HARIM TOK TOK

VOLUME 70 **DATE** **OCTOBER** ,2011

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

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

The AGM was held 8th October in our Military Museum at Wacol. It was most successful with about 25 members attending a pre meeting luncheon prepared by our chef, Jesse Chee. The minutes and various reports will follow in later issues of the HTT. None the less, a short summary is in order to keep you abreast of issues.

Your committee has remained unchanged except that Vice President John Mudge has stepped down and Leigh Eastwood was elected a committee member . Bob Harvey-Hall was deservedly voted a life member- congratulations Bob!

Short discussions covered the possibility of the Association obtaining another ex-army building for the site, confirming our application for a M60 machine gun and an SLR for the Museum from the Department for Defence and that the presentation of our Association's" Steel Tuff "medallions to the winning section of 9 RQR will occur on 4th December, the Regiment's end of year function and farewelling of its outgoing CO, Lt Col Michael Bond.

It is with pleasure that I present my seventh annual report. The Association's activities for the year have been generally well covered in my Harim Tok Tok front page updates, but I would like to highlight the activities which I think we can be justly proud.

Our continuing and growing Military Museum operations remain an outstanding yet unheralded activity of the Association, thanks to our Curator John Holland and his helpers. The cataloguing has continued and regular openings / viewings to the public are ongoing. We have yet to solve our succession plan and this remains a high priority. The ramp is underway and will be installed before Xmas with the help of a working bee to be organized sometime November/ early December.

We held a very successful Rabaul Centenary Party last October and raised about $20,000 for the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial and about $5,000 for the Association. This included the proceeds from the combined Australasian wide PNGAA, NGVR/PNGVR Association and Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Society membership raffle which was run by us in conjunction with our Centenary Party. Thank you committee for your strong support to undertake such large undertakings with so few aging but active members.

Following on with this financial bent and without taking our Treasurer's well earnt accolades, I can report the Association is financially healthier than it has ever been and the continuing benefits of the regular sausage sizzles at Greenbank RSL , about $3,000 last year , has contributed much towards our financial health. I thank those few who have put themselves out with these very late night vigils and enduring some unusual visual events.

Our Harim Tok Tok goes from strength to strength thanks to Bob Collins. Our regular two monthly journal has a balance of articles , news and photographs which seems to be well received by our members. The email distribution list continues to grow and this allows members regular and early access to other newsletters such as the Memorial News, the monthly newsletter of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, PNG Attitude by Keith Jackson and other newsworthy events . I am, however, surprised by the number of address changes that our members have – perhaps some of you have been forgetful paying accounts?

The widespread distribution and aging of our membership is showing in how our social activities are being curtailed - our marchers at Anzac Day are decreasing , our annual regimental dinners have had to be cancelled and the very last Jimboomba Bush Dinning Night will be held next week at Barry and Pam's residence . As they say all good must come to an end , however, I wish to record the outstanding contribution that Pam and Barry have made through their arranging these twice yearly dinners for the last twelve years. Thank you Pam and Barry and thank you all to those who assisted to make these unforgettable events happen.

I thank the outgoing committee members for their contributions which make our Association so special. I thank their understanding during the year while I have been distracted by my Rabaul and Montevideo Maru presidential duties. As you are aware Keith Jackson stood down due to ill health last February and I inherited his position. To meet the 1 July 2012 deadline for the 70th Anniversary dedication of the memorial , a concerted effort has been made since early this year to raise the necessary $400,000 plus funds in time to commission and install the memorial. On 11th October, the PM of PNG, Hon Peter O'Neill, visited the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru National Memorial site at the AWM, Canberra. On behalf of PNG, he gave the Society $100,000 towards the memorial. I can announce that we have just about reached our goal and I am confident sufficient money will be on hand by early November so the Australian known artist/sculptor, James Parrett, may be commissioned to build and install the memorial on the assigned AWM site, so please start making your bookings if you wish to attend this important 30th June / 1st July 2012 weekend in Canberra.

I am confident the Association is in a strong position and wish the incoming committee all the success it deserves. Again, I thank you for the privilege of serving you as President and for your support during the past year.

Phil Ainsworth — 8 October, 2011

L to R : Phil Ainsworth, PNG PM Hon Peter O'Neill MP, Andrea Williams and Don Hook with AWM Director Maj Gen Steve Gower in the background

Historic military events relating to PNG

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

September

1,1906—Australia assumes responsibility for administration of Papua
2,1945—US General Douglas MacArthur & Allies accept Japanese surrender on board USS "Missouri" in Tokyo Bay
3,1901—Australian flag accepted from 30,000 designs in a competition.
3,1939—Australia declares war on Germany
4,1939— Australian Militia mobilised by Lord Gowrie, Governor-General of Australia, following declaration of war with Germany
4,1942—Corporal John A French, 2/9th Battalion, AIF, posthumous VC at Milne Bay, Papua
4,1943—20th Australian Brigade in landing east of Lae, New Guinea—largest Australian seaborne operation since Gallipoli.
6,1942—Japanese forces withdraw from Milne Bay—first Allied land victory against the Japanese won by Australian land and air forces.
6,1943—US paratroops and Australian artillerymen parachute into Nadzab, New Guinea.
6,1951—Peace Treaty signed with Japan
11,1914—Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) captures German wireless station on new Britain, first Australian casualties of Great War, 6 dead , 4 wounded. First Empire land action of World War 1
11,1943—Allied Forces capture Salamaua, New Guinea
13,1914—Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) lands near Rabaul to capture German colony of New Britain
13,1943—Private Richard Kelliher, 2/25th Battalion, VC at Nadzab, PNG
13,1945—Japanese at Wewak, New Guinea, surrender to Australians
14,1942-Japanese troops reach a point 40 km from Port Moresby, New Guinea
15,1914—AN&MEF accepts the surrender of the Government of German New Guinea, Australian submarine AE1 disappears in Rabaul waters
16,1943—Australian troops capture Lae, New Guinea
17,1942—Japanese advance over Owen Stanley's, New Guinea, halted by Australian troops
21,1942—Mass breakout at Tatura POW Camp, Victoria, 8 killed, all escapees recaptured.
22,1943—9th Australian Division lands at Scarlet Breach, New Guinea
22,1950—Australian Prime Minister, Robert G Menzies, announces Army and Citizen Military Force personnel liable to serve anywhere.
23,1942—Australian V & W Class "Scrap Iron Flotilla" destroyer HMAS "Voyager" runs aground whilst on a resupply mission to Australian commandos fighting on Timor, abandoned and destroyed on 25 September
24,1942—General Thomas Blamey appointed C-in-C of Allied Land Forces in New Guinea
24,1914—Australian forces occupy Madang, Papua/New Guinea
26,1943—Australian and British navy and army commandos, operating by canoe from the captured Japanese fishing vessel "Krait" destroy 7 Japanese ships in Singapore harbour and return to Australia without loss—Operation "Jaywick"

October

1,1888 – Nauru Island annexed by Germany
1,1923—Imperial Conference in London begins; Australia votes to establish Singapore Naval Base
1,1945—Start of general demobilisation in Australia after WW11
2,1943—9th Australian Division captures Finschafen
13,1944—Australian Naval Squadron departs Hollandia for Leyte
14,1942—Australians attack at Templeton's Crossing on Kokoda Track, New Guinea
15,1942—Japanese driven from defences at Templeton's Crossing
18,1943—Strong attack by Japanese 20th Division at Scarlet Beach, New Guinea, repulsed by 9th Australian Division
18,1944—Australian corvette HMAS "Geelong" lost in collision off PNG
20,1939—Compulsory Militia service re-introduced in Australia
20,1942—16th Australian Brigade attacks strong Japanese positions at Eora Creek, Kokoda Track, New Guinea
24,1945—UN Day, United Nations Charter ratified

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NGVR/ANGAU DAYS

Thomas Albert Keenan

Continued (as told to Bob Collins)

My transfer to Lae and work in the Gusap area.

