly steep ascents to follow. After many bitter and exhausting experiences the troops learnt to measure distance in hours not miles. Time taken in one direction might be far different from time taken in another, depending on the lie of the land. The soldier's life was governed by the tracks around and along which all operations took place. Mostly they led through the jungle of trees and undergrowth, but sometimes through moss forests or the stifling kunai. As the track became worn the troops had to wallow along in mud up to the knees and perhaps over them, stumbling now and then over hidden rocks and roots, and for support clutching vines and branches which often broke off rotten in their hands".

The report of the 3rd Australian Division raid:

"Such conditions of rain, mud, rottenness, stench, gloom and, above all, the feeling of being shut in by everlasting jungle and ever ascending mountains, are sufficient to fray the strongest nerves. But add to them the tension of the constant expectancy of death from behind the impenetrable screen of green, and nerves must be of the strongest, and morale of the highest, to live down these conditions, accept them as a matter of course, and maintain a cheerful yet fighting spirit."

The Japanese shared such opinions. A senior staff officer on the HQ of the 51st Division described the characteristics of the jungle thus:

All the tall trees are entwined by vine-like plants, which make them either die or fall. There are many fallen trees which frequently become an obstacle to movements. During the rainy season they collect water on the moss, and the vines grow luxuriantly in every direction, twisting among withered trees. As for the surface of the ground, it is covered with leaf-mould, and moss grows on the network of exposed roots. No matter to what high place one climbs, the eye can penetrate only a short distance, and since one cannot depend on this to see the form of the mountains of the vicinity, it is difficult to orient the actual terrain with maps. One can rarely see more than 100 metres through the jungle, so, when one is crawling up on the enemy, it is not difficult to come within 20 metres. Consequently when perceiving the approach of the enemy, it goes without saying, one must be alert for any rustling of foliage, and must make good use of one's ears, just as at night"

Interestingly enough this was the country that most of the NGVR operated in after mobilisation, although I had spent most of my time on the Markham River. Some of the NGVR people I caught up with again were Dick Stanbury and Laurie Baker.

My day commenced with being woken up, rubbing the sleep out of your eyes and having a hurried breakfast of rice and bully beef (normally), then going out with whatever had to be delivered. While I was in this area I ate the same rations as the native carriers as the hours we worked did not allow for me to have the luxury of eating at one of the Cookhouses in the area. I was brought a breakfast when I was woken and ate that and then headed out with my carrying line for the day.

The 2/7th Battalion had a lookout at Lababia which looked over Mubo (our old NGVR headquarters). At one stage we were carrying into the Lababia lookout when a fierce firefight broke out and bullets were flying in every direction. One of the bois said to me "Masta! Mi gat bigpella fraid" (I am afraid). My reply was along the lines that I was too. He was very surprised at this and would not believe it for a while, so I had to explain to him that we had a job to do and would just have to get on with it whether we were afraid or not. This took a bit longer to explain than the above as Pidgin can be a very complicated language when talking of an abstract such as fear. Most times it is a simple direct language but does not

relate to abstracts well.

This was one occasion when we really had to go forward as the troops were almost out of both ammunition and food; two listening posts had been overrun by the Japanese and there were also casualties to bring out.

I had forgotten about our conversation but, on the return trip, when we were crossing the dropping zone near camp I looked to the sky and said my thank-you in Pidgin. When queried by the boss boi I just said I was talking to the 'Masta in the sky'. This gave me a good standing with the carry bois after that. In fact on one occasion when we came back and I looked like crossing the dropping zone without giving thanks I was reminded by the carry line "Masta! Masta! Tok tok long God".

I learned a lot from the boss bois – there were three of them – and, as was the custom in those days, they were warriors in their own right. They showed me how to look at fallen leaves on the tracks, and to know the difference between normal falling leaves, leaves which had been deliberately placed to look natural, and leaves which had been disturbed accidentally in passing. They also taught me how to tell whether there were Japanese in the area, or how long since they had been there, by the distribution and freshness of their 'peck-peck' (faeces) – the Japanese were very dirty in that respect and not disciplined in their toilet habits. On a number of occasions my boss bois warned me of ambushes – being natural bushmen warriors, they could read the signs. On those occasions we used to break bush and cut back to the track after we were around the ambush.

From time to time we would send out natives to scout the area. They were safe as they carried nothing to indicate they carried for us. When the area was safe they would come back with the comment "I alrit masta! Nogat mak bilong bulamacau" (Its alright masta – there are no bullock tracks). It always amused me as the Japanese boots had a split where the big toe was, and looked like a cloven hoof track.

On three occasions in this area we found broken branches on the tracks and it later proved that the Japanese had ambushes covering the track. Why they broke a branch and left it I never found out but it was probably a sign for their own forces which may be using the track. Many a time I wondered just whether anyone up there was looking out for me.

One of the Battalions had a Catholic Padre nicknamed 'Furphy' Murphy. He had been with the Division in the Middle East, and was noted for trying to boost the morale of the troops by telling them just to hang in there as there were reinforcements on the way. I used to stir him from time to time and he announced to me one day that I was the most irreligious person he knew in most ways, but, in the eyes of the carry bois, a true Christian.

There was a Major H.B.S (Jo) Gullett, was with the 17th Brigade who was in charge of the perimeter on top of Vickers Ridge opposite Mubo Strip. He later on got leave of absence and successfully sat for Parliament as a United Australia Party (later the Liberal party) candidate in the Victorian seat of Henty. He was actively encouraged by Higher command as he had served with both the British and Australian Armies and it was thought that a soldier of his experience in Parliament could only benefit the Army. In fact his nomination was accepted by 3rd Division Headquarters on 4th July, 1943, while his Company was in action in the Kitchen Creek – Vial's Track area. He was given leave without pay from the 2/6th Battalion from 30th July to 27th August. He was not successful on this occasion but in 1946 stood again with success.

