



# HARIM TOK TOK

VOLUME

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

Greetings Gentlemen!

The annual Light Horse versus PNGVR 0.303 over open sights rifle shoot was conducted Sunday 26 August at the Fassifern Valley Rifle Range situated a few km south of Boonah SEQ. The Association was represented by Ian Thompson and his brother, Mal Zimmermann and me. It was a very pleasant mild, sunny day with some cross wind, but the Light Horse out shot us again. I had a better day using my new transitional glasses which were a great improvement over the bifocals—all I need now is a zeroed rifle and a new set of eyes, then beware the Light Horse. Paul Oates, ex-kiap, and his Boonah mates do a great job organising the event and, if you have a chance to participate next year, do so as it is a wonderful day out in the beautiful SE Queensland country side. There is also a keen competition for women using 0.22 calibre rifles with peep sights.

**VALE TOM KEENAN:** Eleven Association members, Norm Mundy, John Holland, Doug Ng, Jesse Chee, Ralph Seeto, Terry Glover and his wife, Tom Dowling, Mal Zimmermann, Graham Blanch and ? Newton, attended Tom Keenan's funeral service in Nambour on Thursday 13<sup>TH</sup> September. John Holland represented the President of the Association and gave Tom's eulogy covering his NGVR experiences, which were previously



PNG Consul General Paul Nerau presenting Tom Keenan with slouch hat with Bird of Paradise feathers as worn by NGVR and Bruce Crawford, Circa 2008 in Consul General's office, Brisbane.

published in issues 66,67,68,69 and 70 of our Harim Tok Tok. John extended the Association's condolences to Tom's wife Margaret, daughter Val and family. Our members joined with the local RSL to conduct the usual "Poppy Parade". By my reckoning there is less than a half dozen original NGVR men left .... lest we forget.

Coming events include the mixed dinning night to be held at Jimboomba, Saturday 13th October, 2012. If you require further information or wish to notify your acceptances contact Bob Collins, phone 07 5526 8396 [bob-collins@bigpond.com](mailto:bob-collins@bigpond.com), or to Barry Wright phone 07 5546 9865, email [barrypam.wright@bigpond.com](mailto:barrypam.wright@bigpond.com), by 6th October. There is a restriction on the number of guests so a policy of "first in, best dressed" applies. Bob has requested guests to please pay before the night.

Do not forget the forthcoming Association's AGM to be held at our Wacol Military Museum on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October starting at 1230 pm. The Museum will be open from 1000 am and a free Bar-be-que will



begin 11:30 am. For catering purposes please RSVP to Colin Gould, our Secretary, by 15 October. Diary this date now as we need as many as possible in attendance. The AGM papers have already been emailed and hardcopies are in the mail.

Fassifern Valley shooters relaxing

## IMPORTANT 1942 DATES FOR NGVR

Dec 1941	Pearl Harbour bombed
8 Dec 1941	<b>Selected full time call up of NGVR</b>
21 Jan 1942	<b>Lae/Salamaua/Bulolo bombed</b>
	<b>NGV assumes New Guinea's civil administration</b>
	Lae evacuated
22 Jan	<b>NGVR mobilised</b>
	Salamaua receives warning of a invasion fleet
23 Jan 1942	<b>Rabaul invaded</b>
1 Feb	Lae and Wau bombed
2 Feb	POM bombed
3 Feb	Ambon surrenders
13 Feb	<b>NGVR at Lae for seaborne rescue of survivors from New Britain</b>
15 Feb	ANGAU formed
	Singapore surrenders
19 Feb	Darwin bombed
20 Feb	Timor invaded
23 Feb	Timor surrenders
8 Mar	<b>Lae &amp; Salamaua invaded</b>
9 Mar	RAAF bombed Salamaua
10 Mar	US Carrier aircraft bomb shipping at Lae & Salamaua Finschhafen invaded
17 Mar	McArthur arrives in Australia
18 Mar	McArthur becomes Supreme Comd Allied Forces, SWPA
22 Mar	Aust. P40s attack Lae airfield and destroy 12 aircraft
27 Mar	Blamey made Comd Allied of Land Forces, SWPA
28 Mar	First GIs arrive Sydney
12 Apr	A 60 man platoon from 1 Ind Coy reinforcements arrive in Wau via Bulldog
23 Apr	Kanga Force formed with reinforcement to be sent when POM threat removed.
May	Guadalcanal invaded - Japs start to construct airfield
4- 8 May	<b>Battle of the Coral Sea - POM invasion fleet returns to Rabaul</b>
12 May	Kanga Force instructed to harass enemy in Markham and Salamaua
22-23 May	2/5 Ind Coy air lifted into Wau as part of Kanga Force
6 Jun	<b>Battle of Midway - pivotal battle of the War</b>
29 Jun	Raid on Salamaua by 2/5 and NGVR
30 Jun	Raid on Heath's Pln- Comd of 2/5 killed
21 Jul	Japs attack Mubo & driven off with 12 dead
21/22 Jul	<b>Buna / Gona invaded for overland push to take POM</b>
29 Jul	Japs occupy Kokoda
2 Aug	Japs bomb Wau, Bulolo and Skindewai
7 Aug	US Forces invade Guadalcanal ( <b>Japs defeated 9 Feb 1943</b> )
25-26 Aug	Milne Bay invaded by Japs for airfields to support Papua campaigns
30 Aug	Japs occupy Mubo
7 Sep	Japs withdraw from Milne Bay
26 Sep	Japs withdraw from Ioribaiwa on Kokoda Track
1 Oct	Kanga Force raids Mubo
18 Nov	Australians reach Kumusi River
22 Jan 1943	Japanese defeated at Gona/Buna

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**Stanley Lionel Burton****Continued from last issue**

His story as told to Bob Collins

**I leave Mingende for Bena Bena**

After a week and without any prior notice I received a signal from HQ advising that I would be relieved by two operators and that I would travel to Bena Bena. The relief arrived in about three days and, after I briefed them on the general procedures of the station and introduced them to the local chiefs who had assisted me, I set out to walk to Bena Bena accompanied by two natives who had helped me carry my radio equipment from Madang to this point, and, of course, my watch dog Dallas. This walk took three days but was made difficult by rain and muddy tracks. When I arrived at Bena Bena I met my old partner from previous operations such as Sugarloaf, Camp Diddy, Markham Point, Madang and various interesting reconnaissance work we carried out in the Lae/Markham area, Lofty Anderson.

I was given the task of running the track from Bena Bena to Kainantu, where I made contact with Maurie Perkins who was looking after a Government Station, and I was able to arrange a good home for Dallas the watch dog who was so valuable to me after leaving Madang.



A jeep crossing a newly constructed bridge built with  
ANGAU supervision and local labour.

**Some disappointments but I finally go on leave**

Old partner Lofty Anderson and I were taken to Port Moresby by an American DC3 aircraft and the crew were amazed when we told them what we were doing. They offered to fly us out to Australia when we were available to go on leave but HQ declined saying that they arranged our movement orders to suit this type of arrangement.

The first interview after arriving at HQ was with the Commanding Officer who was very interested in obtaining details of our movements since leaving Kaindi. He congratulated us on the excellent work we did under the most difficult conditions. We were informed that we were used as examples of what was expected of trainees when they were being trained as operators and we were given the nickname of 'The Champs'. However, we were not placed on draft for leave in Australia as promised by the C.O. but, because of our knowledge of the natives, we were given the task of organising natives in the construction of native type buildings for use as new Headquarters. We made several approaches to the Adjutant regarding leave but just received promises that we would be on the next ship. One day the C.O. walked past us and asked how the Champs were going. We immediately asked why we were still at the camp

and he told us he was surprised we were not out on leave and he would demand reasons why we had been delayed, and we would definitely be on the next ship. He was true to his word and we understand he went immediately to have the matter clarified.

I was discussing our leave routine at the administration office one day when I noticed a very nice radiogram in the office, and immediately recognised it as my own which I had to leave with all our other belongings in our home in Bulolo. I told the W.O. on duty that I was sure it belonged to me and he agreed that it had been sent to them from Bulolo. He suggested that I would take it to Australia when I went on leave and that he would arrange for it to be loaded on to the truck that would take us to the ship and also thanked me for the pleasure it had given them while there. Unfortunately I was unable to carry it to the ship from where we were unloaded from the transport so I arranged for the driver to take the radiogram back to HQ so that at least they could derive some pleasure from it.

**I finally go on Leave and promptly go down with Malaria**

My leave commenced on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1943, and I came to Brisbane, where Daphne had a small flat which she obtained after leaving Wau in late 1941. She had seen her family in North Qld and then come to Brisbane and carried out a lot of volunteer work for the Services.

However, as was common with many soldiers coming down from New Guinea in those days, I promptly came down with Malaria and spent much time in and out of various hospitals. We had attacks of Malaria in New Guinea on and off and these had been treated with a dose of quinine, perhaps a day or so in bed recuperating, but when you came down to the cooler climate in Australia the Malaria really took over



Stan & Daphne on his arrival in Australia on leave.

**I am transferred to AIB (Allied Intelligence Bureau) and stay in Australia**

I was finally on my way back to New Guinea, after recovering from Malaria when I was called into an office in Brisbane where I was quizzed about various areas in New Guinea which I knew well – I found later there were major operations to be conducted in those areas and my information was well received.

This was the office of AIB and I feel that my name was given to them by another chap I had run into on leave. I was retained with AIB for a time providing various types of information and ended up on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the MacArthur building, having been transferred into AIB from New Guinea Air Warning Wireless.

### I miss out on Officer Promotion Course

I had been recommended for attendance at an Officer Promotion Course, but we were carrying out a particular job in preparing a map, when one of the Officers in charge, a Major, requested the report be finished that evening. I advised him that I had a problem with the naming of two villages in the area and was not sure which was which. I was not prepared to put my name to any report which was incorrect, as it could have serious consequences if someone was directed to go to a particular village and it turned out to be the wrong one. I had someone coming in during the next few days who could clear the matter up, but the Major would not listen. He had never been in the field and did not understand the importance of all maps etc being absolutely correct. In the end I did not attend the Officer Promotion Course.

### Working at AIB

During my time with AIB I worked with various English and American personnel (mainly the latter) and often had the task of flying to various American bases both in Australia and Overseas e.g. the Philippines, to convey information we had produced. If a large Unit was due to invade a certain area in the South West Pacific our role was to speak to anyone who had information on that area.

Either they were brought to us in Brisbane, or we went to see them, no matter where they were at the time. At one stage a shipping company had a problem as we required to interview one of their Captains who had frequently sailed into a particular area, and they had to release him for some time and find a suitable replacement for him in the meantime.

At one stage I was pressured by the senior officer in the section to produce a report on one of the larger Islands in New Guinea. I advised him that it would take at least 24 hrs to produce but he insisted that it be done straight away. I replied "Sir! I'm sorry but I will not put my name to something which may not be correct. However I will have the information and report ready in 24 hrs".

I had a very high priority for aircraft movement and this caused a few problems at times – once in particular with a American Major. I was a Sergeant and it upset him more than somewhat that he was removed from a flight for me to take his place on the flight. I apologised by telling him that there was nothing I could do about the situation, but the fact that he had been replaced on the flight by a Sgt did not sit well.

At the end of the War I was working with an American chap on a project connected with the Inland Sea of Japan when the Atom Bomb was dropped. When Japan surrendered I announced that as far as I was concerned I was of no further use and wanted to

finish up and take my discharge. However it was not that easy and I was kept on for a time still making trips to various American bases to convey information.

### Confusion on my Discharge

When I was being discharged the Cpl clerk handling my discharge asked me for my number. I replied NGX 452. His reply was "We don't have a category for you!" In response to my query he responded that they didn't have a category for anyone with an NGX number. My only response was "OK. Send me back to New Guinea and discharge me there". His reply - "We can't! It's under military control" to which I responded "Well that's your problem - all I want is a discharge certificate". In the end all I asked for was my discharge certificate and not to bother about anything else.