I was to report to ANGAU in Lae, but as soon as I got there I was ordered to report to the Air Traffic Control in Lae, I was under the impression that I would be given a rest, but was put on an aircraft and sent to Gusap that day to report to Lt Stan Searle, ex Postmaster, Bulolo. Naturally enough his nickname was 'stamp & seal'.

It was an impressive sight. The Americans told me that they had a hundred miles of taxiway and had built hangars and revetments for aircraft.

At that time there were rumours coming in from the natives towards Bogadjim and Madang that there were more Japanese troops in the Bogadjim area than there were 'leaves on the trees'.

I was given a carrier line and some police bois and went out to some nearby villages where the natives had commenced warring between villages and had put up 'tambu' signs for outsiders not to come into their areas.

The 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion were camped nearby, and their Officer in charge, a fairly pompous fellow, didn't want the natives to tell him to keep out of their area, but I convinced him that it was a private matter between villages and would return to normal after the problems had been sorted out.

I took two police bois who were local to the area with me and went down from Gusap towards Madang. These two police bois had been with Ivan Hoggard at Nadzab when I was down there earlier and I knew them. One of them told me that none of the natives in the area had anything to do with the Japs, as no Japs had come into the area at all. The information from the local villages was that there were many Japanese in Madang but not a lot in the area where we were.

This information was passed on to Lt Searle who advised General Vasey, Commander of the 7th Division, of the lack of Japs in the area.

Then I returned to Lae, and was due to report to Horrie Niall.

I was sitting at the airstrip waiting for a lift to ANGAU Headquarters in Lae, when the Air Traffic Controller came out and chewed a piece out of me for not reporting to him. He had news for me. As I had been considered to be a part of the 17th Brigade, I was to be sent on leave, as all of the 17th Brigade and attached troops had been given leave.

My second leave

Again I did not make ANGAU headquarters in Lae. I was put on a plane to Port Moresby and had one of the most enjoyable flights of my life. Aboard the plane was a US Entertainment Group complete with all the glamour girls and they sang songs on the way. We did have to come down to a low level and were strapped in at one stage when fog had closed the gaps but made it to Port Moresby.

By this time the Army administrative system was running like a well oiled machine and I left Port Moresby on the same ship I had come down on the first time – the ex Melbourne to Launceston ferry, to Townsville. Then a troop train to Brisbane and went off to enjoy 34 days leave.

When the leave expired I was to travel north on a troop train with Jimmy Birrell. A couple of very senior Officers were quite put out when they had to get off the train to make way for us. We were Draft Priority 1 and had precedence in travel over most soldiers.

I was met at Townsville with a new uniform which even had my Sergeants stripes sewn on it.

Leave passed all too quickly and I was then back on a troop train from Brisbane to Townsville where the same routine with leaving gear in kitbags was observed, ship to Port Moresby, and flown to Wau. This would have been late 1943. From Wau I went to Finschaffen. At Finschaffen a soldier came running up the strip calling out to me, and when I stopped to meet him, he apologised as he thought I was brother Jim. This was not the first time I had been mistaken for Jim.

Posting to Cape Hoskins and Talasea

By this time the Americans had taken Cape Hoskins. I then had to report to American Headquarters at Finschaffen and they put me through quite a grilling. Somewhere in the middle of this grilling by them one remarked "Wait on! You served with McKechnie Force" and from then on everything went smoothly.

The next day I was on a Motor Torpedo Boat over to Cape Hoskins.

There I met Neville Swanson who told me the story about a Japanese prisoner who indicated that there were a couple of Japs the other side of a big log ready to fire on them Over went a couple of grenades and, sure enough, on the other side of a log was a dead Jap. At this the Japanese prisoner burst out laughing and when questioned why told Swanny that the dead Jap had been his Platoon Sgt and was not liked.

I went on a patrol out from Cape Hoskins with the American Marines. We went down past the airstrip, down to a place called Sag Sag, which is the nearest point to the mainland of New Guinea, where Father Irwin had a mission station. The Yanks that came with me were looking for stray Japs, but they walked along talking at the top of their voices, and one even had a portable radio with him. I was not happy with the way they patrolled and took par-

ticular care to question the local natives about the whereabouts of any Japanese. .

When we were on patrol a group of natives approached us. I knew there was no danger when they approached as they had their women with them. However they put on a small sing-sing for us. The sing-sing was representing cockatoos, which the women dressed up as, coming to get the Galip nuts which grow in profusion around that area. The Marines were very impressed with the whole thing.

The patrol lasted about 10 days. The Officer in charge of the Marines was Capt Balzak, and of course we went into stitches the way the natives pronounced it. He was a Ranger, not a Marine, and explained the difference to me as being what we would call a Commando

I then went from Capt Hoskins to Talasea where Capt Dunbar-Reid was in charge. Jack Mcgrath and John Scott were there also. Scott had been in the Police force in New Guinea, and when I asked what we were to do told me that his philosophy was that, if you didn't do anything, then you could not make a mistake. He went on to ask what Ray Watson had told me which was "to keep the fuzzy wuzzy angel's halos on straight" and he agreed with this.

At this stage there was a huge Japanese force on the Gazelle Peninsula around Rabaul and the thinking was that, the longer they are there, the more disease ridden and ill they would become, so there was no point in attacking them.

Talasea had some beautiful hot water springs – just the right temperature for a hot soak – but they smelled badly of sulphur. The natives warned me that if you stopped in the springs for about an hour you would fall down when you got out – obviously the sulphur had something to do with affecting your balance.

I went up with a US artillery spotting plane here. The pilot asked me to judge what speed we were travelling at so, after studying the terrain, I announced that we were not moving at all. That was quite correct as it turned out – the plane was an artillery spotter and, with the weight of both of us was not making headway into the breeze at all.

We landed at Magigi Plantation and Charlie Blake (ex NGVR) was in charge there. He was commissioned by now and had just been awarded two medals by the Americans for his assistance to them in taking Cape Hoskins.

My first job at Magigi was to defuse a number of bombs which they had dumped into trenches running across the airstrip. These were unexploded US bombs which had been dropped but didn't explode. A US demolitions expert showed me how to screw off the nose, be very careful not to touch the conical piece left, then go to the tail and undo 4 long bolts holding the tail on and take the tail off. Then we had to take out the detonators which were housed in a black box near the tail and dispose of that. It was a very delicate operation but had to be done. The equipment we were supplied with was not all that good. Just a big set of Stilson-like pliers and a few spanners.

After the bombs had been defused there was the problem of disposing of them. This I eventually achieved by calling in a US Landing Craft Infantry which was running up and down the area. When I told him I had some unexploded, but defused, bombs to be taken away he said "Goddam Aussie! Can I have them?" to which I innocently replied "Of course you can". He got his mates quickly enough and they loaded them onto the LCI and when I asked what he was going to do with them he replied "Goddam Aussie! We're going fishing and won't need the bombers this time".