When delivering to his perimeter I had to go down to the Guadagasel Saddle, past 2 field pieces that shelled to the far end of Mubo Strip and Kitchen Creek and then past the Mubo Place Mat Mat (cemetery), turn left up Booee Cheval Creek to the back of Vickers Ridge where Jack McGrath's camp was then up to Vickers Ridge perimeter. Jack McGrath was vital to our security in this area as he always popped up somewhere along the track to advise us of any change in the Japanese positions.

Jackie McGrath was camped up on a ridge, which could see the approaches to a very strategic point named Vickers Ridge. His role was to watch all the approaches and ensure that, if the Japanese occupied any of the approach tracks, we would be advised not to use that approach. He was there for quite a while and the carry bois used to say about him " Igat bigpella brave" (he is very brave).

As was common in this type of country the Japanese had a position on a ridge which was higher still and had a great view of the country. Often when we were carrying we would hear 'thuck' 'thuck' and then the clunk of rounds hitting the trees around, as we were being fired at from afar. When I was describing this to an Australian group their Officer told me that that was the sound of a 'woodpecker', their heavy machine gun. He then went on to say to me that if you could hear them, then it was alright – they had then gone past. He explained that, if the Japanese thought there was activity at any position they would just fire at it.

It would be normal for us in these carrying parties to have not less than 40 carry bois. Ray Watson (ex NGVR) was in charge of all the carrying parties in the area and others, like myself, that were in charge of individual parties were 'Buster' Mills, and two or three others. It was not often that we had to camp out – most of our journeys were completed in one day, and sometimes we actually carried out two drops in the course of one day. One of the only times we would need to camp over was when we were carrying for the 2/5th Independ-

ent Coy, which were right on the edge of the valley. Their normal supply route was from Bulwa, but the journey in from there was over extremely high mountains and was a very difficult task. Consequently we were called upon to supply them, and that meant a stopover in their camp. Their role was to harass the Lines of Communication of the Japanese and this they did well. Before our first drop into them we were told "These blokes are out of everything except courage, so get these supplies to them", and we did.

The line carrying to the 2/5th Independent Coy was over 100 strong. We went down up past Jackie McGrath's observation post, past Leigh Vial's track (interesting that we knew these features not by their correct names or map references, but by the men who were manning them). There were some bois who lived in villages close to where the Ind Coy were, so I made sure I took them with me for local knowledge. They kept telling me that there were Japanese all round (not long before some of them had been sent to work for the Japs so they could find out all about the Japanese movements). We came to a place called 'The gardens' which may have been a garden many years ago but had long ago been let go, and was only a clearing then. At this stage the boss boi advised me that the cargo bois needed a rest and we sat down just above 'the garden'. I was carrying my Owen Gun which I had been shown in my early NGVR days to carry across my chest. We sat down for about 10 minutes and then got up and moved down the track around a bend. Just then there was a noise of something crashing through the bush. The boss boi said, not very convincingly, "Maybe Muruk (Cassowary)", so I put my finger on the trigger of the Owen and crept forward. There was nothing there but, when I looked down the hill I could see two soldiers creeping back up. They had come out from the Ind Coy to meet us and told me that they were walking along the same track only a few days before and had come on a party of Japs, with their Officer waving his sword. The party of Japs was bigger than theirs so they bolted off down the slope and out of it. They believed that the Japs were still there so had come out to meet us and guide us into their camp by another direction to save us being ambushed by the Japs.

Strangely enough, when we got to the Ind Coy their biggest worry was how they would be able to handle 100 plus carry loads of food and ammunition. My advice was to stash some of it in the bush, but don't know whether they did this or not, as we left to go back before they moved on. We never actually stayed over in the 2/5th position, as my carriers would not have had rations.

On the return journey we had reached Leigh Vial's track and just after that spotted two fellows in slouch hats. When asking them who they were they replied that they were part of 'Whittaker's Circus'. George Whittaker (NGVR) was their boss and they were now an Anti Tank Platoon (there were no tanks in the area) attached to the 17th Brigade. They were equipped with a Boyes Anti-tank rifle and had just been out on a reconnaissance patrol. I thought they were a bit silly wandering around the bush which was thick with Japanese in so few numbers, they should have sent out a strong fighting platoon.

All this was around the middle of August, 1943, about a month before the fall of Salamaua.

Our dropping zone was in a cleared area above Mubo called Goodview because of it's commanding position. When first used it was only 600 yards from the Japanese lines I have already mentioned the two field guns that could fire as far as the bamboo on the far side of Mubo Airstrip and to where the 2/7th Battalion was stationed at Lababia lookout which could control movement along Kitchen Creek and the Bamboos. The clearing may have given our position away but it is impossible to have a successful dropping zone if you do not have a good cleared area for the parachutes and free fall cargo to fall, otherwise the loss rate is too great.

When I first got there the RAAF Liaison Officer showed me how to place the white rubberised panel markers, and the accompanying wind markers. One of us would then stand out in the open, near the panel marker and signal to the approaching aircraft when to drop their load.

He told me "Rule number one is that, when they drop, if the cargo is coming straight towards you, run straight at it. Under no circumstances run away from it. If you are running towards it you can see it and, at the last minute, jump out of the way." Apparently they had had two soldiers hit by falling loads and both ended up with broken pelvises. Another chap pushed himself out of the aircraft at 'Skin Diwai', one of our old NGVR camps, now used by the Australian Divisions. Apparently he knew better than to follow safety instructions. He impressed on me the seriousness with which I had to approach the job of being Drop Master on the ground. He was very good in all his explanations and went into detail how the planes would come around, flying directly into the drop zone, losing speed as they came in, and how the pilots wanted to get all the loads out in one run.

It was interesting that the pilots had a lot of confidence in us and, on our signal, they put the green light on in the aircraft and out came the loads.