It was common in those days to receive such things as clothing coupons etc upon discharge, however because of my supposedly unusual circumstances, I received nothing.

Several days later I got a call from the Premier's Office to the effect asking me to call a particular person there. When I went in the Premier's Secretary came out and advised me that the Premier was in a meeting but that he had wanted to see me to apologise for the problem I had encountered with my NGX number and that it was something that should not have happened. Was there anywhere I wanted to go? When I replied "Cairns", I was given a Premier's pass for my travel.

### Post War

It didn't take long for Daphne and I to return to North Qld where I commenced a transport business with my younger brother, George, based at Atherton. We also started a sawmill at Kairi, about 10 miles from Atherton. With the increase in building in Nth Qld after the War there was a big demand for timber and a number of sawmills also started up on the Tablelands.

We also moved into heavy equipment. The cane farms in the area, started on soldier settlement blocks had no way of clearing their land, so we commenced purchasing heavy equipment from various disposal sales in the Townsville area, and began contract clearing etc.

I had the experience of working on heavy equipment in the area before the War and the dozers and other heavy equipment could easily be serviced and handled by myself.

Together with my younger brother, George, we registered the first Road Train in Qld and ran it west of Cairns. The Qld Govt worked closely with us as they were keen to see vast numbers of cattle moved across the country a lot more quickly than was normal.

In 1974, together with other family members, we sold our businesses and I took up a position as Administration Director in Brisbane with a public company, Retravision.

At the time they were looking for suitable land for expansion and I was given the task of finding it. I looked at a number of sites and the one chosen was examined closely. As part of the process I examined previous flood levels and this particular site was located 15feet (5m) above previous levels. We had the concrete poured for the new premises when the big flood of 1974 occurred. One of my staff rang me during the flood and I asked "Where are you ringing from?" He replied "From the office" to which I responded "How did you get into the office? But at least all our equipment is safe as it is on the second floor". He replied "Stan! I got in by boat which pulled up to a window on the second floor". Obviously the Company suffered a huge loss, but,



Stan, centre front, with some of the staff on the Headquarters of Allied Intelligence Bureau



even if we had moved into the new premises, it would not have made any difference as the new concrete floor was also about 10/15 ft under water.

I retired from Retravision in 1984 and Daphne and I moved into a house which we owned here in Buderim. It was quite a large house and we also had a unit here in Buderim. Over the years we sold the unit in Brisbane and the one here in Buderim and in 1992 decided to downsize and obtain a 2 bedroom home in Buderim.

We do not have any children. Unfortunately Daphne suffered two miscarriages and was told by her doctor that it was too dangerous to try again. She devoted a lot of time to voluntary charity work over the years and particularly to the "Save the Children" Fund. She still crochets items to raise funds for the Fund.

About the time of my retirement I was requested by a former Engineer from New Guinea to find him a retirement unit here in Buderim and, after looking at a number of places, eventually we both ended up in the same Retirement Village.

We celebrated our 75<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2012, and my wife Daphne turned 100 on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2010, which was celebrated in suitable fashion here in the Retirement Village where we live with both family and friends from North Qld and locally.



The SS "Friderun", a German cargo ship, moored at Madang Wharf, pre WW2. Photo courtesy Stan Burton.

**Another wonderful story from our NGVR forebears.**

**Stan & Daphne are still resident at their Retirement Village in Buderim.**

## THE EILOGO PLANTATION PAPUAN BLACK SNAKE INCIDENT

Sometime between 1962 and 1965 when the CO PNGVR was Lt Col R D (Dick) Newman, a reconnaissance of an area of rainforest adjacent to the Eilogo rubber plantation on the Sogeri Plateau, situated about 50km east of Port Moresby, was arranged. McDonald's corner the start of the southern end of the Kokoda Track is on the northern escarpment of the plateau while the Eilogo Plantation is on the Sirinumu Dam Road in the south eastern sector of the plateau. The plateau comprises undulating land with an altitude averaging about 500m, ideal land for rubber plantings.

The purpose was to confirm the area was suitable for a Battalion Exercise in guerrilla tactics and provide sufficient information to plan the exercise. The exercise was to

be the culmination of a two week camp of the Regiment at Murray Barracks, Port Moresby. The reconnaissance party consisted of the CO PNGVR, the Port Moresby Company Commander (it was either Andy Anderson or Alf Clarke), Bill Kelly and myself. There could have been another officer or two but I do not recall who.

The arrangement was to pick up a guide from the nearby land owning Papuan village, be dropped off at a preselected location, walk over the area selecting sites for the exercise, then walk through to the Eilogo Plantation homesite where we would be collected. The site proved immensely suitable for the purpose intended so we proceeded to our rendezvous with our transport. This entailed a walk up to the main ridge where we struck a well defined track with high kunai grass on both sides. Turning eastwards along the ridge track we walked towards the plantation. The order of march was the old Papuan guide in the lead followed by the senior officers with the junior officers, of which I was one towards the rear. The time was approaching midday and it was stinking hot and humid and we were very keen to get to our destination.

Suddenly there was a yell from the guide and from where I was in line all I saw was those in front leaping and moving left off the track in great haste as if on the count by numbers. I was about to do the same when I noticed this huge black snake heading towards me suddenly change direction and headed into the grass and rain forest beyond. In hindsight it was a funny sight. When I recall the incident the picture of cartoon characters leaping high and turning direction with legs spinning like Catherine wheels come to mind. However, it was no laughing matter at the time, because the guide had been bitten in the shin and calf muscle – a vicious bite with serum still running down his leg.

The guide was very calm and was sitting on a log when we got to him. He was continually spitting and he explained that if there was blood in his spit he would die – a new one for me. The serum was washed away and a tourniquet applied. We did not have a first aid kit so we created a cut across the bite marks by sawing his leg with a blunt machete to entice bleeding, the practice at that time. No one was too keen to suck the poison out so we decided to carry him to the plantation with Bill Kelly running ahead to prepare the plantation staff for our arrival. At the time there was no anti-venine for Papuan Blacks snakes, which are a variation of the Australian Taipan, but we were aware that plantations were well equipped and experienced in handling emergencies like this. The standard practice was to apply both Tiger and Death Adder anti-venine and hope for the best.

Taking turns piggy backing the village guide, we made it to the plantation. The guide was given the anti venine and kept quiet until the ambulance from Port Moresby arrived to take him to the Port Moresby public hospital. We left him in the care of plantation staff, drove to the guide's village, advised the villagers what had happened and that he was being taken to the hospital.

There was a happy ending – the guide spent about a week in hospital and survived. I am uncertain if and how much compensation was paid. The Port Moresby PNGVR Annual Camp and guerilla exercise were hugely successful and every one lived happily ever after.

**Phil Ainsworth**

**March, 2011**

I lost the trivia contest at the Seniors social last night by one point and was totally embarrassed.

The last question was "Where do most women have curly hair?"  
..... So I shouted out my answer.

Apparently the correct answer is Africa.

These are from a book called *Disorder in the American Courts*, and are things people actually said in court, word for word, taken down and now published by court reporters that had the torment of staying calm while these exchanges were actually taking place.

**The initials S stands for Solicitor—W for witness.**

S. What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?

W. Gucci sweats and Reeboks. ....

S. Are you sexually Active?

W. No! I just lie there. ....

S. This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all?

W. Yes!

S. And in what ways does it affect your memory?

W. I forget.

S. You forget? Can you give us an example of something you forgot? .....

S. The youngest son, the 20 year old, how old is he?

W. He's 20, much like your I.Q. ....

S. Were you present when your picture was taken?

W. Are you shitting me? .....

S. So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?

W. Yes!

S. And what were you doing at the time?

W. Getting laid. ....

S. She had three children, right?

W. Yes.

S. And how many were boys?

W. None.

S. And how many were girls?

W. Your honour! I think I need a different solicitor. ....

S. How was your first marriage terminated?

W. By death.

S. And by whose death was it terminated?

W. Take a guess. ....

S. Can you describe the individual?

W. He was about medium height and had a beard.

S. Was this male or female?

W. Unless the circus was in town I'm going with male. ....

S. Doctor! How many of your autopsies have been performed on dead people?

W. All of them.. The live ones put up too much of a fight. ....

S. All your responses MUST be oral, OK? What school did you go to?

W. Oral. ....

S. Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

W. The autopsy started around 8.30pm.

S. And Mr. Denton was dead at the time?

W. If not, he was by the time I was finished. ....

S. Are you qualified to give a urine sample?

W. Are you qualified to ask that question?

S. Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse.

W. No.

S. Did you check blood pressure.

W. No

S. Did you check for breathing?

W. No.

S. So it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

W. No

S. How can you be so sure doctor.

W. Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

S. I see, but could the patient have still been alive?

W. Yes! It is possible he could have been alive and practicing law

## **THE FORGOTTEN INDIGENOUS PAPUAN AND NEW GUINEA SOLDIERS OF THE NEW GUINEA CAMPAIGN 1942-45**

**An address to the United Service Institute on 28<sup>th</sup> March,  
2000, by Col. D Mcl Ramsay, OAM**

**(Retired, now Deceased)**

In this paper Donald Ramsay highlights the significant, yet largely overlooked, role played by indigenous soldiers of both Papua and Australian New Guinea in the Allied campaign to resist the Japanese invasion and then to liberate Papua and Australian New Guinea from Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945.

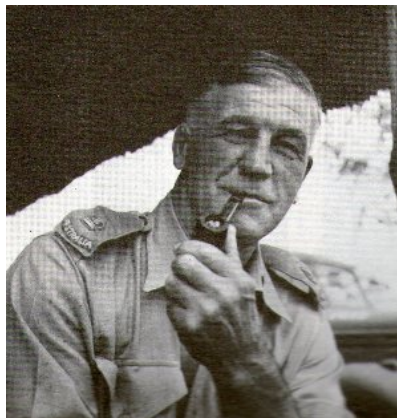
### **Recognition of Indigenous Porters but not Indigenous Soldiers**

Recently, in discussion with my Vietnam Veteran colleagues on the Royal Australian Regiment Association (New South Wales) Committee, it transpired that, while they were aware of the "Fuzzy Wuzzy" carriers, they were astonished to learn that indigenous Papuan and New Guinean soldiers fought in the New Guinea Campaigns of WW2. In fact there were nearly 4,000 indigenous soldiers enlisted as regulars in the Australian Army. They served in all the New Guinea campaigns, except Milne Bay, and they were subsequently awarded eleven Australian Battle Honours, the first of which was "Kokoda Trail".

(I prefer to use the term "Kokoda Trail" to "Kokoda Track", for it appears as a Battle Honour as "Kokoda Trail" on the PIR Colours, although both terms appear to be acceptable nowadays. I believe the Australian War Memorial prefers "Trail", although the Department of Veterans Affairs uses "Track", because Dudley McCarthy used "Track" in his official history. However when the award of Battle Honours was being considered in the 1950's, if the senior Generals – Rowell, Robertson and Berryman – had wanted to call it a "Track" they would have done so.)

I suspect that most Australians are also unaware of their proud record. For this reason, I feel sad each Anzac Day when the media relates the sterling work of the "Fuzzy Wuzzy" porters, but never mentions the Indigenous Papuan and New Guinean

soldiers. At last, though, Australians are made aware of how indigenous people supported Australia in a time of crisis, sometimes at great risk to themselves. The famous photographs of Raphael Oimbari assisting the wounded Private Dick Whittington has also become something of an iconic reminder. Another example of neglect is that there is no mention of the indigenous soldiers engraved on the war memorial at Isurava, a village on the Kokoda Trail.



Maj. W. T. Watson

There were something like 55,000 porters when those operating close to their villages are included. Some were volunteers, some were press-ganged, and some were deserters from the Japanese. Initially, on the Kokoda Trail, they were not treated very well - no pay, slender rations and no tobacco - until ANGAU (Australian and New Guinea Administration Unit) officers were appointed to look after them. In some cases, the

absence of the carriers from their native villages created real hardships for those left behind. For example, if a village had a population of 100, 20 young men would be absent as carriers, with nobody left to launch the fishing canoe or chop down trees for a new food producing garden area.