My next job was to round up all the indentured native labour from north of Talasea to a line near where the Japs were – up north near the Gazelle Peninsula. This was the commencement of the re-establishment of the indentured labour programme. I had to purchase food etc, and build villages to settle them in until they could be returned to their districts. Some of these natives would have been away from their own districts for up to 5 years now. The bulk of these natives were Tambu Island natives.

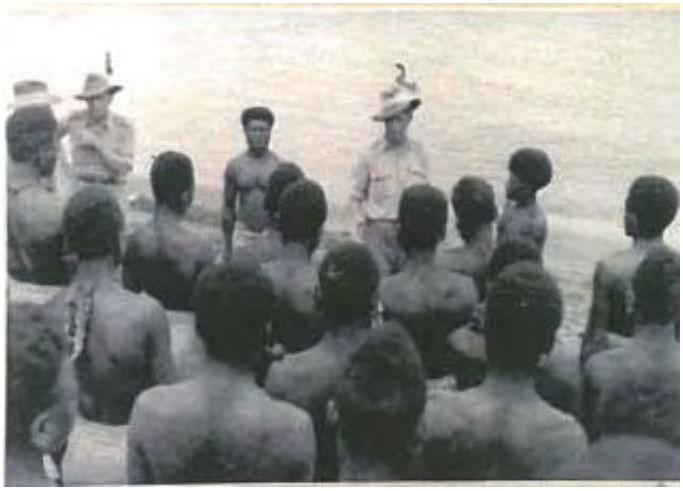
Food was scarce in the area, and a programme of planting gardens was undertaken. I was just up the coast from Magigi Plantation. One of the unusual things about this garden was that, when the taro had grown to a certain size, it was dug up, cut into 5 or 6 pieces and planted again to grow. The theory was that, when the natives were to be repatriated to their villages, they could take this taro with them and the locals could not claim that it belonged to them.

We were fishing one day when the 'Arunta' (mentioned before from my days with the Americans at Salamaua) sailed past. The sailors were waving and yelling to us, when suddenly one of the bois started yelling out and indicated to me that they were heading for a coral reef. I sung out as loud as I could "Look out for the reef" a number of times and the ship did turn away just in time. I don't know whether they heard me or had sounding equipment on board.

I had one large patrol to carry out. A group of us including Jackie McGrath and Charlie Blake, but under the command of Dunbar Reid, had to cross the New Britain Island, as close as we could to where the Japanese were and guide in a party which were to land on the South side of New Britain. At the start of the patrol nobody would tell us what it was all about, but as we got closer to the Japanese we were told. We started from Open Bay, at the southernmost part of the Gazelle Peninsula and headed East. Our route took us through Mokolkol country. The Mokolkols were a nasty tribe of natives, noted for their willingness to attack and kill

anyone, black or white, who ventured into their territory. We eventually met them as they were coming in from the coast. Instead of waiting for us they had commenced to travel west. It was a group of soldiers commanded by 'Red' Robbie, notorious for not obeying orders, and they were there obviously to carry out raids on the outlying Japanese positions. We brought them back with us, down past Tambu Island, opposite which we had headed in and left them half way to Talasea, which was quite safe, and there they settled in and made it their base.

Opposite Tambu Island we then had to clear another small airstrip so that small planes, like the artillery spotter I had gone up for a ride in, could land. We were not told what it was to be used for, but I assume it had something to do with 'Red' Robbies future activities.



This photo is from Australian War Memorial Records.

Summary. Hoskins, New Britain, NGX Sgt T.A. Keenan, ANGAU, with his 'boss bois' Mo and Mundai giving instructions to the natives for their day's work with members of the 36th Infantry Battalion.

When I returned to Tambu Island I was greeted as a long lost brother by the natives – these were the ones I had been working with at Magigi Plantation – getting gardens ready for their repatriation. While we had been out meeting 'Red' Robbie, Capt Dunbar-Reid had repatriated them to their own village lands. Several of the Officers in 'Red' Robbie's group chatted me for 'fraternising' with the natives. I spoke to Capt Dunbar-Reid about this and he later told me that he had great pleasure in telling the Officers concerned that he was the District Officer of the area and any interference in native affairs by any person other than with his permission was just not on and that I was only carrying out his instructions. He claimed the look of aggro on their faces when he stated this just made his day.

Return to New Guinea and move forward to Wewak

I was then ordered to return to New Guinea. I received a fairly curt message just telling me to get on the first available aircraft to Finschhafen – nothing more.

Before I left the Americans gave me a letter to the effect "The bearer of this letter is to be afforded complete co-operation and given assistance which may be at your disposal". This was signed by the US Provost Marshall, a General. Unfortunately it was taken off me at some stage and I never had the opportunity to use it.

From Finschhafen I was sent to Wewak where my role was to assist in the repatriation of natives. There were literally hundreds of Sepiks, Aitapes and Wewak natives who had been brought forward as far as Wewak, but could go no further until the Japanese had been cleared out of their areas. My first task was to see that they were rationed properly. There was a huge camp set up on the Sepik side of Cape Wom where they had been assembled.

I was stationed at ANGAU Headquarters at Wewak

At some stage I went out on a barge with another ANGAU man Len Wilson, to carry out an inspection of one of the Islands off the coast of Wewak – Mushu Island. The Island was beautifully clean, not inhabited, and had fresh-water springs. We knew at the time that there was something big in the wind, but did not know just what. After the Japanese surrender Mushu Island was one of two Islands where thousands of Japanese soldiers were put while awaiting transportation back to Japan.

One piece of ingenuity at the time was the introduction of a local radio station. This was totally unofficial and had been put together by the local Signals unit from old radio equipment they managed to get their hands on and used to play music for the soldiers for a couple of hours a day. It was just a small local station, but we often used to listen to it. One day a voice came over the station "We interrupt this programme to advise you that a 'device' has been dropped on Japan, and we expect to have some important news soon".

Several hours later another broadcast came over to the effect that, forthwith immediately, no Australian or allied soldiers were to expose themselves to any danger at all.

The next day another broadcast came to the effect that another device had been dropped which had devastated a whole Japanese city. Again it was reiterated that, under no circumstances, should any Australian soldiers expose themselves to any danger. When I went and asked one of the senior Officers what was going on, he was amazed at what we knew. He did not know anything about the local radio station at all, and was surprised that word had got around so quickly. He explained that it was a new bomb the Americans had which had been dropped. He went on to explain that it had something to do with splitting an atom and that the Americans had been working on this for some time, using scientists from all countries of the world.

I must confess that this worried me at the time as my limited knowledge of the atom was gained at high school and I recall our physics master saying that if ever the atom could be split that there could then be a continuous chain reaction which could result in the complete destruction of the world. Fortunately this was not the case.

The Japanese Surrender

The day after word came through of the unconditional surrender of the Japanese.

Within several days many thousands of Japanese started to come in to surrender and we then put them to work, cleaning up the areas and improving the road system. One thing that sticks in my mind was that, if looks could kill, I would have been dead many times, as we received many a nasty look.