My first attempt at being ground Drop Master was successful and they load came down precisely where I wanted it, straight along the drop zone.

When air dropping first started in the Kokoda area of Papua, the recovery rate was something like 43%. Practices had improved to the stage where we were recovering between 97% and 100% per drop. However, it was only when an emergency such as the one described above, where the 2/5th Independent Coy wanted urgent supplies that I realised that the Australian Service Corps which were running the drop zones were not advising the

Army of the correct recovery rates and they had a huge supply of food and ammunition in reserve, and could react to an emergency without any worries. From time to time I would be asked for something out of the ordinary in the way of food by one of the Divisional units we were carrying for and my reply used to be along the lines "Well, we will see if anything can fall off the back of a truck." One fellows response was "See if you can make it go over some real bumpy roads".

One incident I had with the 2/7th Battalion was amusing. The Commanding Officer Lt Col Woods said to me, after I had joined them "Sgt Keenan, what do you know about this manoeuvre?" to which I replied "Not a thing sir!" His response was a beauty "Well thank goodness for that – there is now one NCO here not telling me how to run the Battalion". He then proceeded to tell me what their task was and that, if successful, it would lead to the early fall of Salamaua. He finished with the statement that he considered his men capable of the task, and I then advised him that my boss bois thought so too. He was surprised at this so I advised him that my boss bois called his men 'Soldier all same me' which meant that the natives had a very high opinion, not only of his men, but of the soldiers of the 17th Brigade generally. My carry bois considered themselves as the 'big line bilong 17 Brigade'.

He agreed fully with my orders that my cargo lines were not to expose themselves to any great danger and his philosophy was that we were all there to 'Live for our country' not to 'die for our country'. We got on well and he was very co-operative in how he made his requests for our carrying assistance. I had a lot of respect for him as he was very conscious of the well-being of his soldiers.

Their role was to take Komiatum, and his attack was very well thought out and executed. His Battalion mortared the Japanese who took off down the sides of the hills to escape the fire. However, before they could return to their defensive positions, the 2/7th had moved elements in to some of their forward positions, and set up their Vickers machine guns thus preventing the Japs from returning. This meant positioning elements of his Battalion just out of reach of the mortars so they could move in immediately the barrage stopped and take over the Jap positions. To execute such a manoeuvre you needed a lot of confidence in your mortar platoon as any rounds which fell short would have disastrous results.

We left just as the mortar barrage commenced and there was no question of the cargo line keeping up with me, as they were keen to get out of the area where the big fight was obviously to take place.

Working with the Americans

Not long after that I was sent to work with the Yanks. On 29th June, 1943, they had landed at Nassau Bay and the force was called 'MacKechnie Force' after their commander. It consisted mainly of the United States 162nd Regiment. They were experiencing some difficulty in taking a particular ridge held by the Japanese, when the Australian Naval Officer attached to them offered to bring in fire support from our Tribal Class Destroyer the 'Arunta'. It was not normal for US forces in a shore landing not to have full naval support so the offer was accepted. Well the result was spectacular, the 'Arunta' steamed in, heeled over and let fly with all its anti-aircraft weapons at once (4 barrelled pom-poms) and the Japanese cleared out. A Jap prisoner later told the Americans that the Japs were not aware that the US forces had automatic mortars (the way the rounds fell it must have seemed like that). After that the Australians could do no wrong.

It was while I was serving with a particular detachment of this force that I found out that all the Americans I was serving with were Officers. They were working with the Australians, particularly those who had returned from the Middle East to find out more about our tactics. After this operation was over they were all to return to their Units knowing a bit about Australian tactics.

One particular officer told me the most impressive thing he found out about the Australian forces was the way that, when they went into a defensive position, they piled up the dirt from their weapon pits behind the pit. This meant that the machine guns in the rear could fire without worrying about hitting their own soldiers as they had the piles of dirt protecting them from fire coming from behind. The Americans did it the opposite way and piled the dirt in front of them to stop incoming fire.

It was while I was returning from this spell with MacKechnie Force that a curious incident occurred. I was walking near Komiatum and saw a number of chaps ahead of me just waiting for me to come up when I collapsed as though someone had hit me on the back of the head. I was lying on the ground with these chaps all around me when one said "Well mate! You don't have any bullet holes in you. We thought you had been shot, the way you went down"

I was immediately sent to an Aid Station and my heart was found to be very irregular in its beat. The incident was eventually put down to the fact that an outbreak of mumps had occurred in the labour lines and, as I had experienced the mumps I was allowed to inspect the line before they carried. Any native found with the mumps was excused from work until he recovered fully. My incident occurred about three or four weeks into the mumps outbreak and the doctor got stuck into me as he reckoned I had never had the mumps before but I had. I ended up in hospital in Dobodura for 9 days and the staff could not understand why I wanted to go back to my unit, instead of staying safe in Dobodura. What they didn't understand was that a Jap plane came over just about

every night and dropped a bomb and I felt safer back with the 17th Brigade.

One small job I was asked to do prior to returning to the 17th Brigade was to go out and find the wreck of an American plane which had failed to return. I found the wreck of the aircraft but unfortunately all on board had been killed in the crash. It was made clear to me before I set off that we were not to bury the bodies as the Americans were very particular and wanted their own Graves Registration people to inter the bodies. I just collected the Identification discs and returned to Dobodura with the information of just where the wreck was.

I also taught Stan McCosker, the ANGAU chief at Dododura, how to make sake (rice wine) while I was there. I made him a still and took him through the process of making sake. It was a very powerful drop we produced. I had learned to make the sake from reading the recipe in a book and did not mention that this was my first attempt.

When Salamaua fell to the 17th Brigade, the Brigade Commander was asked by the US forces to withdraw his men from the Peninsula. I was told that the US supply system was a bit political and, if the US forces could be seen to have taken Salamaua, then they would be looked after much better, and be entitled to a better support situation. This could well have been so or it could have been part of the McArthur public relations machine showing the Americans to be winning the war.

