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

## PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Good news, I am pleased to say that the link to our upgraded website has been completed - enter [www.pngvr.com](http://www.pngvr.com) and then hit the link to [www.pngvr.weebly.com](http://www.pngvr.weebly.com). Trevor Connell, a member who lives in the Northern Territory, is our new web master. Weebly is a free web programme and it's use was the most practical way to utilise what we had and upgrade at least cost. Thank you Trevor for volunteering and the sterling work you have done over the Christmas period to bring our website back to life so efficiently.. You can dial either website and you will get to the same place. Have a look today and please send regular information to Trevor, phone 0409 690 590, email [trevor.connell@internode.on.net](mailto:trevor.connell@internode.on.net) so the site may be kept up to date and relevant.

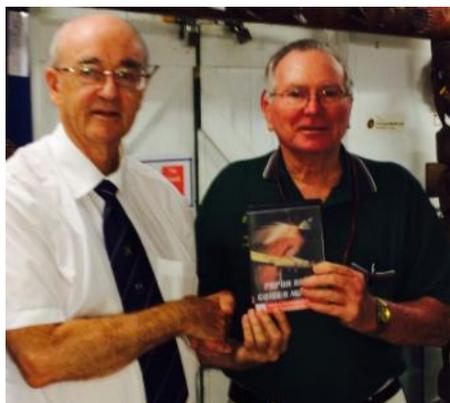
I spoke to Dennis Sanin early January. He is now living on a farm in the Mornington Peninsula area of Victoria. Joshua has joined the army and is presently completing his training in Townsville.

Our first Executive committee meeting for 2014 was held Saturday 18th January at the Museum. Our Patron attended and extended his good esteem and wishes for a successful year. John Holland on behalf of the Association responded and presented him with a set of Highlands DVDs as a thankyou for his continued friendly and much needed support .

Treasurer Doug provided good news reporting the soundness of the Association's finances- all bank account total over \$50,000. Doug added the Association had recently received continuation of its tax deductibility status for financial donations to the Museum- well done.

The Committee was informally advised that the nearby ex-cadets building whose use was offered to a Naval Association by the NSAAQ was rejected and the premises' use will again be subject to review. Our Museum is in dire need of additional space and these premises would suit admirably . Another attempt will be made to lease these premises from the NSAAQ.

A formal dining night will be held at Jimboomba on Saturday 18 March 2014. Numbers are limited so complete your booking early by contacting either Bob Collins on phone 07 5526 8396 or Barry Wright on 07 5546 9865.



Our Patron Maj Gen John Pearn and John Holland 18 January 2014 at the Wacol Museum.

Providing a suitable venue at the right price may be found in central Brisbane, this has proved to be an extremely difficult task in the past, a Regimental Dinner will be held on the Saturday Evening 26 April 2014, You will be informed on progress of this .

Planning is proceeding on our 6 September 2014 Anzac Centenary celebration at the Wacol Museum. It will be in a similar form as our Rabaul Centenary Function held in 2010 except there will be a service to dedicate a plaque in honour of those killed at Bita Paka on 11 September 1914 and those lost in the submarine AE 1 when it disappeared near the Duke of York Islands 14 September 1914. Please diary this date now and volunteer to the committee to assist with the many tasks required to make this a successful event. It is planned for a Vice regal to be in attendance . Details will be provided as planning progresses.

The Museum is going from strength to strength. Many visits have already been arranged by outside parties including many school children, no doubt influenced by the emphasis of Australia's wartime history by the looming Anzac Centenary Celebrations. Curator John is very busy rearranging exhibits and producing new to accommodate the demands of the schools. For instance Kokoda is a theme taught in history so John is busily compiling a Kokoda exhibition in time for our first school excursion to the Museum . John appeals for assistance, so if you can help please ring him on 0449 504 058.

### VALE: Ben Moide, ex- PIB & PNGVR

Sadly, I advise of the death of Sgt. Ben Moide C.B.E., a warrior of World War 2. Ben, aged 88, was living with family at Waigani on the outskirts of Port Moresby.

Ben died early 30 December 2013 and his funeral was shown on ABC TV 19 January 2014. Regrettably the dates of his death and funeral were unknown and the Association was unrepresented at his funeral. A fuller eulogy will be presented in a future HTT issue.

Ben's father came from the village of Saguane on Kiwai Island near Daru in the Western District while his mother came from the Motuan village of Pari, 5km to the east of Port Moresby. Steven Benjamin Moide was born on 21 June 1924, the third of nine children. Ben's mixed cultural background was a marked feature of his Army and civilian life.

Ben left the Catholic School at Badili to sign up for the Papuan Infantry Battalion at age 16 without telling his parents but telling the Australian Enlistment Officer that he was 19. Ben's recruit training Sergeant was the equally famous (former Police) Sgt. Katue M.M. from Kikori. Lahui Ako's biography of Ben ("Nameless Warriors") published in 2012 by UPNG ([www.pngbuai.com/buybooks](http://www.pngbuai.com/buybooks)) demonstrates that he learnt quickly and was promoted into leadership roles by his Australian taubadas.