### Three Vignettes

Now to the soldiers - there was one Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) and four New Guinea Infantry Battalions (NGIB), three of which were operational by the end of WW2.

*(In Nov, 1944, the PIB and NGIB were amalgamated to form the Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR). The PIR was granted the title "Royal" after the Prince of Wales visited Papua New Guinea in 1984 and it is known as the Royal Pacific Islands Regiment (RPIR) today).*

These Infantry Battalions never fought on their own in battalion-sized battles, for their strengths lay in guerilla-type operations, patrolling and functioning as scouts attached to Australian infantry battalions.

I would like to tell you of three unrelated episodes which shed some light on the character of these soldiers. Before I mention the first one, I wish to say that I agree with our President, Brigadier Carey, that military history should be written by military historians. Neither of the authors of two recent Kokoda books recorded the following important event concerning the first shots fired at the Japanese invaders, the shots that indicated to them that they were going to be opposed.

The first batch of about 3,000 Japanese landed near Gona on 21 July, 1942, together with 1,000 mainly Tolai carriers press-ganged from Rabaul. Following the landing, Lt John Chalk and his 35 strong PIB platoon was sent forward on 22 Jul along the Gona Rot to assess the situation, (*Known as the Port Moresby Rot or the Gona Rot, depending on which way one was proceeding, and the postman came through every three weeks*). He intended to secure the Sangara Mission as his base but, as he approached, he saw signs of Japanese occupation. The road from Gona to Sangara is more or less flat and the invaders had arrived on their motor cycles and bicycles. That night he took out a small reconnaissance patrol to confirm his observations. He then sent a runner back to his CO, Maj. W. T. Watson, with his report. Watson sent back a handwritten note on a piece of cardboard saying "You will engage the Enemy". Big Deal - with, by

that time, forty 0.303 rifles and one Thompson sub-machine gun.

Chalk, realising that his platoon would be no match for the advancing enemy, took up an ambush position, on a hill in a local garden and awaited his opportunity. In Chalk's own words: "The Japanese eventually arrived, preceded by native carriers, so I had to hold my fire until the Japanese soldiers came into view. I gave the order to fire and the Japanese immediately swung into action with mortars and woodpecker machine guns." Hopelessly outnumbered by more than 1,000 well-armed enemy Chalk and his platoon melted back into the jungle to rejoin Maj Watson. Capt Chalk died in 2001. Interestingly, one of the soldiers involved in this ambush was Pte Paul Lafe. In the mid 1960s Warrant Officer Class 2 Paul Lafe BEM was one of my Sgt-Majs.

My second episode concerns the PIB in Feb 1944, when the enemy had been forced out of Finschhafen and were retreating over the mountains and up the coast to their base at Madang. Recently Capt Frank Hawdon OAM, a colleague of mine on the Battle for Australia Commemoration Ctee (NSW), told me that he had been the Signals Officer of the 35<sup>th</sup> Aust Infantry Bn at this time. (*In Feb, 1944, 35<sup>th</sup> Bn, as part of 8<sup>th</sup> Aust Inf Bde, was clearing out by-passed pockets of enemy resistance in the Sio area, on the Huon Peninsula coast between Finschhafen and Saidor*). A few years ago he was granted access to the 35<sup>th</sup> Bn War Diaries at the Australian War Museum in Canberra. They recorded that, in the period 13 to 27 Feb, 1944, the 35<sup>th</sup> Bn, by body count, killed 128, while the attached PIB Company killed 309 Japanese. In this context it is worth noting that PIR was ahead of the Gurkhas. (*It should be noted, however, that the Gurkhas also fought in Europe, and the comparison quoted concerned Japanese dead only. It is understood that the Aust Governor-General, Field Marshall Sir William Slim, when presenting Colours to PIR at Taurama Barracks, Port Moresby, in 1958, said that he felt that there were many similarities in the martial traits of the Gurkha and soldiers of Papua New Guinea - praise indeed considering his background.*)

My third episode concerns the late Maj Gen Allan Murchison AO MC RFD ED, who was a member of the Royal United Service Institution for many years and who was the Commanding Officer of 2<sup>nd</sup> New Guinea Infantry Bn in 1945-46. He told me some years ago that many Australian soldiers survived due to the quick reactions of the Papuan and New Guinean scouts advancing ahead of their Australian comrades. They had better traction in the mud of the jungle floor due to their big prehensile toes and they could smell the Japanese in ambush ahead. They would say to the point section or platoon commander of the Australian company "Masta Japan e stap" and what was a Japanese ambush, became an Australian counter ambush.



Cpl Malaisa

### Papuan Infantry Battalion

The PIB was raised in June 1940 in Port Moresby. All ranks were volunteers. Many were ex policemen from the Royal Papuan Constabulary (RPC) and the first 63 recruits were either ex-members or serving members of the RPC. Enrolment was for



three years – the pay in year 1 was 10 shillings per month rising to 1 pound per month in year 3. Rations were in excess of the RPC scale and included butter and jam. The battalion's tasks were patrolling, reconnaissance and sharpening bush skills.



Cpl Sala &  
Sgt Matpi

By early 1942, the PIB strength was 294 (224 privates) with Australian officers, warrant officers and senior NCOs. It is important to understand the soldiers

were regulars in the Australian Military Forces. In March, the PIB was given the task of patrolling the coastline after the Japanese landed at Lae. Later the PIB was sent up the Gona Rot ahead of 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion and, as recorded above, in July, 1942, soldiers of the PIB near Gona offered the first resistance to the Japanese in New Guinea.

As the Kokoda campaign continued and during the series of delaying actions in the withdrawal, the PIB was engaged in felling trees and destroying bridges, including the wire bridge over the Kumusi River. With their local knowledge, guerilla tactics were adopted and the Japanese were attacked on their flanks and rear. On occasions, the PIT assisted in extracting Australian casualties from the point of contact.

During the subsequent Australian advance, the PIT soldiers in their own environment were used successfully in deep penetration and reconnaissance patrols. Finally, in January, 1943, they shared in the Australian successes at Buna and Sanananda. At this time, whilst some Japanese tried to escape using the river systems back to Morobe, the PIB inflicted many casualties on the enemy. In the confusion, a number of carriers of the Japanese escaped and some joined the PIB, including William Maipi – more about him later.



Sgt  
Katue  
MM  
with  
Capt  
Graham-  
slaw  
ANGAU

Before moving on from the Kokoda campaign I would like to mention the remarkable Sgt Katue MM. During the withdrawal phase, he was left behind because he could not walk. As he recovered, he made his way back to rejoin friendly forces and he got some of the locals to help him in his exploits. When he turned up after two months, he tendered the insignia and badges of 26 Japanese officers and NCOs that he had killed, but none from privates, for they had nothing worth collecting.

Following their defeat at Milne Bay and Kokoda, the Japanese

Commander-in-Chief, Lieut Gen Adachi Hajoza, developed Lae and Salamaua as fortified bases. To weaken Lae, the Allied strategy was to make a drive for Salamaua that would draw off forces from Lae. In Feb 1943, A Coy PIB played an important part in the approach to Salamaua, while B Coy helped to stop the Japanese advance on Wau. In company with the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, A Coy got outstanding results as scouts for the 4<sup>th</sup> United States Infantry Division, in particular. Once Salamaua fell, Col McKechnie, the 162<sup>nd</sup> United States Infantry Regiment's commander, wrote to Maj Watson, CO of PIB stating his soldiers had amazing respect and admiration for the PIB's prowess and soldierly qualities, and without the PIB it would have been difficult to complete the mission successfully.

To obtain intelligence, some PIB soldiers were allowed to grow their hair, remain unshaven, stain their teeth with betel nut chewing, and then merge with the local villagers. One soldier volunteered to catch fish for the Japanese and they gave him grenades to stun the fish. On handing over the catch, he asked for some fish to smoke for the local villagers and while doing so he arranged four fires on the shore. This was a pre-arranged signal to his company commander, and next morning the Air Force bombed the Japanese concentration.

As for Wau – on Christmas Day 1972, standing at the top of the sloping airfield there, a famous Papua New Guinea senior administrator and first Speaker of the Papua New Guinea House of Assembly, Sir Horrie Niall, explained to me, as we looked down at the end of the runway, that that was as far as the Japanese got – fortunately. Horrie went on to say that, at the time, it was thought that a German, a former worker on the gold field, had alerted the Japanese to a long-forgotten track from the coast to Wau – hence their sudden and surprise appearance. Also, at one stage, the strong room of the Bank of New South Wales was blown, to evacuate its contents to Port Moresby.

And so the PIB story continues with C Coy landing with the 9<sup>th</sup> Aust Div at Scarlet Beach, Finschhafen, while A Coy joined the 5<sup>th</sup> Aust Div on the advance from Finschhafen to Saidor on the way to Madang. Meanwhile B Coy was assigned to 7<sup>th</sup> Div operating in the advance up the Markham Valley to the Ramu Valley. After these campaigns the battalion concentrated back at Port Moresby. In June 1945, the new 1 PIB worked with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aust Div on Bougainville. In all the PIB had a life of 5 years and the fierce fighting exploits of its soldiers won much respect from their Australian and American colleagues.



PIB Training Depot Battalion, Sep 1945. Capt Brown, Sgts Tomi and Tapoli and Cpl Beku with CO Lt. Col. McAdie

## New Guinea Infantry Battalions

When the PIB was being raised in 1940, Brig Gen McNicoll, Administrator of New Guinea was asked about establishing a NGIB. On the advice of a senior and experienced public servant who considered the New Guinean men would be unsuitable as soldiers the proposal was turned down. As the New Guinea campaigns developed, however, this issue was re-considered. In 1944, with much of New Guinea free and more men available to enlist, the first New Guinea Inf Bn was raised in March: the second in Sept, and then these two bns were amalgamated with the PIB to form the Pacific Islands Regiment in Nov. Subsequently, 3 NGIB was raised in Aug, 1945, and 4 NGIB (formative only) in Jan 1946, before the PIR was disbanded in June 1946.

When 1 NGIB was raised in March 1944, a much-criticised decision was made that the PIB would have Papuan soldiers only and the NGIB New Guinean soldiers exclusively. It was an unhappy time for the PIB as their New Guinean members were transferred to the NGIB.

In Nov 1944, C Coy, 1 NGIB relieved B Coy PIB at Hansa Bay while A Coy joined 3<sup>rd</sup> Div on Bougainville. At the same



Presentation of DCM to WO Yawige, Gougainville, 1945

It was a fantastic performance by the PIR – in action from July, 1942 to August 1945, inflicting 2,209 killed-in-action on the Japanese while experiencing only 38 killed-in-action and 98 wounded -in-action of its own. The Commander of the Allied forces in the New Guinea Theatre stated that the PIR contributed in no small way to the success of operations. Indigenous awards included 4 Distinguished Conduct Medals (DCM), 2 George Medals (GM), 15 Military Medals (MM) and 3 British Empire Medals (BEM)

### The Aftermath

In dealing with the following sad episode in the history of the PIR, I must mention that Warrant Officer William Mapi DCM



A face that would be familiar to some in PNGVR.  
Pte Ben Moide with PIR recruits  
Ben later served with PNGVR

time, B and D Coys moved to New Britain and headed the parallel advances on that island. On reaching the line Open Bay-Wide Bay, defensive positions were adopted to contain the large Japanese base at Rabaul. In Sep, 1944, 2 NGIB was formed and moved to New Britain where there was a problem that resulted in Lt Col Allan Murchison being appointed to command. The Bn then joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Aust Div in the Wewak area and was placed under command of 17<sup>th</sup> Inf Brigade in the Maprik sector. For the first time, a battalion of the PR was used in set piece company attacks, with air and artillery support, as the battalion advanced towards the Sepik River. The most spectacular attack was carried out by A Coy, under command of Maj Ron Garland MC, which resulted in the company capturing all of 2/7 Aust Inf Bn's objectives. This enabled the 2/7<sup>th</sup> to pass through quickly to sever the Japanese line of communications between their inland and coastal sectors.