My Return to Australia

I was high on the draft priority list for repatriation to Australia, but was told by the Commanding Officer of ANGAU that if I wanted to leave early I would probably go out on a cargo ship and would probably have to climb up the cargo net to get on board. My response was that I was prepared to climb up barbed wire if it meant going home.

I was a bit surprised that I was DP1 and several people told me that I was lucky to be going home as I wasn't even married. What had put me high up the list, of course, was the time I has spent on Active Service. My term in Hospital in Australia had actually counted as Active Service, and I had nearly 4 years up in all.

Even though I was not in combat I worked for the whole of the war in forward areas, and on many an occasion, had bullets flying over my head when we were carrying supplies in the mountains behind Salamaua.

A ship duly called and, of course, we had to climb up the cargo nets to get aboard.

I was thinking to myself for the voyage – Brisbane here I come – but, of course, the ship sailed directly to Sydney.

On the way home we pulled into Lae to pick up about another 40 chaps, and when I looked over the wharf I spotted Stan McCosker, who used to be the Copra inspector at Kokopo. I sang out to him and told him I was on the way home and asked if there was any way I could get a message home. His response was that I had come to the right man as he was O.C. Communications in Lae, so I gave him my parents address and he promised to look after it. This he duly did and my mother advised my sister Pat, who was in Sydney that I would be coming home and which ship I would be on.

Just before we docked at Woolloomooloo Docks in Sydney we were all gathered together and advised that this would be a military exercise and we would depart the ship the way soldiers should.

While this was going on a message came over the P.A. system "Sgt Keenan – please report to the galley". I did not understand this but was told by one of the Officers to report immediately. When I got there one of the cooks said "Sgt Keenan – quick" and took me over to the side of the ship to what looked like a cupboard but he moved it and there was a loading hole in the side about 4 feet by 3 feet. This looked straight onto the wharf where my sister was waiting and she rushed up to the ship and gave me a big hug and kiss before anyone could stop her. She then shouted out "105 Bronte Road, Bondi Junction – get there as soon as you can Tom. I have to get out of here as I have broken security"

Well you should have heard the cheers and claps from all those waiting for us to arrive.

We duly disembarked and were taken to an Army transit camp where we were advised to go into Sydney to the YMCA and pay the 2 shillings required to have a hot shower. I did this and then got a taxi out to see my sister. This was not as easy as it sounds as the Taxi was only allowed to go so far and the taxi driver had to arrange for me to transfer to another taxi to complete the journey to Bondi Junction.

I then had to wait to get a troop train back to Brisbane.

In Brisbane I went on leave for the time due to me. I was warned before I went on leave that I was still in the army and that I could be called back if necessary, so I kept my uniform.

I was finally discharged the day after my leave expired. The Army gave me a book "Return to Civilian Life" which I still have at home.

My Discharge Certificate states that I served on Continuous Full Time War Service for a total effective period of 1,546 days:-

In Australia 319 days

Outside Australia 1,227 days

My medals are:-

1939/45 Star

Pacific Star

War Medal 1939/45

Australian Service Medal

Papua New Guinea Independence Medal

Civilian Life

I never returned to New Guinea

I did not have a trade, and obtained a job as a scaffolder with J.S. Box & Sons. After I had been working for about a year my boss approached me to do a course at the Technical College to become a Licenced Scaffolder, as he did not have one on his team. I was being paid a rea-

sonably good wage, but, when I got my licence, the buck stopped with me, as I was the licenced scaffolder.

It was a time of great interest to scaffolders. Most of the buildings up to then were only three floors, but after the war buildings were being built as high as six floors, and scaffolding had to change in order to cope with the increased heights. As it happened one of the Lecturers at the Tech College, Harold Harsley, offered to assist me if I needed it at any stage. I called on his services a number of times, and he was wonderful, producing the appropriate plans and drawings, together with writings for safety precautions etc. All he ever asked for was, if there was something different or unusual about the particular job, he could bring his classes out to inspect the scaffolding as he believed in having his students see for themselves what he was teaching. His theory was, if the students looked out of a sixth floor window at a job, they could realise just how important the safety aspect was.

Later in life I had a lot of difficulty in getting a Service Pension. I had chest pains and had a lot of expenses when I went very deaf when I was only about 40 and the Repatriation Department would not consider my request for assistance. Funnily enough the Repatriation Department at first accepted my chest pains as being due to war service, but at the time I had never claimed for my hearing disability. However both the RSL and a friendly QC helped me a lot in my appeals to the Department. One of the facts in my favour was that it appeared that Government Officials had actually edited my health records, which is not allowable. It took some 15 years of appeals to obtain a pension, and the person hearing the final appeal actually suggested that I should also apply for my hearing as well, which he approved on the spot. Back in those days you received a Gold Card if you got over a 50% disability pension, and I was given nearly 60% at the final hearing.

Tom & Margaret Keenan on their wedding day

Margaret and I were married on 18th January, 1951. We had met through Margaret's brother buying a motor-bike from my brother Frank.

We have three children, 2 boys and a girl. Larry was born Nov 1953, Mark on Sep 1955 and Val in Feb 1958.

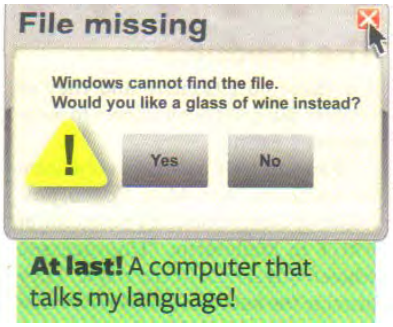
I joined a group called 'Troop Train 1992' which was formed to recreate the troop train movements from the war, but we cannot have steam engines drive the trains today as the water tanks and coal tenders are no longer available. They now get Diesel engines but recreate the troop trains to places such as Cairns, Townsville and the Atherton Tablelands so we can visit areas where we served during the war. We have 40 active members and have a great time revisiting places we used to go through during the war. It is so popular a lot of non-service people join our trips.

I will conclude with a song made up during the war about we NGVR men. It was made up by Hilary Farr and Neville Swanson.

It is called the "New Guinea Swoopers" and goes:-

Shivering on the mountain-tops and sweating by the shore,
Treading over country that we've never trod before,
We wander on through sun and rain and sometimes 'neath the moon,
Although we smell, we know quite well we'll get our wash-wash soon,
'Caus we're distinct from everyone, not Bombardiers or Fusiliers, or Troopers,
And when we're near a crowd we shout out loud
We're Bill Edwards own New Guinea Swoopers

So ends another fascinating story of one of our NGVR veterans. Compared to most soldiers who served in WW11 these men had remarkable service histories.



Had to get a new computer recently— unfortunately couldn't get one with this accessory

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

A vignette to capture the resilience of the human spirit

Ildefonce Mungemanganga had travelled a significant distance on the roof of a small truck in order to get to Kigali by eight o'clock, January 3rd, 1995, but he did not

know it. In an act of undoubted bravery and loyalty, Ildefonce's friends had taken custody of him after they discovered him, wherever it was he had been left, and found a way to get him to the United Nations Hospital. Several days prior, Ildefonce had been attacked, murderously beaten and left for dead. His attackers had tried to decapitate him, and they had very nearly succeeded. Instead of a neck, there was a gaping abyss, his lungs visible through the opening and his trachea severed. He was still able to breathe because his trachea was exposed through the hole between his head and his chest, allowing oxygen to flow into his lungs. But even that would not have been enough to keep him alive had the machete penetrated a millimetre deeper: as it was, it had missed his two vital carotid arteries. His face, too, was mutilated: the entire face smashed in.