As we were moving from Salamaua to Lae we could see the trails being left by Australian artillery as they were shelling Lae. As it happened the 7th Division was entering Lae when the 9th Division was still shelling the town.

To be continued

GIANT SNAILS

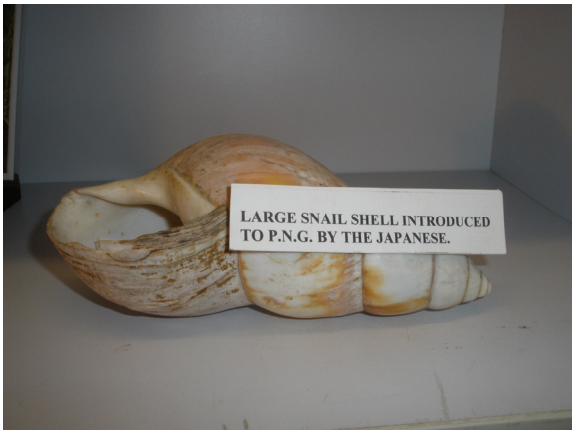
According to Lt Col N.P. Maddern, CO of the PNGVR, the giant snails which have plagued local planters since the end of the way, may be a blessing in disguise. All new recruits to the PNGVR are expected to learn to live off the country and, according to the CO, boiled, baked or fried, snails are "Mighty good kai!"

Col Maddern, who was a POW in Malaya, is an authority on the culinary possibilities of snails: but, so far, recruits to the Volunteers show no signs of developing his enthusiasm for the slimy pests.

Teaching recruits to live off the land will be generally applauded. It will be remembered that members of the 22nd Battalion, AIF, when forced to take to the New Britain bush after the occupation of Rabaul in 1942, literally starved to death in sight of edible plants which they failed to recognise as food.

Recruiting for the PNGVR is going on steadily in all Territory centres. Route marches – accompanied by the usual contingents of natives and dogs and the perennial query, "Masta, when dispela pait 'e srart?" have been held in Port Moresby, Rabaul and Lae.

An Extract from the Pacific Islands Monthly, July, 1951, provided by your Association Museum.



Giant snail shell on show in your museum

HISTORY OF THE DAWN SERVICE.

The Dawn Service on ANZAC Day has become a solemn Australian and New Zealand tradition. It is taken for granted as part of the ANZAC ethos and few wonder how it started. Its story, as it were, is buried in a small cemetery carved out of the bush some kilometers outside the Northern Queensland town of Herberton.

Almost paradoxically, one grave stands out by its simplicity. It is covered by protective white-washed concrete slab with a plain cement cross at its top end. No epitaph recalls even the name of the deceased. The inscription on the cross is a mere two words "A Priest"

No person would identify the grave as that of a dedicated clergyman who created the Dawn Service, without the wimple marker placed next to the grave only in recent times. It reads:

"Adjacent of, and on the right of this marker, lies the grave of the late Reverend Arthur Ernest White, a Church of England clergyman and padre, 44th Battalion, First Australian Imperial Force. On 25th April, 1923, at Albany in Western Australia, the Reverend White led a party of friends in what was the first ever observation of a Dawn parade on ANZAC Day, thus establishing a tradition which has endured, Australia wide ever since".

Reverend White was serving as one of the padres of the earliest ANZAC's to leave Australia with the first AIF in November, 1914. The convoy was assembled in the Princess Royal Harbour and King George Sound at Albany, W.A. Before embarkation, at four in the morning, he conducted a service for all the men of the Battalion. When White returned to Australia in 1919, he was appointed relieving Rector of the St John's Church in Albany. It was a strange coincidence that the starting point of the AIF convoys should now become his parish.

No doubt it must have been the memory of his first Dawn Service those many years earlier and his experiences overseas, combined with the awesome cost of lives and injuries, which inspired him to honour permanently the valiant man (both living and the dead) who had joined the fight for the Allied cause. He is quoted

FLASHBACK. Mt Ambra Camp, near Mt. Hagen, where the 1964 and 1965 Annual Camps were held

to have said "Albany was the last sight of land these ANZAC troops saw after leaving Australian shores and some of them never returned. We should hold a service here at the first light of dawn each ANZAC Day to commemorate them".

So on ANZAC Day 1923 he came to hold the first Commemorative Dawn Service.

As the sun was rising, a man in a small dinghy cast a wreath into King George Sound while White, with a band of about 20 men gathered around him on the summit of nearby Mount Clarence, silently watched the wreath floating out to sea. He then quietly recited the words "As the sun rises and goeth down we will remember them". All present were deeply moved and news of the Ceremony soon spread throughout the country, and the various Returned Service Communities Australia wide emulated the Ceremony.

Eventually White was transferred from Albany to serve other congregations, the first in South Australia, then Broken Hill where he built a church, then later at Forbes NSW. In his retirement from parish life, he moved to Herberton where he became Chaplain of an Anglican convent. However soon after his arrival (on 26th Sep 1954) he died, to be buried so modestly and anonymously as "A Priest".

GEORGE COCKRAM
NGVR/ KANGA FORCE/ ANGAU
Continued
As told to Bob Collins

My Second Leave in Australia.

On 13th November, 1944, I flew out of Nadzab for Townsville on my second leave. From Townsville I travelled by troop train to Melbourne and by troop train back to Townsville where I embarked on the 'Swanee' on 5th January, 1945, for Lae.

I recall sleeping in the stables at Caulfield on that leave and always used to say that I slept in Phar Lap's stable.

Operations in Bougainville.

From Lae I went to Finschhafen where I boarded the 'George Peet' for Bougainville on 15th Feb, 1945.

Not long after I arrived on Bougainville I was promoted to Acting Warrant Officer 11 and this was confirmed in August, 1945.