3NGIB, raised in Aug, 1945, was commanded by Lt Col Ferguson MacAdie DSO. The Bn had no active service, but played a valuable role in the confinement and repatriation of the large Japanese garrison in Rabaul.



Sgt Iwagu Iaking, GM.

played a very prominent role in helping to solve what could have been an explosive situation.

Previously, his daring exploits, leadership and bravery had become something of a legend. His personal tally of killing Japanese soldiers was 110.

When the first daft of New Guinea soldiers ex PIB arrived at 2 NGIB many were told that they would have to re-enlist because

there was no proper documentation as to how and when they had joined the PIB – perhaps because they had done so informally during operations in their own areas. This new procedure was much resented by these experienced soldiers. Then, having worn Australian chevron badges of rank on the sleeves in the PIB, they were told that coloured bars on their lap laps would take the place of the chevrons. This foolish decision caused consternation and Sgt Tapioli MM refused, saying that bars had been worn by sanitary workers on their lap laps pre-war. He said that he would rather drop rank – otherwise he would salute with his genitals. When the decision was not reversed, the soldiers became unruly and a newly joined, inexperienced Australian officer who had shouted at them was set upon and ended up in hospital. Four culprits were sentenced to gaol for six months. Chevrons were quickly restored. It says much for Allan Murchison's skill on taking over an untried and unsettled 2 NGIB that he subsequently led a very successful Bn in operations behind Wewak.

The decision to separate Papuan and New Guinean soldiers and the chevron business were just the beginning of the unrest in the

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 13**



## NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES' YEAR: 1942

It is 70 years since the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR) was involved in WW2. 1942 was NGVR'S year, the year the unit was mobilised, fought and disbanded after it served its purpose. Although NGVR's role was small, its importance cannot be appreciated without viewing it in a broader strategic way.

Prior to the Pacific War, the Japanese wished to establish its own "sphere of influence" or colonies in South East Asia; however, the Western powers were critical of its aims. Thus Japan was in a situation of stalemate - the US initiated sanctions which Japan could not tolerate for nationalistic pride and economic reasons; it had to either bow to the Western powers or aggressively progress its plan.

The US was neutral and Japan thought if it could destroy the US Pacific Fleet and establish its South East Asian Economic Sphere of Co-posterity (SEASEC) swiftly, it would be able to negotiate a peaceable solution with the US, rather than go to war. This was a grave misjudgement on Japan's part, for a war with the US was one the Japanese knew they could not win.

The boundaries of the SEASEC were to be the former German Pacific Island Colonies which the Japanese took over as Mandated Trust Territory after WW1 in the east and Papua New Guinea and Indonesia in the south. The Japanese aim was then to move westwards into Burma and India. Japan had already been fighting for nearly a decade occupying Manchuria, Korea and most of China.

The Japanese simultaneously attacked Pearl Harbour, Malaya and other territories and achieved its goals more rapidly than they expected. The Japanese plan seemed to be one of 6 weeks consolidation before the next stage of conquest. After 7/8 December 1941 attacks and invasions the next stage was the invasion of Rabaul and NG Islands, Indonesia etc. Each jump was about 400 to 600 miles to ensure the new ventures were within range of land air support. The targets were airfields with sea port access - Rabaul, Ambon, Lae, Salamaua, Milne Bay and Port Moresby are examples.

This changed when the Japanese realised that their country and supply lines were similarly vulnerable as the Allies to sea borne aerial attacks. For example, the 10 March successful US carrier attack on Lae and Salamaua and the 18 April Doolittle raid on Japan. These attacks delayed the Pt Moresby invasion plan so the Japanese carriers could be redeployed to provide stronger air cover for their transports and to entice the US carriers into battle in an endeavour to eliminate them. This was the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Australia had been at war for over two years when the Pacific War commenced. Most of Australia's military resources were in the Middle East helping against the Axis powers. In 1941 with the looming Japanese threat, Australia sent its 8<sup>th</sup> Division, less one Brigade to Malaya. The 23rd Brigade 8<sup>th</sup> Division formed the "Bird Forces" and deployed Gull, Sparrow and Lark Forces to Ambon, Timor and Rabaul respectively. Australia was counting on the British forces in Malaya and the British fleet for protection. When the British were defeated, Australia called on the US and appointed US General MacArthur as Supreme Commander. The only force available in Australia at that time was the Militia which was deployed to Pt Moresby.

NGVR had the distinction of being the only Australian army military unit raised, mobilised, fought and disbanded overseas, in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea between 1939 and

1943. On 4 September 1939, Australian Army Headquarters ordered the raising of NGVR. A cosmopolitan group of men from Europe, the British Isles, New Zealand, Australia and Asia, whose homes and livelihoods were in New Guinea hastened to join. Bear in mind that in 1940, the expatriate population of the Wau/Bulolo area was about 3,000, with Rabaul and surrounding islands with just over 1,000.

The initial strength of the battalion was limited to 20 officers and 400 other ranks, but this was increased in June 1940 to 23 officers and 482 other ranks. The enthusiasm in the early days stemmed mainly from returned soldiers of the 1914-18 War, but by mid-1941 the unit had lost many of its younger members having joined the AIF and other services. While the remoteness of many areas was a disadvantage, a growing realisation of the danger of war in the Pacific led to a revival of interest late 1941.

In April 1941, NGVR was deployed in Rabaul, the New Guinea (NG) Goldfields and the New Guinea Coast. Rabaul was the Battalion HQ and also comprised a Rifle Company. The NG Goldfields comprised the Bn 2/ic located in Wau with a Rifle Company and a Machine Gun (MG) Company and in nearby Bulolo there was an Australian Army Medical Corp Detachment. The NG Coast was made up of a Rifle Company HQ with a MG Platoon in Lae, while Salamaua and Madang each had a Rifle Platoon. Enlistment was for a two year period and there was no pay except for an allowance of 1 pound per year. The uniform consisted of khaki shirts and trousers, made from material sent from Australia. The Army supplied felt hats, bandoliers, leather belts, boots and puttees. Brass NGVR shoulder badgers were worn. Arms consisted of .303 rifles and some Vickers and Lewis machine guns. There were no radios, submachine guns, grenades or mortars.

Major Bill Edwards NG2000, a WW1 veteran, assumed command of NGVR on September 1941. This was when NGVR's HQ was transferred to Bulolo after the deployment of Lark Force to Rabaul lessened the significance of NGVR there. Edwards was also Adjutant and he and his 2/ic, Major E W Jeynes, also a WW1 veteran, encouraged the detachments in the NG Goldfields and Coast to develop independent units, preparing escape routes, observation points and stores dumps in their own regions. Although most were not mobilised until 21 January 1942, they continued to give their best without pay. This was a very different strategy to that used in Rabaul.

When the Japanese invaded Rabaul in the early hours of the 23 January 1942, the Rabaul company of NGVR was under the command of Lt Col Carr, the CO of 2/22 Battalion. NGVR, being part of A Company 2/22 Battalion under the command of Major Bill Owen (later CO of 39 Battalion who was killed at Kokoda 29 July 1942) was positioned on the extreme northern flank of the defence around the western shore of Simpson Harbour, just south of the 'Big Dipper' Road or, as it is known today 'Burma' Road. NGVR manned Vickers machine guns, Lewis guns and a mortar. The Vickers were dug in within 100m of the beach and to the side of the new steep military road 'Big Dipper', while the Lewis guns and mortar were further south near Vulcan. NGVR withdrew when outflanked to the south near Vulcan. Because the Japanese infiltration south of NGVR's position cut the Big Dipper and Kokopo Ridge Roads before NGVR could withdraw through battalion lines, most NGVR soldiers moved west along the north coast. This explains why more were evacuated by the MV Lakatoi from the north coast of New Britain than the MV Laurabada from the south coast.

2/22 Battalion's dispositions were widely spread, for instance, A Company, of which NGVR was part, was protecting a 3 to 4 km front along Simpson Harbour western shoreline. Only two companies were tasked to cover the Battalion's harbour frontage of about 15km, A Company protecting the Burma Road junction with Malaguna Road in the north and Y Company, a Its total

composite of detached troops, at Raluana Point protecting the junction of the Harbour Road and the Kokopo Ridge Road junction in the south. The rest of the Battalion was on the escarpment above the harbour. Any assessment of the situation would confirm Lark Force was on a 'mission impossible'. Unfortunately the commander either did not appreciate this early enough or was too inflexible to develop an alternate strategy should Rabaul be invaded by an overwhelming force, which it was.

There were 80 NGVR soldiers reported to be in Rabaul at the time of the Japanese Invasion. Of these, 22 escaped (13 on MV Lakatoi, 2 on MV Laurabada, 3 on an unnamed vessel, 2 in the McGowan Group, 1 in MV Dulcy and 1 who missed the boats and survived in the bush for many months before being rescued), 46 captured and 12, the balance assumedly perished in battle or succumbed to privations suffered during their escape. 43 captured died (7 were massacred at Toll and 36 were lost on the Montevideo Maru), while 3 officers were taken to Japan and survived the war. Thus 55 of 80 perished, a casualty rate of 70% was sustained by NGVR in Rabaul and its aftermath.

Pte Leslie John Stokie NG239 was the man who missed the boats. A planter in the Bainings, he was suffering from malaria at the time of the invasion and his movements between January 1942 and when he was rescued were hampered by these malaria attacks. He tried to canoe to the New Guinea mainland in July but was forced to turn back. After hearing of shot down American airmen hiding in the hills at the back of Ula Mona, he sent a message to them and they eventually arrived at Stokie's camp in poor health. The three airmen and Stokie were taken out by Catalina flying boat in March 1943. By this time, Stokie had been in the bush for 14 months. After a holiday, Stokie returned to duty as a member of 'M Special Unit' as a coast watcher and leader of a small guerrilla group on the north coast in New Britain. He was put ashore with 15 other Australian and 27 native troops on 28 September 1943 at Cape Orford, west of Wide Bay. When he was withdrawn from New Britain in June 1944, his team was credited with killing 63 Japanese. He ended the war as an acting Captain and was awarded an MC.

The only army unit in Salamaua, Wau, Bulolo and Lae and the Markham was NGVR which was called up full time on 8 December 1941, although mobilisation did not take place until 22 January 1942. The Australian military plans were to have troops only in Rabaul and Port Moresby, so the defence in Lae/ Wau area was left entirely in the hands of the militia, NGVR.

Lae, Bulolo and Salamaua were bombed midday 21 January. The Administrator declared a state of emergency and handed over civilian administration to Major E W Jenyns, the 2/IC of NGVR and from that day until ANGAU was formed in Wau on 15 February 1942, NGVR was both an armed force and an administrative unit. Edwards set up NGVR Headquarters on his plantation west of Lae. The civil population was moved by late afternoon to an emergency camp about 6 km west of Lae and plans were made for all unfit males to be evacuated; a group east along the coast to Papua by boat, some through Salamaua to Wau and others including the Chinese civilians escorted from Nadzab to Bulwa and by truck to Wau. Bill Edwards, whose nicknames were 'Whisky Bill', 'Mud Guts' and 'Kukurai' acted swiftly and intelligently.

As the only administrative representative of law and order, NGVR assumed responsibility for several thousand indentured labourers recruited from many outlying districts, but now without support and unable to return to their homes. The NGVR established depots and fed them, and they became the first of the army of carriers and labourers who proved so

vital in their support to the Allies during the fighting that followed.