The resuscitationist on duty that night was an Australian doctor-soldier from Brisbane named John Pearn. His military rank was Colonel; he was fifty-five, and before Rwanda he had been a senior paediatrician at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane for twenty-four years. Colonel Pearn held a senior post as a doctor-soldier in the Australian military, and when the UN sent seven thousand soldiers to Rwanda, with Australia providing the entire medical contingent, he and some twenty other doctors in the Australian Defence Reserves volunteered to go and help. They served in eight-week intensive rotations in groups of four at the United Nations Hospital, based in the capital, Kigali, of that stricken nation.

In April 1994, Colonel Pearn and the rest of the Western world had watched the televised footage of a ghastly and violent anarchy in the worst genocide that had occurred since the Second World War. An estimated eight hundred thousand people died in Rwanda in 1994, and only the first hundred thousand were killed by bullets. The rest were hacked to death with swords and machetes. There were literally millions of children stranded across the country, who needed not just medical skill, but life-saving care.

Colonel Pearn did not have to go to Rwanda, and nor did the dozens of other doctors who volunteered. But as a paediatrician, Colonel Pearn knew firsthand that Australian medical care was close to being the best in the world; that what was happening in Rwanda was a greater display of injury and death than Australia had ever seen; and that not going to help was not an option without sacrificing self-dignity and personal integrity. During the eight weeks he spent there, he and the three other specialist doctors in Rotation 4 of the Australian Forward Surgical Team, saw a long succession of horrific and often fatal injuries. There were children who were brought to the hospital by nuns, barely alive when they arrived, who died while being carried along the ten-metre-long corridor between the entrance and the emergency ward. There was a newspaper journalist who died after being in the hospital for eight days, having been blinded and suffering from severe brain damage following a murderous assault. An orthopaedic surgeon was always on hand at the hospital to operate on the children whose feet were blown apart by land mines. But amidst

all this death and destruction in the human-to-human combat, there glimmered little jewels of something more hopeful, hardier and more resistant – a human spirit that refused to give up.

Col John Pearn (L) resuscitationist in UNAMIR 11 United Nations Force in Rwanda, with Flt Lt Ormsby (c) Master Cpl Jim Muntrods (from Canada), with child victim of genocidal abuse.

There was a village called Kibilira in the high mountains, which was a three-hour drive away from Kigali along a narrow road. Like every community in Rwanda, it had been completely destroyed during the genocide of April-May 1994. The hospital there had been quite well-equipped beforehand, but it had been trashed, and looted, and every one of its doctors, nurses and every staff member cut to pieces. The sole survivor at Kibilira was a young teacher who had survived by hiding for twelve weeks, and he eventually set up a medical clinic in the old rooms of the hospital. Every Friday, if the intensive ward at Kigali could spare him, Colonel Pearn made the journey into the mountains in a heavily fortified army convoy.

On the first day he came, there was an orderly queue stretching half a mile. He and the other medics with him saw each person for a few minutes at a time, plying them with painkillers and antiseptics and bandages, then moving on to the next person. By the end of the day, there were still three or four hundred people who had not been seen. The queue was no longer, and had disintegrated into disorderly frustration and violence of desperate people was in the air.

One of the women who showed up that day at Kibilira had walked for two days to get there, but there was not enough time to see her, so she went home again. Two weeks later, she made the journey a second time to queue outside the Australian emergency clinic, and this time she was able to be seen by a doctor. In the genocidal slaughter which had engulfed her village, she was one of only two survivors. Her injuries were horrific: her lower stomach and pelvis had been split open with a knife and then clumsily sewn back together with wire. She had been discovered, and assumed to be dead, among a pile of corpses by a farmer who had hidden during the slaughter, and emerged hours later. Observing that she was eight months' pregnant, he dutifully carried out the customary postmortem Caesarean, part of local custom and culture, using a knife so the mother and baby could be buried separately.

Then he realised, with horror, that the woman was still alive. Using the only materials to hand, wire, he sewed her back up again and resuscitated her, but her internal organs were a mess. The anatomy of her bladder, uterus and urinary tract had been completely rearranged so that urine was constantly trickling out the bottom half of her body.

The baby was long dead; something, however, had evidently risen in the mother, that made her walk for two days to the newly-established Australian first aid clinic she had heard about, believing that someone there would be able to do something for her. Such is humanity's faith in the healing powers of doctors, and the indomitable will to live.

The doctor who saw her at Kibilira was Colonel Pearn, but he could not do anything for her. The equipment

they had was enough for basic first aid, and the soldiers and medics volunteered their sugar rations for the many children who showed up, but that was all. There had been many other desperately sick people who were beyond help, whom they had already turned away.

The only thing to be done was to tell her about the United Nations Hospital, three hours' drive away, at Kigali; and to promise her that if she could get herself there, he would find a way to help her. He wanted to take her back in the vehicle that had brought him there, but to transport civilians inside armed military convoys, with the risk of ambush, was strictly prohibited.

Exhausted resuscitationist. UN Hospital, Kigali. 29 Jan, 1995.

On one of those journeys to Kibilira, the army convoy that transported Colonel Pearn was ambushed by a unit of the Rwandan Patriotic Army. The RPA and the United Nations were the only two dominant military forces in Rwanda, and, though not technically enemies, the UN was not an invited guest to the country, nor was the convoy carrying Colonel Pearn travelling in an area where they were authorised to enter. The group that ambushed them was made up of a bunch of adolescent boy-soldiers – the youngest was fourteen, the oldest not more than twenty-two – all wearing T-shirts and baseball caps and very dangerous. There were perhaps thirty of them, and they were heavily armed with guns. The Australian soldiers in the convoy were also heavily armed with guns. They were ordered to get out of the vehicle. Colonel Pearn and the soldiers complied. They got out of the vehicle.

Almost everyone was pointing a firearm at someone else.

Colonel Pearn, as Senior Officer took a few steps forward and began to speak, in his best French, explaining who they were and why they were there. The protocol in these situations was to negotiate first, try to dispel the situation, and not to fire unless it was absolutely necessary. There was no law and order remaining in Rwanda: the only law remaining was the rule of the weapon. As representatives of the UN, there were strict "Rules of Engagement". It was permissible for them to use lethal force to protect themselves and civilians, but if there was a shoot-out between Australian soldiers and Rwandans, there could very well be an international incident.

He had been speaking for perhaps twenty to thirty seconds when the leader of the group lowered his gun and held up his hands. He then said, in English, "Are you trying to speak French?"

There were several seconds of silence before one of the Australian soldiers involuntarily sniggered.

(More than ten years later, he and his niece, the author, were sitting in his living room in Brisbane, and she was telling him how difficult she found it was to speak French. "I've been learning for eight years and I still can't string a sentence together."

"Not being able to speak French saved my life," he said.) The tension broke almost immediately. The Rwandan Patriotic Army were laughing as they escorted the Australian military back the way they had come.

A week after that first visit to Kibilira, a woman walked up to the Australian guard post at the United Nations Hospital. Undaunted by the machine guns which the soldiers

held, she told them she wanted to see Colonel John Pearn, and managed to persuade one of them to take a message for her.