By the time I reached Bougainville the Americans, who had established the beach-head at Torokina had moved on and the Australian Army was conducting operations.

On Bougainville I continued to be in charge of labour lines moving food and ammunition up to the forward troops. The difference here was that there was some fierce fighting going on between the Australians and the Japanese, whereas after Shaggy Ridge in the Ramu the Japanese were retreating rapidly and only putting up pockets of resistance to slow the Australian advance.

On Bougainville the Japs were making a fierce fight of things and movement forward was slow for the fighting troops.

At one stage an Officer approached me and asked me to carry out a dead Australian soldier. We made a stretcher of two poles with groundsheets between them and the natives set off at a great pace back – frankly they went like hell knowing that people were being killed in the area – I can't say I blamed them.

When I got back to the Headquarters area I was in some trouble for carrying out the dead soldier and was told "You are not supposed to touch bodies. War Graves are in charge of bodies and it is their responsibility to bury them and mark the graves" – pretty silly but that is how it was. As a matter of interest Frank Partridge won his Victoria Cross in the action in which the soldier was killed.

It was here that I found out for the first time that one of the conditions that the native carriers I had were employed under was that they could only carry forward. They were not allowed to carry back and that was another reason for my getting into trouble.

Twice while I was on Bougainville I made the journey with a carry line from Torokina right across the island to Keita. On this trip you actually walked between two large volcanos.

There was a lot of native repatriation going on at the time. Naturally when the Japanese occupied parts of New Guinea the indentured natives from that area could not be repatriated at the end of their two year indenture and had been used by both the Japanese and the Australian Army for carrying. However, as soon as their home areas were re-occupied they were repatriated.

There was only one medical officer at Kieta and, when one of my police bois was bitten by a centipede, he was in so much pain that he asked to be shot. In another incident a meri (woman) was also bitten by a centipede. I

had a jeep at the time and put her on it to be taken to Kieta but she had never been in a vehicle before and kept on calling out "Mi paul daun! Mi paul daun" (I will fall off) but we got her to the medical officer for treatment OK.

There was a strip outside Torokina nicknamed 'the mad mile' because the Americans had consistently shelled the area when they first landed there. Naturally this caused a lot of destroyed trees to fall over the road and I was given the job of clearing the trees. I had a supply of quarter-pound blocks of TNT with electric detonators. I would attach one to an offending tree, set the detonator and move back. The tree would be blown in two and I would then push it off the road with a truck I had been given for this purpose.

I had a couple of natives to help me with the clearance of the trees but they would never come close when I was about to use the TNT.

The Officer in charge of the Torokina area at the time was Jack Read, who did a lot of good work there, and was correctly decorated for it. There were a couple of New Zealand Air Force personnel stationed there. One day a Lieutenant who used to position the Police Bois around the area asked me to fill in for him. My task was to deliver the Police Bois to their posts and this day I had a couple of beers before going off and one of the Police Bois reported me. I was hauled up before Jack Reid and the Lieutenant I was covering for tried to protect me by saying I was OK. Jack interrupted him and said "Let George speak for himself!" He looked straight at me and asked "Were you boozed or not?" I answered "Yes!" and his comment to me was "I don't mind if you have a drink but you should have had more sense than to do it in front of the natives"

Another time a New Zealand aircraft caught on fire while taking off, so it circled and came straight back in. I tore down to the plane in my jeep and was asked "Where's your fire extinguisher?" As it happened I didn't have one and got into trouble again – a great lot of help I was, but it is a natural instinct to try and give assistance if you can.

One of the great delights of Kieta was the crayfish. The native bois used to catch them at night by lighting a coconut palm frond and the crayfish used to swim up to see what the light was. It was always beautiful to sit down to a whole crayfish for a meal.

At one stage I was out in a forward area when some shooting started in the middle of the night. A Lieutenant and myself dived in separate directions into the bush nearby and I landed right in the middle of an area the natives had been using for a toilet. His report on me, which I later saw, read "Speaks very good pidgin, but a little nervous in the forward areas". The Lt obviously smelt me later and thought I had made a mess of myself with fright and did not realise what I had landed in.

Another time when some shooting started during the night I just stood behind a tree – mindful of my previous smelly experience. I found out later that some pigs had set off some Murray Switches which had been set out in front of the lines as an early warning device and the soldiers had opened up when they went off – a pretty common occurrence in New Guinea.

When General Blamey visited Bougainville he was not prepared to get his feet wet when crossing a river so a tank had it's exhaust raised and he sat dry on top of the tank for the crossing. He was on a flag-flying visit to the forward areas.

Just before the end of the war I was with Jack Tregallis in the centre of the island, and we were corduroying roads and cutting our own timber for the purpose so that vehicles could come through. I again became sick and had to go to the coast. I had two impacted teeth taken out and was treated for 'sprue'. I had to remain at the Casualty Clearing Station, and the first Atom Bomb was dropped on Japan at that time.

On another occasion I was standing talking to a Lieutenant in the Signals Corps at a radio station when a bolt of lightning hit the thatched roof of the hut. The Lieutenant was knocked completely over and I was knocked to my knees.

More Hospitalisation and Eventual Discharge from the Army.

In July, August and September, 1945, I spent more time in Hospital with Clin. Dysentery but returned to ANGAU in Sep 1945. I was in 109 Casualty Clearing Station when the Atom bomb was dropped on Japan and the war ended.

I was then sent to Rabaul in September, 1945 from Bougainville.

Whilst in Rabaul I was back to the old duties – Native Labour Overseer allocating labour to the various tasks going in the area. Some unloading of ships was carried out and we also repatriated natives to their home villages when transport became available.

While unloading one ship in Rabaul I recall one of the native labourers walking into a girder in the hold of a ship – the cut in his head was so big that the skin just fell down over his eyes.