On the 22 January 1941, Salamaua received a warning of a Japanese invasion fleet, however, this was the fleet which invaded Rabaul. Thus the 21 January bombing was merely a diversionary raid. Meanwhile in Salamaua the 133 expatriates were evacuated to Butu 8 km inland, and the next day 100 continued overland to Wau. The others took canoes along the coast reaching Gona on 4th February, thence by aircraft to Port Moresby via Kokoda. Six RAAF ground signallers and 5 to 6 NGVR men under the command of Sgt Bob Phillips kept the important RAAF staging air field at Salamaua open. The Japanese showed their intentions when their 1 February second bombing raid on Salamaua spared the airfield while the Wau airstrip was bombed.

Administratively, NGVR came under the 8th Military District HQ in Pt Moresby. NGVR comprised 151 at Wau, 85 in Bulolo, 39 at Salamaua and 19 in Madang, a total of about 294. It was not a well trained fighting force having suffered turnover difficulties earlier and was armed with only obsolescent WW1 light infantry weapons. NGVR Lae was A Company and the Salamaua/Wau men comprised B Company.

NGVR and Kanga Force faced huge transportation and communication difficulties. For instance, Salamaua is 40 km south across Huon Gulf from Lae and it is the same distance from Lae to Kirklands at the Markham River Crossing lookout. Salamaua is 50 air km from Wau (about an 8 day walk) while Bulolo and Kirklands were 20km and 90km from Wau respectively.

By mid February, B Company assembled at Mubo under Captain Umphelby, a regular army warrant officer who was previously in Rabaul and was transferred to the New Guinea mainland. Following the Japanese occupation of Salamaua, the unit's role was to keep Salamaua under observation and to oppose any Japanese move towards Wau. Prepositioned supply dumps and observation posts in the hinterland facilitated the task. Umphelby's Company was a varied lot, accompanied by 70 carriers to transport equipment including two Vickers MGs. These were set up to cover the narrow approach up the Botoi River valley into Mubo. Clearly the unit contained a number of men with an appreciation of terrain.

The Wau NGVR detachment joined the Salamaua detachment at Mubo and prepared to fight as guerrillas when the Salamaua invasion occurred. Instructions were received on 2nd February to keep Wau air strip open with the expectation of the need to destroy it within a few days.

A RAAF aircraft spotted the Lae invasion force on 7 March. On 8 March Japanese Naval troops landed at Lae and at 0155 hours a battalion of 144 Infantry Regiment (the unit responsible for the Tol massacre), part of Horrii's South Seas Force, landed on the eastern side of the Salamaua isthmus unopposed. Captain Allan Cameron of the 2/22 Battalion, who had arrived in Salamaua from New Britain by small boat on the previous day, was the senior officer present and immediately ordered the sole Hudson Bomber to leave and sent Sgt Phillips off to blow up the fuel dump. Cameron and three others waited for the Japanese at the airstrip and after a skirmish, the airstrip was blown and they departed south towards Mubo.

After the Japanese landed in Lae and Salamaua on 8 March, NGVR's dispositions were 4 officers and 70 other ranks (ORs) in the Salamaua area, 5 officers and 80 ORs in the Lae/Markham area, 2 officers and 100 ORs in the Wau/Bulolo/Bulwa area and another 30 ORs in the Madang/Ramu area, a total of 291 of which only 100 were fit and trained. Estimated Japanese numbers in the Lae/Markham were 1,800 and 300 in Salamaua. NGVR's role was to keep in touch with the enemy and dominate the patrol areas without threatening the Japanese enough to provoke them to reinforce and attack in overwhelming strength beyond the limit of

the road to Nadzab or beyond Mubo from Salamaua. The men of NGVR were the "keepers of the gate".

Five Hudson aircraft bombed Salamaua on 9 March slightly damaging one transport ship while four B 17 bombers followed up later but they could not locate the target. On 10 March, the US carriers Yorktown and Lexington launched a successful 104 aircraft raid from 70 km south of the Papuan coastline, sinking an 8,600t merchant cruiser at Lae and forcing another to breach at the end of Lae airfield while at Salamaua a 6,000t transport and a minesweeper were sunk. This was an important raid as it was the first serious loss of ships and men for the Japanese since the start of the war. Most importantly it reinforced the need for increased air cover for Japanese invasion fleets and imposed a delay on the proposed Pt Moresby invasion until early May.

Following the loss of Lae, Captain Hugh Lyons' A Company was similarly stationed in the Markham Valley west of Lae keeping an eye on Japanese moves in that direction. The radio removed from Salamaua continued to provide valuable information to Pt Moresby. Leigh Vial, a former NG government officer and now in the RAAF, with the assistance of NGVR scouts set up a coast watching position in the hills north of Mubo at 'Nuk Nuk' overlooking Huon Gulf, Salamaua and Lae, observing shipping and air movements. Similarly another observation post was established about 15 km west of Lae just south of the Markham River, 'Chungol', which overlooked Lae airfield and was never discovered by the Japanese. The NGVR scouts, led by Sgt Jim McAdam, were involved either in the forest or mining industries before the war and had an intimate knowledge of the area and environment.

A Company was set up at Kirklands Crossing on the south bank of Markham River just upstream from the mouth of the Erap River, about 40km west of Lae, to watch for Japanese crossing and threatening the Bulolo River Valley. Kirklands was in swampland and was hot, humid and mosquito infested. Most men stayed at Bob's Camp, about 6km south in thick rainforest, which was connected by phone to Kirklands. At this stage the Japanese had advanced only to Heath's Plantation, 20km west of Lae where a mountain gun was established.

On 8th March, the same day Salamaua was occupied, a major change in command in the Pacific was made; US forces in Australia and areas north and north east, including the Philippines would be called South West Pacific Area (SWPA) under General MacArthur, the rest of the Pacific would be under naval command of Admiral Nimitz. Mac Arthur arrived in Darwin on 17th March and on the following day the Australian Prime Minister Curtin announced MacArthur would be the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in SWPA. General Thomas Blamey would be the commander of Allied Land Forces and US Lt General Brett the commander of Allied Air Forces. New Guinea Force replaced the 8th Military District and Major General Morris would retain the command of NG Force. Pt Moresby was being bombed and Morris could do little to reinforce NGVR in the NG Goldfields because of more pressing concerns.

Also on 8th March, NGVR was instructed to destroy the Wau Airfield and carry out demolitions of the Bulolo Valley. By the 15th March, Major Bill Edwards authorised the destruction of 2 power stations as well as the main Bulolo / Wau Bridge, even though there was no indication of Japanese movement from Salamaua or Lae- perhaps the result of paucity of communications and commanders not appreciating the terrain / environment in which NGVR was operating, because without air support, resupply was near impossible. Meanwhile the Commander of New Guinea Force Major Gen Morris sent a reinforcement platoon of 1 Independent Company, under the command of Captain Roy Howard, via the Bulldog Track arriving Wau 12 April. Howard immediately sent two sections each to A

and B Companies NGVR.

A Company maintained a standing patrol east of Nadzab and had been using a truck for resupply purposes. The truck was captured by the Japanese on 1st May. Meanwhile, there was still no evidence of the Japanese intending to advance from Lae towards Wau and NGVR remained the "keepers of the gate". Leigh Vial, at Nuk Nuk, estimated there were only 100 Japanese in Salamaua. In Lae the Japanese priority was keeping the airfield open to keep up the pressure on Pt Moresby. Apparently in April, a Japanese pilot estimated there was only a naval garrison of 200 men plus 30 pilots and 100 aircraft maintenance personnel in Lae, a total of about 330. With the Japanese higher command planning a seaborne invasion of Pt Moresby, a diversion of forces and supplies for an offensive towards Wau made little sense.

Squadron Leader Jackson and his squadron of P40s surprised the Japanese at Lae and destroyed 9 fighters and 3 bombers on 22nd March.

On 22 April, NG Force HQ instructed NGVR that no operations against Lae or Salamaua was to be undertaken without direct authority from Pt Moresby. On the same day, a 60 man Japanese patrol moved from Salamaua to Komiatum challenging NGVR's control there. NGVR's small guard saved the radio and shot 3 Japanese but the Japanese destroyed the village and NGVR's supplies and it returned to Salamaua the following day - it seemed just a matter of time before the Japanese made a move into the hinterland towards Wau.

On 23 April Kanga Force was formed. Reinforcements and supplies would be despatched by air to Kanga Force once the threat to Pt Moresby was removed. Thus Kanga Force would comprise NGVR, 2/5 Independent Company and 1 Platoon of 1 Independent Company. An Independent Company comprised 17 officers and 256 men, a total of 273, divided into three platoons each with three sections of 19 men. Separate signalling, transport, engineering and medical personnel were attached and a higher proportion of automatic weapons were allocated. The Independent Company Commander was Major Paul Keen, an ex- Solomon Island administrator, while Sgt Mal Bishop (to become a CO of PNGVR after the War) was the Engineering Sergeant.

NGVR was reinforced late May early June 1942 when Major Keen's larger 2/5 Independent Company was flown into Wau. Although Edwards retained command of NGVR, he handed over to Lt Col Norman Fleay, when Kanga Force was established soon after.

The Battle of the Coral Sea was fought from 4 to 8 May 1942, after which the seaborne threat to Pt Moresby was removed.

On 12 May, Lt Col Norman Fleay, The commander of Kanga Force was instructed to harass the enemy in the Markham Valley and Salamaua area. After five false starts due to bad weather, on 23 and 24 May the 2/5 Independent Company was flown into Wau in 7 Dakota aircraft sourced from ANA (2), Dutch(1) and USAF(4). By 26 May the unit had assembled at Bulolo. This was the first time a whole Allied unit had been airlifted into a war zone.

After a 7 day reconnaissance in the Markham area, Major Fleay submitted an appreciation to Pt Moresby. He estimated there were 2,000 enemy in Lae and 250 in Salamaua while his Force amounted to 2 companies of NGVR with an effective strength of 100 split between the Markham and Mubo areas, 250 men from the 2/5 and Howard's 60, a total of 410. Additionally he estimated only 30 men of his HQ personnel were suitable for operations. His conclusion was that his force was only suitable for raids and patrol work defending the Bulolo Valley and the route to Papua.



Kanga Force Commander Fleay set 3 raiding tasks: Heath's Plantation where the mountain gun was positioned; Lae airfield and its aircraft; and Salamaua. Two targets were selected, Heath's and Salamaua which were to occur simultaneously. On 15 June Capt Winning 2/ic of the 2/5 led 51 of his men to Mubo via the Buisaval Track and joined up with NGVR for the Salamaua raid. He was accompanied by Umphelby and Ted Jenyns and four others who were to look after the carriers. From 19 to 24 June close reconnaissance was carried out of the target and it was established that about 300 Japanese troops were in Salamaua. On 27 June the raiding group moved to Butu situated 8 km south of Salamaua. The 27 and 28 June were spent in planning, briefings and preparation. It was decided 7 raiding parties each of about 10 men would be used with each party to be led by an NGVR scout. The objective of the raid was to demolish key infrastructure and cause as much mayhem as possible.

The raid commander was Capt Winning and the coordinated raid commenced before Dawn on the 29 June. It was successfully carried out with estimated 57 to 113 Japanese killed for the loss of 3 slightly wounded attackers. All returned to Mubo by 30 June. The impact of the raid was seen in the rapid response of the Japanese Command: Salamaua was immediately reinforced and troops were pushed out into the hinterland to find signs of the Australians. Having to deploy additional men to Lae and Salamaua meant they were not available elsewhere when operations in Papua and Guadalcanal were being planned. It was the first offensive action on land against the Japanese invasion of New Guinea Mainland. The raid justified the Independent Company concept, the value of the NGVR scouts and the importance of detailed reconnaissance for accurate information for planning successful operations.