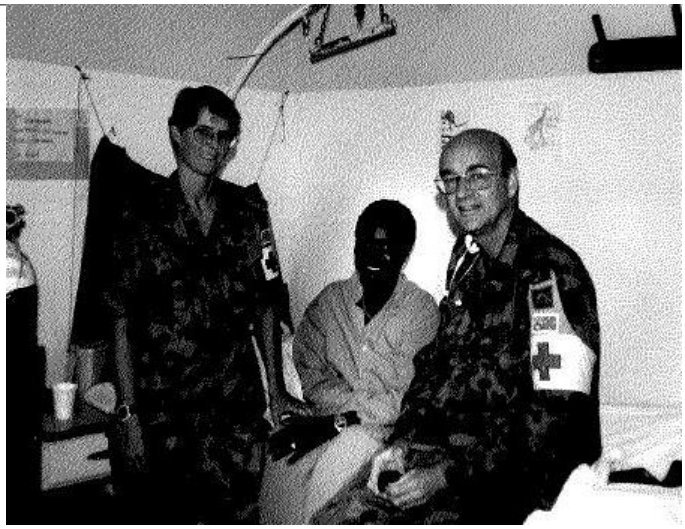
It was the woman who had suffered a premortem, amateur Caesarean. Somehow she had managed to walk down the mountain road, the road that was a precarious three-hour-journey by car, with the wire the farmer had used holding the skin of her pelvis together. She had made it to Kigali, and she wanted someone to help her.

The aftermath of genocidal civil war. An 11 yr old boy, the result of a landmine blast while he was collecting firewood. One leg and both eyes destroyed. Intensive Care Ward, UN Hospital, Kigali. At right his mother and Col John Pearn, Resusciationist and Physician in Charge, the Intensive Care Ward.

Photographed with permission Mrs Dorosika, 5 Feb, 1995.

Colonel Pearn met her outside the military hospital. After examination, he thought he would have to tell her, for the second time, that he could not do anything for her. Her organs were so damaged that it was beyond anything he had ever seen before.

Miraculously, one of his fellow doctors, an Australian RAAF surgeon, knew that there was a trained renal surgeon who specialised in kidneys and urinary tracts and who was serving in one of the UN infantry battalions in Rwanda. He was called in immediately and agreed to operate on her. The next day she was alive, conscious



Post-Operative Ward UN Hospital, Kigali. (L-R) Capt Bronwyn Wheeler (Sister in Charge); Mrs Uwimana (described above) and Col John Pearn, Resuscitationist and Intensivist. Photographed and produced with permission of Mrs Uwimana

and sitting up in bed in military pyjamas. The surgical team had to remove her uterus, but she was able to walk out normally ten days later.

As for Ildefonce Mungemangaga: he, too, was luckier than those eight hundred thousand people who were reduced to statistics. He walked out of the hospital alive. After a month of surgery and postoperative intensive care, Ildefonce was discharged with bandages across his forehead, nose and chin, and temporary stitches holding his neck together. Two weeks later, he returned fit and well, with his most precious possession, his cow, as a gift to thank the Australian doctors for saving his life. Colonel Pearn and the other doctors could not refuse a gesture made so earnestly, so they told him they could not take it on the military plane with them, but they would collect it later if they returned – would he mind it for them until then?

Fifteen years on, he is still minding it.

Author—Georgia White, University of Melbourne. 2011

A wonderful story, and we thank our Association Patron, Maj. Gen. John Pearn, AO, RFD (Retd) for his voluntary service to Rwanda, which, without doubt, resulted in the saving of many lives which would otherwise have been lost.

Maj Gen Pearn also served in Vietnam as the Consultant Physician to the Aust & New Zealand forces in 1970 for 4 months, based at 1 Aust Field Hosp in Vung Tau.

Other deployments included PNG (1966 & 67) where he spent 5 months as Training Major in C Coy PNGVR, based in Goroka.

FLASHBACK. Bernard Arnold on Tank at Rabaul Depot .

"And this is Dr Og, your anaesthetist"

This year will experience 4 unusual dates.

1/1/11, 11/1/11, 1/11/11, and 11/11/11

Now take the last 2 digits of the year you were born plus the age you will be this year and it will equal 111.

VALE—Roy Sheargold.

Roy was on a flight home from Dubai when he passed on peacefully in his sleep on 6July.

Above—PIR members at Nadzab, Markham Valley, 1945. The 4 made up the Regimental HQ Staff of PIR.

Back L-R Col Edwards, CO. Maj Darcy Brigade Maj.

Front Capt Sheargold Staff Capt Lt Wilson Liaison Offr.

Units in Nadzab at that time were:-

HQ PIR

Pacific Islands Depot Bn

2nd New Guinea Inf Bn

3rd New Guinea Inf Bn (being formed)

In the field were:-

Papuan Inf Bn

1st New Guinea Inf Bn.

Above Capt Sheargold and Lt Wilson at Nadzab, 1945.

Photos forwarded by Roy prior to his trip.

LEST WE FORGET

VALE LES IRVINE

Les served with ANGAU during WW2 and each year for the past 5 years has marched in front of our Assn Banner on Anzac Day. Les was too ill to march this year and went around in a golf buggy.

He died of cancer on 5th July—below is his story.

LESLIE JAMES IRVINE

MY FAMILY BACKGROUND AND LIFE PRIOR TO ENLISTMENT 1941

I was born on 16th August, 1922 at our home, 5 Middle Street, West End, Brisbane.

My grandfather, John William Henry Anderson was born on 10th June 1863 at 1 Graham Street, Plymouth, England. In1883, at age 20 he came to Australia on board the sailing ship "RMS Rohilla". He returned to England and later went to South Africa where he married Charlotte Edwina Beech in 1889. Charlotte was also born in England in 1863. They married in Johannesburg.

My grandfather was a carpenter and joiner and travelled throughout South Africa. He served in The Boer War and the Matabele War in South Africa. My mother, Gladys Alma Anderson was born in Cape Town. The other children were born in various towns including Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Ladysmith. The family came to Australia by sea, when my mother was in her early teens, and settled in Brisbane. My grandfather lived with us at West End in his later years and passed away on 24th August 1940.

My mother married Horace Bradley on 27th December 1916, who was born in Yorkshire, England in 1883, and was killed in France in World War I on the 3rd May 1917. They had one son John Herbert Bradley who was born on 21st October 1917 and he passed away on 12th April 1962.

My grandfather and grandmother, on my fathers' side were born in Ireland in 1850 and 1861 and passed away in Brisbane on 11th August 1913 and 14th October 1948 respectively. My grandmother was one of the original Leitch family of Leitch's Road, Albany Creek.

My father, James Irvine was born at Leitch's Road, Albany Creek on 30th September 1885 and married my mother, who was then Mrs Gladys Alma Bradley (widow), in 1921. He was a hair dresser by trade and died 6th September 1951.

I had two young sisters, Thelma Gladys Irvine and Olive Ruby Irvine and a half brother, John Herbert Bradley. My sisters and I have been very close all our lives. I visited Olive, who lives with her family at Gatton frequently and I would stay with them for several days.

Sadly, Thelma passed away on 25th June 2002 after the doctors inserted a faulty valve to her aorta in an operation. I still miss her very much as she lived at Holland Park and Wishart and we visited each other and she stayed with me over night on many occasions. We also went on Probus trips, phoned each other frequently and talked for forty-five minutes or more at a time.