There were a lot of Japanese prisoners-of-war in Rabaul at the time and the War Crimes Courts were in full swing. A number of Japanese were hanged or shot as a result of their War Crimes, but I was in no way involved with those.

I was discharged from the Army on 1st June 1946, and my discharge certificate shows:-

Served 1,587 days.
1,136days Overseas Service
451 days Service in Australia.

The Cockram Family War Service.

As I previously mentioned my father George served in WW1 with the 14th Battalion.

My brother Harold served with the 39th Battalion, and saw service on the Kokoda Trail.

My brother Thomas served in Small Ships as a crane driver. He should never have been in the Army, as, when he was young, he had 5 years on his back with infantile paralysis.

My half-brother Arthur served with the Provost Corps.

My half-brother Charlie was 18 the day the War in the Pacific ended and he was up at the local recruiting depot waiting to sign on when he was told he was not wanted.

Return to Civilian Life.

On discharge from the Army I went to work for the Administration in Rabaul, strangely enough doing almost the same as I had for the army – handling the repatriation of natives and being in charge of native labour lines.

I made many a trip on New Britain returning natives to their villages and on the times I has in charge of labour lines I would assess the requirement for labour and allocate that labour for the task.
Whenever a coastal schooner or other vessel arrived in Rabaul heading for places such as Madang, Wewak or Aitape etc. we would get those natives due to be repatriated, take them to the boat and make up a list of those departing. Many of these natives had been in Rabaul and New Britain for up to 6 years and were well overdue for repatriation to their home villages.
I did not stay long with the Administration.
J.D. Simpson, the Manager of Bulolo Gold Dredging, and Fred Rose, the head electrician for B.G.D, arrived in Rabaul to purchase Army disposal goods for the reconstruction of the dredges at Bulolo and Wau areas and they offered me a job.
I was to start with them when my brother wrote asking me to go to Melbourne to be best man at his wedding. This was in 1946. so I resigned from the Administration and went to Melbourne.

I Return to New Guinea.

In 1947 I decided to return to New Guinea and obtained a job with Bulolo Gold Dredging in Bulwa, which by this time was being called Bulwatut.
Before the War there had been 8 dredges operating but when I returned there were only 3 or 4 operating. I did not go straight on to the dredges, the BGD Manager, Lars Bergstrand, put me on to road works – putting gravel on the roads and making sure they were generally in reasonable order. Again I returned to my native labour job.
At one stage the Company sent me on recruiting trips. I flew to Lae, then to Kaipit and walked out myself to the villages recruiting. I was walking through a village called Atsonas when I ran into my pre war personal servant, Karu. He had stayed with me for some time after we were mobilised but on one of my trips to the Markham he told me he wanted to return to his village. I advised him that if he left me he would probably get roped in by the Army and be put to work carrying heavy loads, but the next morning he was gone. I advised him that he would have to sign on with BGD but I would try to get him assigned to me. When I got back from my recruiting trip he was working in one of the stores but the Company released him to work for me and I then paid him instead of BGD. He stayed with us for another 8 years. Any time we left to travel or go on leave he would go home to his village but be waiting for us when we returned.
On the second trip I again went into Kaipit and sent out recruiters from there.
I eventually complained about this, as on the dredges they were operating three shifts, and the money was much better. I immediately got a rise of 10/- ($1) per week and eventually was transferred to the position of Mess Steward.
This suited me as I was corresponding with Evelyn and we had been engaged. The only way I was going to get married quarters was by taking the Mess Steward job. In those days you had to wait a year after you applied for a married quarter before one became available, but Jack Mitchell told me that if I took the job as Mess Steward I would get a house.
Evelyn was booked on a ship going to New Guinea but decided that she did not want to get married in New Guinea, away from her family and friends, so she cancelled the booking and I then had to obtain leave and go to Melbourne where we were married on the 11th May, 1948. We flew back to New Guinea on a DC3 from Melbourne. It was quite a trip and we had to overnight at Townsville on the way. At one stage I looked out of the window and could see large white lumps flying past – when we landed I asked the pilot what they were and was told 'Ice coming off the wings'. It added another hour to a long trip.
It was the best part of a year before I managed to get back on to dredges.
I stayed on the dredges in New Guinea until 1956. By that time the dredges were shutting down and I had no desire to work in the ply mill so it was time to go.

We Leave New Guinea.

Evelyn had been born in England – her parents had been 'ten pound migrants' - and still had relations there so when we left New Guinea in 1956 we went on a 3 month holiday to England.
It was while we were in England that I wrote to a Candian firm, Placer Development, who had an office in San Francisco, requesting a job on dredges with them. I ended up going from London to New York on the 'Queen Elizabeth', and from New York to San Francisco by Greyhound bus. When I walked into the office the first person I met was J.D. Simpson, with whom I had worked in Bulwa. The first thing he said to me was "Where's Evelyn?" and I explained she was still in London. Unfortunately he was then notified of a death in the family and he had to go to Canada - he had married a Canadian, and he asked me to hang about until he got back.
I stayed in San Francisco living on the Company for the next 21 days until he returned and I was sent straight down to El Bagre, in Colombia, South America. Evelyn by this time had returned to Australia.
I started as a winchman in El Bagre, but shortly thereafter there was a 3 month strike and I was promoted to Dredge Master. After the strike finished I had a Dredge Master, a Canadian, George Townsend, working as a stern oiler for me.
Evelyn did not come to Columbia straight away as one of her aunties was coming out to Australia and had not seen Evelyn's mother for 33 years.
Evelyn eventually arrived in El Bagre, and we stayed there for 3 X 2 year term contracts, even though we did not enjoy Columbia as much as New Guinea. At the end of each contract we would go on a long holiday. The terms were that you would be paid for 2 months holiday at the end of a 2 year contract and you could take a third month without pay if you chose. We were flown first class at first, but one of the Contractors spoilt that when he demanded a first class seat for his young baby, and after that the Company flew us all economy.
There were no roads into El Bagre. The only transport in and out was by air or river. Most of the ore was taken out by air.