On the following night, Major Paul Keen, the 2/5 Independent Company Commander, commanded the raid on Heath's Plantation. The objective was to destroy a bridge and the artillery piece and cause as much chaos as possible. A composite group of 2/5 Independent Company and NGVR was used. Surprise was achieved but when Major Keen was killed early in the action, Captain Lang assumed command of the group and extracted the party west and across the Markham River. The Japanese reacted and on 2 July they bombed Wau, Bulolo and Skindewai. The bombing killed two 2/5 Independent Company men at Bulolo.

On 10 July Capt Winning and Umphelby, the latter very ill, returned to Wau and told Lt Col Fleay of the poor condition of their troops. A section of the 2/5 was sent forward as reinforcements and another followed on 19 July. The Japanese reinforced Salamaua and Sgt Jim Mc Adam estimated the number had now swelled to about 500 with strong patrols of up to 70 men scouring the immediate area of Salamaua for signs of Australian activity.

A strong Japanese force of 136 departed Salamaua for Mubo on 21 July, the day the Japanese landed at Gona. The Japanese approached Mubo late in the afternoon with their scouts forward. The Australians fired on the group. The Vickers situated on Mat Mat OP, was ideally sited firing along the valley trapping the Japanese and those who had advanced were caught in the fire of Lewis guns on the Australian's right flank. At least 12 Japanese were accounted for while the Australians suffered no casualties. This was when it was reported that there had been a European man at Salamaua, a former dredge worker, who appeared in league with the Japanese. ANGAU officer John Murphy was certain he was Joseph Hofstetter. Hofstetter was later mentioned for showing the Japanese the "old German survey line", the route the Japanese used when they attacked Wau in 1943.

On the same day as the Japanese moved on Mubo, they also took action in the Markham Valley. It was also the time when the Lae/Salamaua situation receded in importance when the Japanese landed at Gona. This overland threat to Pt Moresby meant the limited resources being sent to Wau would be disrupted and Kanga Force would have to make do with what it had. What was not known at the time was that the Japanese orders for the overland attack on Pt Moresby also included plans to press the Australians at Wau to facilitate its Pt Moresby offensive.

Although NGVR remained in good spirits, the deprivations of continuous operations in hostile terrain without adequate supply and medication took their toll, with many falling sick with fever and other tropical diseases. The number of fit men steadily dwindled. As food was not getting through, the soldiers became increasingly dependent on local food supply. Japanese air raids, their intimidation tactics over the local people, and the sheer physical difficulty of getting rations forward to feed carriers had a cumulative effect and threatened to stop Kanga Force activity.

Later, when the focus shifted to the Milne Bay and Kokoda Track battles, NGVR continued to man its posts overlooking the Japanese. 1942 was NGVR's year; however, NGVR was an exhausted unit by September. Although some troops remained in place until early 1943 there were too few left to be effective when NGVR was officially disbanded. Because of their knowledge of the country and its problems, the remaining NGVR soldiers were attached either to the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) or other units which needed their individual talents, and NGVR lost its identity. Many never served again because of the deprivations suffered during their long period in the jungle without medical and other supplies.

The NGVR soldiers came from many walks of life. While some were too old to join the AIF, medically unfit or employed in restricted occupations, they fought well. They also initiated the organising Papua New Guinean labour which was to become a vital contributory feature to the success of the Allied campaign in the New Guinea archipelago.

After NGVR was disbanded, its Commander, Major Edwards, transferred to ANGAU and was in charge of carriers with the American troops in their drive along the Morobe coast towards Salamaua in 1943. In late 1943, 1 New Guinea Infantry Battalion (NGIB) was formed with Major WM Edwards as its founding commander. In September 1943 he was promoted Lt Col. In November 1944, Lt Col Edwards was promoted to Colonel to command the newly formed Pacific Island Regiment, which comprised 1 PIB and 1 NGIB and 2 NGIV, with 3 NGIB to follow in August 1945. On 10 October 1945, at the age of 49 years, Col Edwards retired from the command.

### Phil Ainsworth, August 2012

Sources:

"The Battle for Wau, New Guinea's Frontline 1942-1943" by Philip Bradley, 2008, Cambridge University Press, ISBN-13 978-0-521-89681-8

"The New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, NGVR, 1939- 1943, A History" by Ian Downs, 1999, A Pacific Press Publication, ISBN 1 875150 03 X

Coady's article from Australian War Memorial, Canberra

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8 PIR. In New Britain and in Bougainville, instead of operating in their well-trying and successful roles under their own Australian officers, they were farmed out in penny packets to Australian battalions and under command of junior officers inexperienced in working with the PIR. The soldiers became dispirited when an officer would say "You lot will man the perimeter tonight" whilst his own soldiers had uninterrupted sleep. Resentment build up as they realised full well that they were being paid a pittance in comparison with the Australian soldiers, and especially when they were eventually granted an increase of only 5 shillings per month. The problem was that a large increase to Australian rates of pay could not be sustained post-war, and no doubt this contributed to the PIR being disbanded.

With the end of the war, the PIR was concentrated in Battalion camps on the Gazelle Peninsula and, unfortunately, ill-discipline continued. To defuse the situation, Sgt Maj Mapti arrived in Rabaul and with a jeep and driver, he addressed each of the Bns in turn, telling the soldiers that everyone must obey the civil law now that hostilities had ceased and police instructions must be obeyed. It says much for his standing and reputation within the Regiment, that ill-discipline stopped, and so in June 1946, PIR ceased to exist. The Regiment's great reputation prevailed however, and PIR was raised once again in 1951. The RPIR celebrated its 55<sup>th</sup> post World War 2 birthday on 3 March 2006.

**Col Donald Ramsay's vale notice was contained in HTT Vol 70.**

The photos in the article were obtained from "To Find a Path", The life and times of the Royal Pacific Islands Regiment.

#### Green Tree Snakes (Dendrolaphis punctulata) Can Be Dangerous

Yes, tree snakes or grass snakes, not brown snakes or taipans. Here's why.

A couple in Townsville had a lot of potted plants. During a recent cold winter, for Townsville that is, the wife was bringing some of the valued tender ones indoors to protect them from the cold night.

It turned out that a little green tree snake was hidden in one of the plants. When it had warmed up, it slithered out and the wife saw it go under the lounge. She let out a very loud scream.

The husband, who was taking a shower, ran out into the living room naked to see what the problem was. She told him there was a snake under the lounge. He got down on the floor on his hands and knees to look for it. About that time the family dog came and cold-nosed him on the behind. He thought the snake had bitten him, so he screamed and fell over on the floor.

His wife thought he had had a heart attack, so she covered him up, told him to lie still and called an ambulance.

The paramedics rushed in, would not listen to his protests, loaded him on the stretcher, and started carrying him out. About that time, the snake came out from under the lounge and the paramedic saw it and dropped his end of the stretcher. That's when the man broke his leg and why he is still in the hospital.

The wife still had the problem of the snake in the house, so she called on a neighbour who volunteered to capture the snake. He armed himself with a rolled-up newspaper and began poking under the lounge. Soon he decided it was gone and told the woman, who sat down on the lounge in relief.

But while relaxing, her hand dangled in between the cushions, where she felt the snake wriggling around. She screamed and fainted, the snake rushed back under the lounge.

The neighbour, seeing her lying there passed out, tried to use CPR to revive her.

The neighbour's wife, who had just returned from shopping at Woolies, saw her husband's mouth on the woman's mouth and slammed her husband in the back of the head with a bag of canned goods, knocking him out and cutting his scalp to a point where it needed stitches.

The noise woke the woman from her dead faint and she saw her neighbour lying on the floor with his wife bending over him, so she assumed that the snake had bitten him. She went to the kitchen and got a small bottle of whiskey, and began pouring it down the man's throat.

By now, the police had arrived. They saw the unconscious man, smelled the whiskey, and assumed that a drunken fight had occurred. They were about to arrest them all, when the women tried to explain how it all happened over a little garden snake! The police called an ambulance, which took away the neighbour and his sobbing wife.

Now, the little snake again crawled out from under the lounge and one of the policemen drew his gun and fired at it. He missed the snake and hit the leg of the end table. The table fell over, the lamp on it shattered and, as the bulb broke, it started a fire in the curtains.

The other policeman tried to beat out the flames, and fell through the window into the yard on top of the family dog who, startled, jumped out and raced into the street, where an on-coming car swerved to avoid it and smashed into the parked police car.

Meanwhile, neighbours saw the burning curtains and called in the fire brigade. The firemen had started raising the fire ladder when they were halfway down the street. The rising ladder tore out the overhead wires, put out the power, and disconnected the telephones in a ten-square city block area (but they did get the house fire out).

Time passed! The snake was caught and both men were discharged from the hospital, the house was repaired, the dog came home, the police acquired a new car and all was right with their world.

A while later they were watching TV and the weatherman announced a cold snap for that night. The wife asked her husband if he thought they should bring in their plants for the night.

**And that's when he shot her.**

The following article was supplied by Andrea Williams, President of PNGAA and editor of "Una Voce". She obtained it from Mrs Beatrice Knight, a pre-war Rabaul resident.

The source is not labelled but most of Mrs Knight's cuttings came from the Brisbane Courier. Written above the article itself reads "Must have been printed 19/9/40" which has to be incorrect, probably 1943.

#### **"LOST LEGION"**

##### **Exploits of the N.G.V.R**

Today is the first anniversary of the calling-up for full time duty of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, who were the first men to fight for their homes on Australian territory, but today the N.G.V.R. is a "lost legion".



NGVR Lae 1940. H.C. Cruickshank NG504 5th from left

Photo supplied by Graham Cruickshank, son.

Can any reader explain the different head-dress on Cruickshank and the man next to him?

numbers at peak were less than 500, scattered over the vast area of New Guinea and New Britain. Many have died or are prisoners of the Japanese. Some are still in action in the jungle war, some have been discharged as unfit or over age. Many were invalided to Australia, and now boarded "fit", are ready and anxious to return to their unit. But they have no unit. They have been told that it is disbanded.

As soldiers, many of them feel that their experience and close knowledge of New Guinea, gained in some cases over 20 years and more, is being wasted. From the fit N.G.V.R. personnel still available and the "NGX" men in the A.I.F. They believe it would be possible to select a unit of men with the forces, some of whom would be at home in every part of the Territory, to act as guides, scouts, and liaison with the natives.

Officers of regular Army units which have fought through the New Guinea campaign agree that units that have had the services of men familiar with New Guinea have always had a tremendous advantage over units not so fortunate. They have suggested that every company should have attached to it some officer or soldier with New Guinea experience.

### HISTORY OF FORCE

Every exploit of the unit in a year of scattered jungle warfare cannot be chronicled here, but the history of the N.G.V.R. in brief is as follows:-

It was formed in Rabaul on September 19 1939, with a strength of probably 150, and detachments together nearly twice as strong on the mainland at Lae, Salamaua and Madang. In October 1941, headquarters were moved to Bulolo in the area where the larger proportion of the unit was located.

Mainly it was composed at the outbreak of war of returned soldiers of the last war, men over the age of enlistment or below medical standard, and men in restricted occupations. Training was all voluntary, carried out in members' own time.

Clergymen, dentists, doctors, solicitors, mining engineers, school teachers – all professionals were represented in its ranks. Banking staffs volunteered almost to a man. Under training it became a "pocket Army", capable of even important technical military work because of its composition.

This training continued until January 21 last year, when a Government patrol officer at Finschhafen warned by radio that 60 Japanese planes were coming down the coast. It was this warning that enabled the people of Lae and Bulolo

to "go to ground" before the coming raid. Bombers, dive bombers, fighters strafed Lae – then in the process of becoming the new capital of the Territory, with the Administrator and two of his departments already in occupation – for an hour, and razed it. Other planes attacked Salamaua, Bulolo and Madang. Civil rule on the mainland ceased, civilian population was evacuated. The N.G.V.R. took charge of the area. They were the only personnel left.

### JAPANESE INVASION

On January 21, the alarm was given in Rabaul that an invasion fleet was approaching New Britain, and those of the Volunteers left (for many had succeeded in entering the A.I.F. And some were absent on furlough), about 72 in all, were called up for full-time duty at once.