I attended the West End State School up to Grade V and went to the South Brisbane Intermediate School in Merivale Street, South Brisbane for Grades VI and VII. After passing the State School Scholarship examination, I attended the State Commercial High School in George Street in the city. Completing sub-junior I left school and looked for employment as I wanted to earn money to help my family, which was not very financial my father was out of work for three years during the depression.

In those days there were no computers, TVs, refrigerators or radios but we had a crystal set with two sets of ear phones. We had a gas stove but had the gas disconnected because we couldn't afford to pay for the gas supply, and used a wood stove instead. There was an ice chest but, as we couldn't afford to buy ice, we used a metal and gauze safe hanging under the house for the milk and butter. We never ate ice cream and had roast chicken only at Christmas, when dad would kill a "chook" for mum to pluck and clean before cooking.

As houses did not have insect screens, we hung fly paper from the ceiling and burnt mosquito coils at night. This sounds ridiculous but houses were built without bathrooms or toilets. We had a metal bath in a shed at the bottom of our back steps with the earth closet at the rear of the yard. Rotary clothes hoists were not invented so people strung wire clothes lines across the back yard, held up with wooden props.

Men out of work would do anything to earn a 'bob'. Some would borrow a horse and cart and drive down the streets selling clothes props or calling out for any empty bottles. Our father would borrow a horse and cart, and he and I would go from West End to the bush beyond Camp Hill to collect firewood. When my father was out of work he would do "relief work" for about 2 ½ days a week, on the roads with a pick and shovel, and the men would line up at the police station at the end of the week for their pay.

I was a real "Ginger Meggs". I went on a milk run and drove the horse and cart, distributed newspapers on a paper run and went to the bake house on weekends and holidays to water and feed the horses so my favourite uncle could have a rest.

I rode my "trolley" down the hills in the district. Boundary Street near Dornoch Terrace, West End was a good steep hill until the Council reduced its height by 16 feet to form an approach to a bridge across the river to the University, which never went ahead. Some of my favourite hills still exist at Baynes Street, Hamstead Road and Gladstone Road.

My brother and I would take our cart with a few sacks to "Tritton's" factory in Grey Street, South Brisbane and collect as much firewood as we could by filling the cart and the sacks with offcuts.

I was in the naval cadets for 4 years from 11 to 14 years of age. We met in John Street, now called Berwick Street, Fortitude Valley. We wore proper naval uniforms, experienced strict military discipline and

learnt rifle drills, signalling, navigation lights and so on. At the end of the year we would go into camp at Lota, take our turn at peeling spuds and onions and do guard duty. Our rifles were smaller than a .303 but nearly twice as large as a .22. We would go on marches led by our own Naval Band. I learnt to look after myself. I was very proud on the last drill night of the year when I was introduced to the Governor, Sir Leslie Wilson, as the cleanest cadet in camp.

On Friday nights I would be given two pennies for tram fares to take me to the Naval cadets in John Street, Fortitude Valley. One penny was for the fare from West End to the Customs House and then I walked to John Street. The other penny was for my tram fare from the Customs House to West End. After cadets, some nights, I would spend my penny on an ice cream then walk home to West End.

Les in Goodna bushland, 1942

Although we were without the luxuries kids have today, we were never bored as we made our own fun playing cricket, marbles and "cat". On Guy Fawkes Night, 5th November of each year, we would draw outlines such as a horse on kerosene tin, punch the outline with a nail, dress up, blacken our faces and put a lighted candle in the tin. My sister Olive and I would then walk around the district to get people to throw a penny or two into the tin.

When the Council decided to put the sewerage in our street, the men dug the trench with picks and shovels, as there was no such thing as a jack-hammer in those days. When the digging became too difficult, the men would punch a hole with a large drill and sledge hammer, place dynamite in the hole, light the fuse, cover the hole and then "bang bang". At "knock off time" the ganger would come along at 5 o'clock and blow a referee type whistle. The men would come running down the street in their heavy boots, shouting and laughing, shower and change in a large shed at the bottom of the street and head home. I also happened to have a referee type whistle, so one day, at 4 o'clock; I stood on our front steps and blew the whistle as loud as I could. The men stopped work and came running. When the ganger came at 5 o'clock and blew his whistle, most of the men were well gone.

For entertainment on Saturday nights we would walk to the southern approach of the Old Victoria Bridge and listen to the West End Salvation Army Band. When this was over we would visit two of Dad's brothers who owned taxis on the rank in Delaney's Lane, opposite South Brisbane Railway Station. We would then buy a penny worth of chips and walk home.

When travelling on trams as teenagers, we would ride on the platform at the rear of the tram, as the custom those days. One day when halfway along Melbourne Street, the tram conductor, who looked like a Scotsman, wouldn't let anybody get away not paying his fare. This day he got off the tram and chased a non-payer along the footpath. While he was demonstrating with this passenger, we gave the "ding ding" and the tram drove off leaving the conductor behind. We rang the bell for the rest of our journey to the West End shopping centre where we got off. I waited on the footpath to see what would happen. The tram driver was getting very impatient banging on his foot bell, but there was nobody to give him the "ding ding" so he could drive on. After banging for a while, he looked around and discovered he had no conductor, who arrived on the next tram. Many years later I caught up with a fellow whom I knew worked on trams on the West End line and I told him about this incident. He said "Yes, that was the joke of the depot".

I started work as an office boy with British Products Pty Ltd which was situated on the corner of Edward and Elizabeth Streets in 1937. I left in 1941 to enlist in the army.

MY WARTIME SERVICE

I enlisted in December 1941, just before the Japs came into the war, aged 19. My army number was QX 56932. I was initially posted to the northern part of the large Chermside Army Camp with the 7th Australian Field Ambulance as part of the 7th Australian Infantry Brigade.

After some weeks we left Chermside and camped on the outskirts of Nambour. We were there only a couple of weeks before being split into small sections and sent to the Gaythorne Railway Station in Brisbane, where there were 24 trains to transfer the 7th Brigade to Townsville. Our small sections were allocated so that each train had some ambulance personnel in case of sickness or an emergency on the journey.

Our train, the 24th comprised of two types of carriages, covered ones for the officers, the ambulance personnel and the Regimental Aid Post (RAP) for sick or injured soldiers. The rest were open trucks in which the soldiers travelled. Needless to say they were soon covered in soot, dust and rain.

Our train trip took four days as we had to stop in loops on many occasions to allow trains travelling in the opposite direction to pass on the single track. Soldiers had to sleep on the floor of the open trucks. When the train stopped to take water or meals for the soldiers at the railway refreshment rooms, soldiers would line up where the engine was taking water and have a wash.

We left our train at Stuart, boarded army trucks and travelled along the Charters Towers Road to our new camping area. Our duties in the camp included calling .

On arrival in Milne Bay Harbour, to reduce the load on

Les and two RAAF men from the Photographic Section at Tadjj, on a native outrigger on Ali Island, 1944

the RAP of the various units for sick or injured who needed to be taken to our Advanced Dressing Station (ADS) for treatment, and if necessary, onto our Main Dressing Station (MDS). I was on duty one day at our MDS when a soldier, who had a bad accident, had his face stitched without anaesthetic by Dr Connor, the Officer in Charge (O I/C) of my company. Our other duties were to meet planes flying into Garbutt and ships sailing into the port with soldiers suffering with malaria, scrub typhus and injuries who had not healed in the Australian General Hospital (AGH) in Papua.