We Leave Colombia and Return to Australia.

When the third term was up we returned to Australia and I obtained a job with the Post Master General Department. I was with a section called 'mechanical aids'. My

first job was as a driver towing a trailer. When I got to my destination the foreman handed me a pick and shovel and I said "What's this for? I'm a driver!" When he insisted I work, I took off.
Soon after I became a crane driver and had to drive the crane from Doncaster to Moorabbin to have the exhaust fixed so it didn't blow back into your face. It took half a day to get there at about 12k p.h.
I remained a crane driver with the PMG and stayed in Australia for about 18 months.

I go to Bolivia, South America.

I was then approached by International Mining, an American company, for a position in Bolivia. A dredge was being dismantled in Marysville, California, USA, and was to be shipped to Bolivia, South America, where it was to be reassembled.
I was to help dismantle the dredge but the Supervisor, George Ball, had an accident and things were held up for a while, until the Company found another person to supervise the dismantling, and I was sent straight to Bolivia.
By the time I arrived in Avicaya, Bolivia some of the equipment was there and the first job I was given was to construct a Shore Plant, which consisted of building some half a mile (approx 850m) of conveyor belt to dump the tailings over a hill.
We had finished our first 2 year contract but the company asked me to come back and be the Dredge Master. It took 2 years for the dredge to be shipped down and constructed.
We came home but I went across to Bolivia again in 1973 to another company called Comsur located at a town called Potosi. Evelyn did not accompany me at this time as her mother was not well and she stayed in Australia to look after her.
There is a big silver mining operation at Potosi and I was the Dredge Master there until the dredge washed away down the river. I was Dredge Master but wasn't called out until it was too late and the dredge had gone aground downstream. I took a section of the power cable to La Paz where the Head Office was and told them that they would have an insurance claim as the cable should have held but broke. They didn't do anything so I blew up and quit, and returned to Australia once again.

Work in Australia

I then took a job as a courier-clerk with an Insurance Company in Melbourne. .
I enjoyed that but Evelyn and I decided that we wanted to return to England for a holiday so I went in to resign. The manager advised me not to resign but to apply for special leave. This I did and off we went again.
After we returned from England I felt obliged to work for a while as the Company had been good to me so I stayed for another 12 months and then retired in 1977 at the age of 65.
We have had a number of trips back to England but have never returned to New Guinea. I would like to see a bit more of say, Singapore or Hong Kong, but Evelyn only wants to go to England. Evelyn has been back 6 times.
I purchased a single bedroom flat at Bilinga on the Gold Coast at one stage when Evelyn went back to England by herself and had several very enjoyable months up there fishing and relaxing, but we later sold it.
We now live in retirement at Surry Hills, a Melbourne suburb, near Box Hill where I was born.

NGVR Reunions in Melbourne.

At one stage in Melbourne there were 17 NGVR veterans and we used to have the odd get-together and march as a unit on Anzac Day.
We had a flag behind which we used to march and I think Kevin Baker has that now, but cannot be sure. Kevin was in NGVR in Rabaul, and survived the Japanese landing there.

Another remarkable story concludes. George and Evelyn currently live in Melbourne.

A SOLDIER DIED TODAY

He was getting old and paunchy, And his hair was falling fast.

And he sat around the RSL,, Telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he once fought in, And the deeds that he had done,

In his exploits with his buddies, They were heroes every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbour His tales became a joke

All his buddies listened quietly, For they knew where of he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer, For ol' Bob has passed away.

And the world's a little poorer, For a soldier died today.

He won't be mourned by many, Just his children and his wife.

For he lived an ordinary, Very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,, Going quietly on his way,

And the world won't note his passing, 'Tho a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth, Their bodies lie in State.

While thousands note their passing, And proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories, From the time that they were young,

But the passing of a soldier, Goes unnoticed, and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution, To the welfare of the land

Some jerk who breaks his promises And cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow, Who in times of war and strife,

Goes off to serve his country, And offers up his life.

The politician's stipend, And the style in which he lives

Are often disproportionate, To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary soldier, Who offered up his all,

Is paid off with a medal, And perhaps a pension, small.

It's so easy to forget them, For it is so many times

That our Bobs and Johns and Johnnies, Went to battle, but we know.

It is not the politicians, With their compromises and ploys

Who won for us the freedom, That our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger, With your enemies at hand,

Would you really want some cop-out, With his ever waffling stand?

Or would you want a soldier, His home his country his kin,

Just a common soldier, Who would fight until the end.

He was just a common soldier, And his ranks are growing thin,

But his presence should remind us, We may need his like again.

For when countries are in conflict, We find the soldier's part

Is to clean up all the troubles, That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honour, While he's still here to hear the praise

Then at least let's give him homage, At the ending of his days.

Perhaps a simple headline, In the paper that might say!

"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING

A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."

A Mormon was seated next to an Australian on a flight from London to Brisbane.

After the plane was airborne, drink orders were taken.

The Aussie asked for a rum and coke, which was brought and placed before him.

The flight attendant then asked the Mormon if he would like a drink. He replied in disgust "I'd rather be savagely raped by a dozen whores than let liquor touch my lips".

The Aussie then handed his drink back to the attendant and said "Me too! I didn't know we had a choice".

Anzac Day 2011 Brisbane. Two visiting members from the ACT, Don Hook and Charles Nelson, enjoying a chat with Mile Griffin Committee Member and frequent assistant at your Museum.

VALE

Michael O'Callaghan

Michael passed away on 2 Jan, 2011. He served in PNGVR but no more information is known about him at this time. If any member has any further information on Michael please pass on to Editor for inclusion in a future edition.