They took over a section of the front line at Lakunai aerodrome, and when the fortress battery was bombed out of action on the morning of January 23 the N.G.V.R. remained holding their positions after all other troops had withdrawn.

Later they took up a new position on the beach between Raluana Point and Vulcan volcano with one section of A.I.F. Infantry, and it was here before dawn the next morning that the N.G.V.R. and the few A.I.F. proceeded to engage the Japanese forces again, providing the only resistance the Japanese experience in capturing Rabaul which has since become a major naval base for the enemy.

They fought until all their ammunition was expended, and were at last overpowered. Only seven escaped to Australia after long jungle treks down the coasts, leading with them large parties who depended on them for guidance in getting out.

On the mainland of New Guinea the destruction of planes, hangars and workshops put all transport out of action, because the whole area relied on the planes for its traffic. The N.G.V.R. were at once called on by their senior officer for full-time duty. They were civilians on the morning of January 21, full-time soldiers in the afternoon. They were the only Australian soldiers in the district when the Japanese eventually made their landing there, weeks later.

N.G.V.R. patrols moved in their own familiar localities like shadows, striking and disappearing, never allowing the invader to gather knowledge of their strength or where they came from, meanwhile gathering information of the movements and strength of the enemy, their equipment, their likely plans.

### WORK OF PATROLS

Time and time again, they went singly or in small parties right through the Japanese positions by night, wrecking and pillaging where opportunity offered. They moved freely among the planes on the Japanese held aerodromes, reported their types and armament, and the positions of their dumps for Allied airmen to strike next day.

They decisively defeated the Japanese in actions at Mubo and in the Markham Valley, took part in the raid at Heath's Farm, seven miles from Lae – where 44 Japanese were killed – and in the raid on Salamaua, in which 113 Japanese were killed, and in which they did not suffer one single casualty.

With civil government gone, men of the N.G.V.R. assumed responsibility for several thousand indentured natives, unable to return to their homes in other islands and districts. These natives had to be got together in depots, and fed, so that they should not become a burden on the indigenous natives of the area. They became the army of carriers needed for supplies.

The natives soon recovered from the shock of the raids and returned to duty, and when a day or two after the landings at Lae





NGVR Vickers Gun Platoon—Rabaul

Note shorts being worn. This would have been early days of the Platoon as they quickly learnt that shorts are not suitable when firing the Vickers as the hot cartridge cases fall directly on the legs of the firer and often end up in extremely sensitive places.

and Salamaua Allied planes came over and strafed the Japanese, the reaction among the natives was terrific. When six big Allied transport planes arrived and landed troops and equipment at Wau, the natives were so overcome with enthusiasm that they unloaded all six planes in nine minutes.

It was months before any mail from outside reached the volunteer regiment. Their womenfolk had been evacuated hurriedly with just a few rounds of baggage, leaving their homes unguarded and their men in uniform.

Their exploits have been rewarded as far as is known, with one Military Medal, but there can be no doubt that many others have deserved decorations, and perhaps the number of honours to the credit of the N.G.V.R. will be increased as details of their actions come to the notice of those in authority.

#### Another item forwarded by Andrea Williams—this time an email from Helen Boutell.

This was under the Roll of Honour heading in the Sydney Morning Herald, 25 Oct 1945

**NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES.** The President and executive of the New Guinea Branch of the Returned Soldiers League desire to express their deepest sympathy with the families of members of the N.G.V.R. whose lives were sacrificed when the S.S. Montevideo Mauru was sunk in July, 1942, on a voyage from Rabaul.

*When our lawn mower broke and wouldn't run, my wife kept hinting to me that I should get it fixed. But, somehow, I always had something else to take care of first, the shed, the boat, making beer.... Always something more important to me. Finally she thought of a clever way to make her point. When I arrived home one day, I found her seated in the tall grass snipping away with a tiny pair of sewing scissors. I watched silently for a minute, and when I came out again I handed her a toothbrush and said "When you finish cutting the grass, you might as well sweep the driveway"*

*The doctors say I will walk again, but I will always have a limp.*

#### THE US 1ST MARINE DIVISION

This US Marine Unit is a Marine Corps multi role Infantry Division based at Camp Pendleton in California, and was activated as a Division from a Regiment on 1 Feb, 1941, aboard the battleship USS Texas. It is a subordinate unit of the 1 Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF). The unit is the oldest and largest active duty division in the US Marine Corps and is nicknamed 'The Old Breed and the Blue Diamond', the latter related to its insignia: the insignia also displays the Southern Cross. The Division has a special affinity with Australia in that whenever they ship out they do so to the traditional Australian folk song Waltzing Matilda as their battle hymn.

How did this happen? After the Battle of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, the Division landed at Brett's Wharf in Brisbane in December, 1943. The First Regiment was sent to Melbourne for what is now referred to as R & R (Rest and Resuscitation). The

Regiment was quartered at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). Whilst there the MCG was named Camp Murphy. It was also at Melbourne the decision was made to take the traditional Australian folk song as the Division's battle hymn.

In October 1977, a plaque was unveiled at the MCG recording that the First Regiment of the First Marine Division, United States Marine Corps, was based at this Sports ground in 1943 and looked on it as their home. A group of WW2 marine veterans visited Melbourne in August 2002 and gathered at the MCG to commemorate their 1943 visit.

Whilst in Victoria the remainder of the Division made use of Balcombe Army Camp at Mt Martha, Mornington Peninsula, which was later well known as Balcombe Army Apprentices School during 1948-1982. The Australian Army erected gates at the camp upon which were placed two plaques, one from the First Marine Division and one from the Australian Army, with both indicating the presence of the Marines. It was at Balcombe that the Division was presented the first of three US Presidential Unit Citations won during WW2. Whilst there the Division carried out landing exercises near Martha Point using HMAS Manoora.

Unit History - WW1 as the 5th Regiment

WW2, Korean War, Vietnam War,

Desert Shield/Storm,

1990's Humanitarian Relief,

Iraq War, Afghanistan War.

This redoubtable fighting unit has won nine US Presidential Unit Citations since its formation.

**Bob Harvey-Hall.**

Reference: Wikipedia via Yahoo.

*Did you know?*

*About 18% of Australia is occupied by desert.*

*Pigeon racing was a demonstration sport at the 1900 Paris Olympic Games.*

*An eggplant is actually a type of thistle.*



#### THE LALOKI RIVER INCIDENT—CIRCA 1963

Sometime in 1963, PNGVR Port Moresby planned a Company range practice at the Goldie River Army Training Area (GRATA). The idea was to leave Murray Barracks Saturday afternoon, camp at GRATA overnight and fire our repertoire of weapons Sunday morning. The Company's weaponry and other gear were loaded, the troops mounted and away we went on a sunny Port Moresby Saturday. While GRATA is not far from Port Moresby, it is out of Port Moresby's rain shadow and experiences a different weather pattern. The GRATA area had had rain as the road leading in along the Goldie River galley rainforest was very wet and our vehicles slid and skidded as we progressed to the camp site.

Late afternoon storm clouds were gathering and we camped to prepare for an early Sunday start. We stopped just before entering the main camp at GRATA, moved off the road into a kunai clearing and set up camp beside a small creek which ran

into the Goldie River a short distance away. No sooner had we erected the tents, when the storm erupted. The rain bucketed down, and it did not stop until early morning. By this time the creek was breaking its bank and it was obvious there would be no firing that day. We decamped and headed back to Port Moresby, hoping to get there before the water from higher in the Goldie and Laloki watersheds descended and cut the road. As soon as the vehicles were loaded they departed with the GMC loaded with the weapons leading the way.

Lt Bruce Johnson and I set off as soon as our driver was ready. As the water was well over the road and about a third way up the Landrover's door, it was safer for Bruce and I to walk beside the vehicle and guide the driver along the road and over the many small bridges. Emerging from the galley rainforest into open savannah land the road improved and we made good time to the Brown River junction situated just north of the Laloki River Bridge. As we drove onto the Brown River Road we saw stationary vehicles queued ahead - we were too late, the Laloki River had broken its bank, where it usually did, and fast running water covered the road about 50m north of the Bridge, the side we were on.

Something was going on as our troops were congregated around the GMC. It soon became apparent a potentially serious situation was developing. The GMC was on the road but in the water with the water lapping the top of its rear wheels. Several men were on the GMC with a rope strung out with John Page attached sweeping past us along side the road endeavouring to reach a Papuan perched in a tree. John had misjudged his entry into the water and he was swept past the tree. He was hauled in and had another attempt to rescue the Papuan. This time Cpl Allan (Dinger) Bell drove the GMC further into the water to form a breakwater and to provide a better launching pad for John. John went into the water but as he was approaching the tree the rope snagged and he was pulled under. Some how John extracted himself and managed to swim to and cling to the same tree the Papuan was perched; however, he had swallowed water and he was obviously exhausted. I asked Sgt Bill Stewart, a professional firefighter who was the Chief at the Boroko Fire Station, if he was prepared to rescue John. He stripped and was soon in the water and easily approached the tree where he tied John on to the rope, and together, as the rope was pulled from the road, they "back planned" to the shore. Bill immediately returned to the water and rescued the Papuan in the same manner.

Our attention was then drawn to the GMC which had a noticeable lean – the fast running water was rising and was either eroding the road beneath its down stream wheels or shifting the vehicle sideways towards the edge of the road. Quickly estimating the time, the amount of paper work and endless investigations we would have to endure if we sunk the GMC with the Company's weapons, our attention was most certainly concentrated. Dinger tried to reverse out of the river but the engine spluttered and stopped. By this time the water on the upstream side was lapping the top of the bonnet. Enterprisingly, Dinger got out of the truck, cut the fan belt and tried again. It started, running on about three of its six cylinders. There was insufficient power for Dinger to drive the GMC out of the stream so a rope was hastily tied to the rear of the GMC, and with the men pulling and after a few attempts with Dinger coaching the mis-firing engine, a very wet GMC emerged from the Laloki River waters.

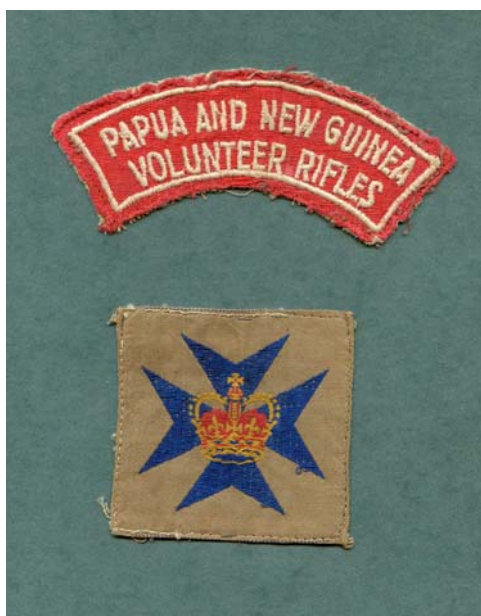
It was time for a break and a cup of tea while we waited for the water level to drop. Sometime later it was noticed the rescued Papuan was missing and upon hearing some shouting, we looked across the water and there he was; his journey to Port Moresby or wherever he was going must have been



urgent; he had somehow crossed the water over the road, waved and walked away without so much as a thank you. Luckily all were safe and no equipment was lost, but it could well have been a disaster. About a year later, Sgt Bill Stewart and Cpl John Page were awarded well deserved BEMs for their courageous work.

Phil Ainsworth

1 March 2011



## FLASHBACK

*Unit and Command flashes as used by PNGVR.*

*In 1960 the Northern Command flash ceased to be issued and in 1961 the issue of PNGVR shoulder flashes also ceased.*



1960. C Coy PNGVR Goroka as members prepare to move out on a bivouac. L-R. Lt Don Heap, Darryl Sears, Juergen Raasch. Photo courtesy Juergen who has just returned to Nth Qld after several years in the United Arab Emirates



Above. John Holland receiving a Z Special plaque from the son of Horrie Young, who was on the "Krait" for both of its missions to Singapore



Working bee at the Museum—preparation for the installation of the entrance ramp.