We were camped next to the RAAF fighter strip at Aitkenvale when Townsville had the three raids by the Jap planes. The fellows in my tent were drinking when we were ordered into our trenches, but they could not be bothered getting off their bunks and said to me "You just sit outside the tent junior, and let us know what's doing". I had never seen anti-aircraft shells bursting in the sky and I thought a Jap plane had been hit, but I was wrong. The Jap plane was flying very high.

I do not know the exact date, but when 7th Brigade left Brisbane for Townsville, our Field Ambulance Unit was transferred to the 29th Brigade.

Townsville was a wild town during the war and was under the strict control of the army. Military police directed the traffic on point duty and at night the town and traffic operated under black-out conditions. When girls went to dances, they were accompanied by their parents. There were fights between the Yanks and the Aussies and on one occasion a Yank was thrown into the river from the Victoria Bridge. I was on guard duty at Roseneath, which is on the Townsville to Charters Towers rail line, the night when the American negroes went berserk and Australian machine gunners were called in to restore order.

We were eventually issued with our jungle greens, taken to the wharf, boarded the ship "Katoomba" and accommodated in the ship's hold surrounded by cases of ammunition. We were travelling in convoy with the ship "Duntroon" and escorted by two Australian destroyers, one being "HMAS Vendetta" with a Catalina flying overhead. The two destroyers would sweep back and forth in front of the two ships, which kept some distance apart.

I missed the initial landing at Milne Bay because my Am-Balance unit had been transferred to the 29th Brigade.

On arrival in Milne Bay Harbour, to reduce the loan on the "Katoomba", a number of our troops were transferred to "HMAS Vendetta" to land. When we were aboard the "Vendetta", we saw six bombers in formation coming towards us. The sailors were at action stations and manning the anti-aircraft guns. This didn't look too good for us standing on the deck. Fortunately it was a false alarm as they were our planes.

We landed at Gilli Gilli and travelled by truck to where our HQ and MDS would be located. My B Company moved to another area later to establish its ADS. Our meals for the next three weeks were baked beans three times a day. At one stage later, we were on two meals of beans a day and a vitamin pill.

We had many air-raids, day and night, and the 3.7 inch anti-aircraft gun alongside us made sure we didn't go to sleep. On one such raid, after the Jap planes passed overhead, we could see what looked like hundreds of lights falling from the sky. These lights were attached to miniature parachutes, one of which I acquired and which I recently donated to the NGVR museum. This illumination was to light up the area for the Jap bombers which followed. Fortunately for us, our RAAF fighters intercepted them out at sea and the raid was unsuccessful.

Les with natives at Yakumil, Aitape, Wewak area, early 1845

To be Continued.

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

VALE

Major Frank George Hoeter MBE ED JP

A TRIBUTE TO A PNGVR VETERAN

Frank George Hoeter was born in Pago Pago, American Samoa, in 1923, arriving in Australia in 1935.He attended Sydney Grammar School and at 18 years of age he enlisted in the AIF. After WW2 he joined the NSW Police Service, was seconded to the Commonwealth Police Service at Canberra and later joined the Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary as a Sub Inspector in 1949, retiring in 1975 as a Chief Superintendent. He settled in Hervey Bay where he founded a chapter of the International Police Force. In his busy retirement he also served as the Deputy Director of the

Wide Bay Emergency Serviced. Rotary and the RSL also provided a path of expression for him.

Frank with Inspector Rackemann, Minister for the Army, Mr Kraemer and possibly Minister for Territories (Mr Paul Hasluck?)

Frank served for over 20 years in the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles.

During WW2 he served in several units including the 57th Special Wireless Group and the 8th Lines of Communication Provost Company. After discharge from the AIF in 1946 he enlisted in the3rd Infantry Bn CMF in Canberra. He joined the PNGVR on 15 May, 1951, at Lae in A Coy as a Private Recruit (this rank seems strange given his veteran statue). He was commissioned as a Lieut in Oct 1953 and promoted Major in May 1962. He was appointed Battalion Second in Command in the same year and relinquished that position when he was appointed as a United Nations Observer to Kashmir in March 1963.

Maj Frank Hoeter (Rear L) at Foreign Armies Course, May, 1965

During his service in PNGVR he served as OIC B Coy, Rabaul, C Coy in the Eastern and Western Highlands, and D Coy at Wewak before retiring from PNGVR in 1972. Frank received his MBE primarily for his serviced to PNGVR. With Peter Harbeck he raised the Madang Platoon and was personally responsible for forming the Samarai Detachment.

Frank Hoeter dies on 1st August, 2011, and is survived by his wife Ruth, a daughter and two grand-children.

Bob Harvey-Hall.

Ed. I recall playing Rugby League for Madang when Frank Hoeter was refereeing in Goroka. He also referred in Rabaul and Wewak.

Maj Frank Hoeter at the presentation of the Colours to PNGVR with Lt G.R. Allman carrying the Colour

The caption says Mt Hagen \, however the depot behind is the / Goroka Depot..

VALE

COL. DONALD McINNES RAMSAY OAM

Col Ramsay, former CO of the 2nd Bn of the Pacific Island Regiment has died in Sydney.

He was born and educated in Scotland and graduated from the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, Commissioned in The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) in 1943, he saw active service during WW2 in Italy (including the Cassino battles) and Greece. He was demobbed in 1947 as a Major, however joined the Aust. Army as a Captain and was posted to 2 RAR. He became Adjutant when the unit was posted to Malaya in the 1950's during the Emergency and then a Coy Comd. He was also Senior Instructor at the Canungra Jungle Training Centre.

He served with the PIR twice. From 1960-62 he was a Coy Comd and then Bn Second in Comd. From 1965-67 he raised the 2nd Bn PIR and became its foundation

Commanding Officer.

2 PIR was based in Wewak with responsibility for the border with Indonesia. Whilst at Wewak he provided materiel and training assistance to D Coy PNGVR.

He retired from the Army in 1972 to lead PNG's largest community owned export import Company until Independence in 1975. Later he served on the admin staff of The Scots College in Sydney until 1994.

He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2001 for services to international relations, recognizing his contributions to both PNG and "gap year" exchange programmes between British and Australian youth

Bob Harvey-Hall recalls.coming across him when on a recce for the 2nd PNGVR annual Camp at Mt Ambra, whilst in the Coy of Col Mal Bishop and Peter Harbeck. As Bob recalls Col Ramsay preferred very good Scotch Whisky in the mess..

Comd PNG Comand Brig. I.M.Hunter (L) with Lt Col D.M. Ramsay

Sgt Raymond Dalton

It is with regret that we also advise the death of Ray Dalton, WW2 veteran and an early member of A Coy PNGVR, on 12th Sep., 2011, aged 88 years.

More details of Ray's life will appear in the next issue.

This flag, on display in your Assn Museum, was donated to the Museum by Jack Goad (Dec'd), who obtained it whilst serving with the NGVR and removing German nationals from the Lutheran Mission at Finschhafen in 1942.

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

All correspondence to:-

The Secretary, P.O. Box 885, PARK RIDGE, Qld., 4125

Mobile:- 0424 562 030

Email:- pngvr@optusnet.com.au

www.pngvr.com