Rev. Allan McFarland—Assn Chaplain

7May,1919—15May, 2001

Allan was born in Sydney, the eldest of three sons. His first job was in Canberra as a messenger boy cycling and running between Govt Depts. He married in Canberra in July, 1940.

In 1942 he enlisted and saw service as a radio operator in Cairns with Commando - Z Special forces. On discharge he became a Theological student, being ordained Priest in 1947.

His postings included Gundy, Jerry's Plains in the Newcastle, NSW Diocese, Mossman, Atherton, Chinchilla & Hervey Bay and Grovely, Qld.

In 1958 he obtained his Batchelor of Divinity Degree from the University of London, a rare feat in those days.

He continued his association with Z Special Force and also was the Association Chaplain until his death.

LEST WE FORGET.

Rev. McFarland receiving as Assn plaque from President Phil Ainsworth.

FUNCTION DATES

Sat 13th August, 2011

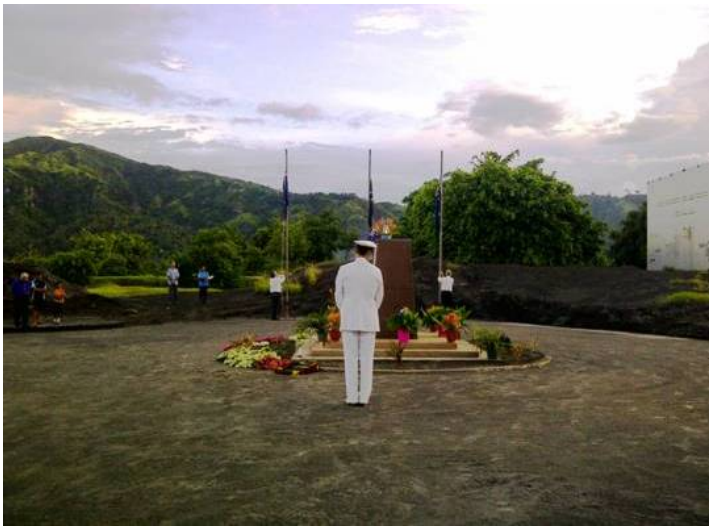
Committee Meetings, Museum. Wacol

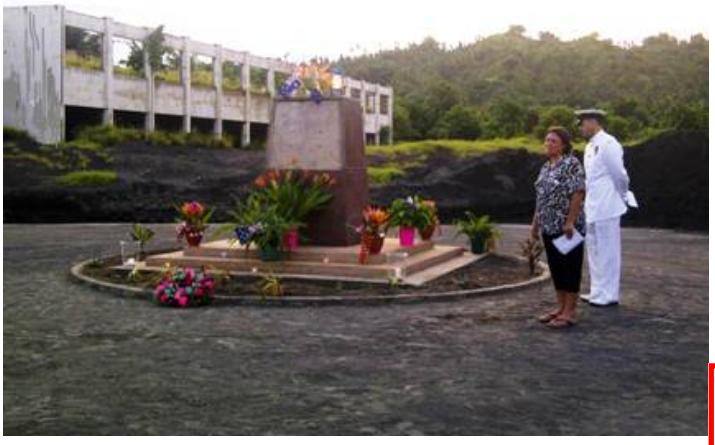
Sat 15th October, 2011

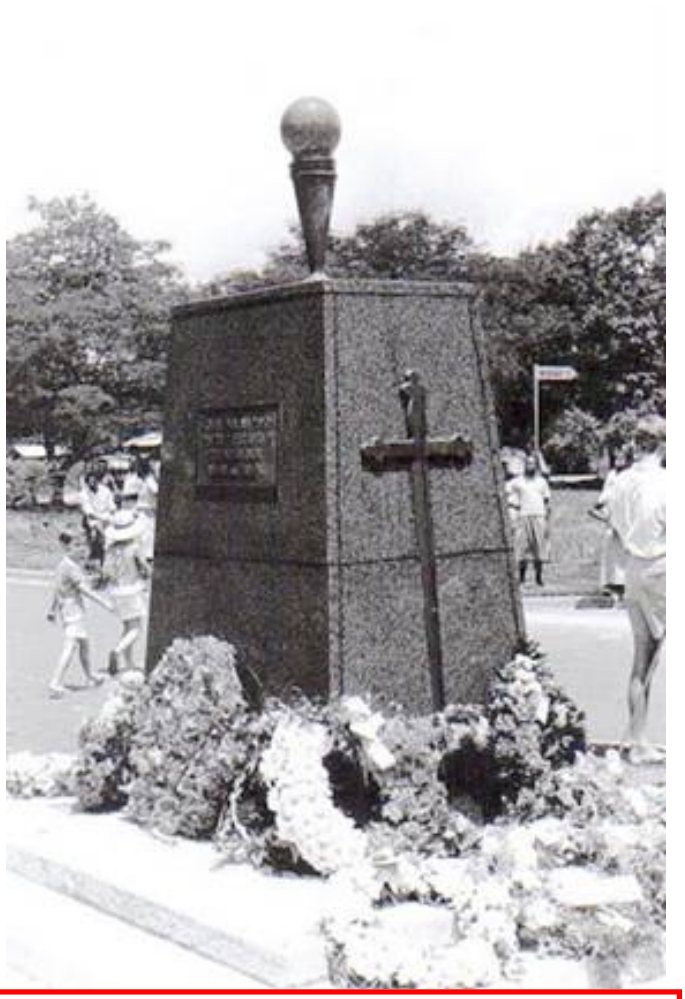
Mixed Field Dining Night

Jimboomba

This will definitely be the **last such function,** so make sure you are there for this one







Anzac Day, 2011 Rabaul.

Top. CPO Mick Saunders

Above. Long time resident of Rabaul, Lyn Woolcott, gives welcoming address. Admin building in background .

Above Right. Rabaul Cenotaph circa 1960.

Photos from Rabaul Historical Society

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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