Assn Welfare Officer Paul Brown swinging the crowbar. Our Patron Maj General John Pearn is the centre figure.

$$\begin{aligned}
 1 \times 8 + 1 &= 9 \\
 12 \times 8 + 2 &= 98 \\
 123 \times 8 + 3 &= 987 \\
 1234 \times 8 + 4 &= 9876 \\
 12345 \times 8 + 5 &= 98765 \\
 123456 \times 8 + 6 &= 987654 \\
 1234567 \times 8 + 7 &= 9876543 \\
 12345678 \times 8 + 8 &= 98765432 \\
 123456789 \times 8 + 9 &= 987654321
 \end{aligned}$$

Some mathematicians have far toooooo much time on their hands.



Another item in your Museum

Morse Code Key. Used to send messages in a series of dots & dashes. It was found in a building that had been bombed in Rabaul during the War.

*Don't worry about old age—it doesn't last long*





Email from Ben Zuvani, who is studying at Flinders Uni, S.A.

I have been in touch with my dad in PNG and got the details of his service from him. He commenced service around Feb/Mar, 1970 with Support Coy, Mortar Pl at Murray Barracks, Port Moresby. End of service was Dec 1973 with D Coy, Moem Barracks, Wewak. His full name is Theodore Zuvani and rank at the end of service was full Corporal. His number is 871274, This photo of D Coy was taken at Wewak with Maj. Newton as their C.O. Dad is seated first row and first person on the left.

malaria.

Private Read was buried in the Kieta Cemetery having served his country for a little over three months and leaving his brother Arthur in Australia as the only one to mourn his passing.

**From PNG Attitude 13.10.09.**

Photo below

PNGVR members from the Commonwealth Bank, Port Moresby, June, 1951. Front: Tex Muir, Dutchy Holland; Right to left: Bob Collins, Alf Scales, Max Little.

**Ed comment.** I served with Lt Col Alf Scales at HQ, COMMUNICATIONS ZONE, Moore Park Barracks, Sydney, in the mid 1970's. He was SO1 Operations, and I was SO 2 Operations.

Photo courtesy Alf Scales.

## TOO FAR AWAY THY GRAVE TO SEE

By Ken Wright.

A volunteer was Joseph Read. He'd come to Australia from London to start a new life and took on a plasterer's trade after his arrival in South Australia.

He enlisted on 31 Oct 1914 in the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force tasked to seize German colonies in the Pacific and became Pte Joseph Read, Number 118, D Coy, 3 Battalion.

He had served with the British Army in the Boer War from 1901-02 with the 2nd Bn, Dorsetshire Regiment.

By 13 Nov, the full quotas from the States had been assembled and sent to Liverpool Army Camp, outside Sydney with Major PW Toll as their C.O. With the barest of training, the members of 3rd Bn. embarked from Sydney on 28 Nov aboard His Majesty's Australian Transport SS "Eastern" bound for Rabaul.

The other German possessions named by the British Govt were progressively occupied by the Australian forces. New Ireland, the Admiralty Islands, Western Islands, Bougainville, New Guinea, Nauru and the German Solomon Islands were all brought under Australian administration until their future could be decided after the war.

Private Read was a member of the occupying forces, possibly stationed on Bougainville, as his location is not mentioned on his service record.

He died on 11 Feb 1915, not from the effects of a German bullet or an unfortunate accident but from the bite of a mosquito. He contracted blackwater fever, a very dangerous complication of malignant



Australian troops Gazelle Peninsula, 1914.



Political Correctness is a doctrine fostered by a delusional, illogical minority, and rapidly promoted by mainstream media, which holds forth the proposition that it is possible to pick up a turd by the clean end.

## EMAIL RECEIVED FROM MEMBER BRIAN ANDREW CURRENTLY IN COLUMBIA.

Hi Bob, I am writing with a request for a favour.

On June 25th I boarded a plane in Cartagena, Colombia en route to Los Angeles via Ft Lauderdale, Miami with a connection next day on an Air New Zealand flight to Australia. My booking on the flight to OZ was purchased online with an agent named Flight Deals Online.

On arrival in LA I approached Air NZ to confirm my booking and learned that the company I booked with is bogus and Air NZ couldn't issue a ticket. I was on a cheap flight, \$US890 to Auckland/Melbourne/Adelaide and Air NZ couldn't issue a ticket for less than \$US1,430 on subsequent flights. My best option was to return to Colombia for \$US440 but I only had \$300 with me and no credit card to buy online. My wife had my Citibank debit card with her on a visit to relatives in another city, and I had no known phone or internet means of contact. So I am stranded !!!!.....

But fortunately had made arrangements with the Director of the

Bob Hope Hollywood USO at LAX to bridge the 22 hour flight gap at that facility and she graciously extended my stay till Saturday 30th. The management and staff showed me every courtesy and made me welcome in every way. A member used her credit card to buy my ticket online and I was able to repay after my wife sent money via Western Union.

Bob I am asking that you publish a thank you on behalf of the Association in the next HTT and send a copy to Director Barbara Musella. Her email is bmusellauso@earthlink.net. I have a picture that you may also wish to publish of myself and Barbara in the USO foyer. They are very keen to widen the scope of their activity and will be delighted to see some input and gratitude from another country. Everybody I met at USO was keen to learn about OZ and many of the young Marines and Army personnel were enthralled to learn about Brewer Force and Los Negros.

I will need to remain here for a while now so could you please send some email addresses for Barry, Norm, Jack, Leigh so I can email them.

Best Wishes, Brian

**Brian was in 7 PI C Coy Madang from 1959 to 1962/3.**



Brian with Bob Hope Hollywood USO Director Barbara Musella at Los Angeles.



Asn Members at the MM Memorial dedication Canberra July. John McGrath, Richard Hart, Barry Wright, Norm Mundy Ralph Seeto, JesseChee, Doug Ng.



PNGVR table at the lunch held the day prior to the Memorial dedication Doug Ng, Ralph Seeto, John McGrath, Barry Wright Bob

Collins Jesse Chee , Bob & Dawn Harvey-Hall, Peter??, Norm Mundy.

## HTT Vol 75 SUBMARINE AE1

The article could have given the impression that the WW1 submarine had indeed been found after all this time. However the following tells the full story.

Around mid October, Rabaul was abuzz with the impending visit of two Australian Mine hunters namely the HMAS GASCOYNE and the HMAS DIMANTINA in cooperation with HMNZS RESOLUTION and HMNZS WELLINGTON to conduct an operation named OPERATION RENDER SAFE.

The object of the visit was to locate and render safe as much of the unexploded ordinance left over from World War Two that could be found. There is still cache's of munitions remaining to be located and destroyed, which are buried or under volcanic ash, hidden in tunnels or undersea. Thousands of tons of bombs were dropped on Rabaul and Kokopo area by allied aircraft in the neutralization of this formidable fortress not including stockpiles of munitions remaining from the Japanese. Rabaul was one of the most heavily bombed "cities" in the world at that time. Of course some of this material remains armed but unexploded. There was usually up to 100,000 Japanese personnel in Rabaul most of the time and often more when they were building up invasion troops for the PNG mainland and Solomon Islands campaign's. After the surrender there were still up to 90,000 Japanese personnel remaining in and around Rabaul.

The mine hunters were also under the constraints that all underwater wreckage was deemed to be a war grave, which meant any unexploded ordnance (UXO) had to be recovered and moved to a designated underwater detonation area.

When the ships arrived I had the pleasure of meeting socially the divers off the HMAS Gascoyne, whose divers first explored the submarine wreck. So come the 24<sup>th</sup> of October and I was asked by an Australian 60 Minutes crew to meet them at Rapopo Plantation Resort to talk about Rabaul WW 2 history. When I arrived they were conducting an interview with one of the Gascoyne's divers. I learned they had found a submarine in deep water in Rabaul's Simpson Harbour. As the chief diver and I had had a couple of drinks earlier in the week, I asked him what they had and where. He was not able to tell me as the information was classified at the time but he asked me some questions on the submarines, which had been in this area. After the discussion I had a good idea what was down there.

The following Sunday I promised to take as many of the officers as would fit in my vehicle for a tour of the Rabaul tunnels and other remaining installations as well as the Rabaul museum (in the New Guinea Club) just off Mango Avenue Rabaul. Also to Admiral Yamamoto's Bunker adjacent to the New Guinea Club and then over to an extensive Japanese cave complex near Ramale, some concrete pill boxes and guns and later the Kokopo museum and barge tunnels at Karavia on the way back to the ship.

So armed with Peter Stones book "Hostages to Freedom – The Fall of Rabaul" and once in the New Guinea Club museum I showed them a model of the famous missing Australian submarine AE – 1 and asked is this what you found. The answer was no, so then in Peters book I showed them a photograph of a Japanese submarine and got an affirmative response. So this was then an easy vessel to identify.

Anyway to get down to the identity of this boat.

The Brisbane Courier Mail carried a headline on the 28th of October saying "Find may solve WW1 mystery" and went on to describe AE – 1 with a comparison to another shipwreck which had also been found by the HMNZS Resolution in 100 metres of water. Submarine AE-1 was lost with all hands on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1914. Another site called Scoop Independent News on the same day displayed a photo of an intact shipwreck in 100 metres of water and a sonar image of the submarine in the harbour. From the front of my office on the



shore of Simpson Harbour it is not difficult to see where the navy ships were stopped and a guess to the location was easy. The submarine location has been marked on hydrographic charts of Simpson Harbour at least from 1997 and may be on earlier ones. The chart does not say what is down there but identifies the feature as wreckage.

Anyway I am very sure the wreckage is of the Japanese Midget submarine HA Ko Hyoteki # 53.

Peter Stone has a photo supplied from the Australian War Memorial Museum I think of the very submarine in his book and the story, which will follow. Bob Scott who worked as a Salvage diver with Ian Short in the 60's and 70's also contributed some information. Peters photo shows Japanese prisoners of war working on the ship as it lay in partially submerged in shallow water near the old GM slipway which was around where the present Burma Road turns off the Rabaul – Kokopo road near Malaguna No. 3 Village. The submarine had been scuttled near the slipway before the Japanese surrender on the 06<sup>th</sup> of September 1945. Commander Croft of the RAN was tasked with the collection and disposal of the war material when the allies returned to Rabaul. He had a salvage vessel called the Caledonian Salvor at his disposal and he used her along with Japanese POW crewmembers to raise this submarine on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1946.

However, Number 53 was still armed with two torpedoes and Commander. Croft tried unsuccessfully to remove them. He was called away for awhile and when he returned to Rabaul he found the sub had been stripped of anything movable. He tried again to disarm the sub and was unsuccessful. As he could not sell her in this condition or cut her up for scrap he made the decision to attach a cable and pulled her out into Simpson Harbour. The ship he used for this job was the HMAS Koala. So with drums, netting and cables attached he got her out into harbour away from the shipping leads around 30 fathom mark and scuttled her. David Flinn. Rabaul. 10.12.2011



A Japanese Midget sub being salvaged. More on Japanese midget subs in future issues. Thanks to David Flinn.



PNGAA President - Andrea Williams, PNG Consul General to QLD & NT, Paul Nerau OBE and Phil Ainsworth, at the United Service Club, 13 September 2012 to discuss PNG community matters.

## 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](mailto:pngvr@optusnet.com.au)

[www.pngvr.com](http://www.pngvr.com)

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**Bob Collins—Editor**

## C J MEDALS

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557 Compton Road, Runcorn, Ql.4113

Email [cjmedals@gmail.com](mailto:cjmedals@gmail.com)

Samuel Alfred

Ph: 07 3276 1058

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99 Annerley Road, Woolloongabba QLD 4102

**[www.kingco.com.au](http://www.kingco.com.au)**