The post-war society was difficult for Ben and other soldiers unless they re-enlisted in the Pacific Islands Regiment (from 1951). Ben persevered through the development problems of Port Moresby and found employment with the Australian Administrator, the UPNG Vice- Chancellor and finally SP Brewery. After the war also, Ben was



A young Ben Moide teaching recruits, WW2

very active as a leader in the RSL and in the developing Rugby League organisation.

Although over 40 years of age, Ben was permitted to enlist in PNGVR as a rifleman post 1964, the year of integration; although he served only a short time. The Association members, principally Joe Fisk et al sponsored Ben to Brisbane in the late 1990's to march with PNGVR in the Anzac Day March of that year. Phil Ainsworth recalls meeting Ben and Joe Fisk in his first week in PNG playing Rugby League in Port Moresby with the famous Magani's Team in 1960. Ben would have been 36 years of age but looked in his early twenties then.

Ben was honoured with a M.B.E. then a C.B.E. and he was chosen to represent all ex-Servicemen at all PNG Remembrance Day Services (23 July) in recent decades. In that capacity, Ben was an advocate and an icon for the PIB and NGIB in Papua New Guinea. Ben was a frequent and welcome guest at ANZAC Day and Kokoda Day services in Qld where his presence reminded everyone of the critical role played by the PIB and NGIB in all the PNG campaigns (except Milne Bay) during World War 2. Ben maintained a close relationship with Capt. Alan Hooper (PIB, ANGAU) as they reminisced, in Motu, about their war experiences. This information was provided by Greg Ivey.

Phil Ainsworth

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**Robert Eustace (Bob) EMERY, M.M.**

**(Continued)**

### **Commandeering of Motor Vessels**

A message came through one day "Commandeer all small ships, fuel for 5,000 miles (8,000km) journey, hide and await further instructions". There were quite a few small ships kicking around and Andy Kirkwell-Smith was in Madang with us – he was a Navy man from WW 1 and had a plantation down the Rai Coast, south of Madang. He and I were sent by Gordon Russell to go and take over the 'Totol' at Krangat Island, at the entrance to Madang Harbour, which was the Headquarters of the Lutheran Mission in the area. He and I went across in a canoe in the middle of the night, just the two of us, and the Lutheran boat was tied up at the Mission Wharf at Krangat. The skipper and crew were asleep on the boat – it was about 1am. I stood at the end of the gangway with a loaded rifle and Andy went on the boat to find the skipper. My job was to stop anyone getting off. Eventually after about a quarter of an hour I could hear voices and old Ted Radke, the skipper of the boat, an Australian, comes up in his pyjamas, rubbing his eyes, and said "You better come and have a cup of coffee now". He was very co-operative, mind you he didn't have much choice, so we told him we had to take over the boat and wanted him to stop on it as we wanted him to skipper it. The 'Totol' had cabins on it for about five people and was 35 tons – you could go around the world in it. It had been built in Hong Kong and the Lutheran Mission had only taken delivery of it a few months prior.

Up at Alexishafen there was a boat belonging to the Catholic Mission – I cannot remember the name of it now. Well Gordon Russell, I don't know why, he sent three Roman Catholics up there to take over the boat. I think that was a mistake – you don't want Roman Catholics to take over something belonging to the Bishop – you want to send Protestants instead of Catholics.

There was also the 'Winnon' which belonged to a Chinese named Chui Long. We got that and a couple of other smaller ones and put them in a little harbour, about half way between Madang and Alexishafen – I can't think of the name of it now – it was just a little harbour and you could hide the small boats at the mouth of the river there under the mangroves. There was a stone jetty that went right out into the middle of the bay and it had been built by the Missionaries. The boats couldn't get up to the beach – they had to go onto the end of the jetty and we used to run drums of fuel out there at night and fuel the boats. During the day we would take the boats out and stick them up the creek with some branches over the top of them.

We had been doing this for a week or two with about four boats when, one morning, we were out on the end of the jetty and we couldn't get the engine to start on one of the boats after daylight. With this particular boat you had to pump up a glow-lamp and heat up the cylinder head. This day we had two blowlamps going

in the engine room and they were making a roaring noise, like you pump up a Primus. I was just sitting there enjoying the sunlight when I happened to look down the jetty towards the land, and there was one of our chaps down there waving a towel to me as a signal. I waved to him, then he pointed, and I turned and looked the other way, out towards the sea, and there was a big flying boat coming. It looked as though it was going to land alongside us. It looked like one of our Sunderland Flying Boats but it wasn't, it was a Japanese plane and came in right past us – I could see the Japs looking out of the windows. If I had a shotgun there I reckon I could have shot them. It went straight past us and gave us quite a fright as we wondered what was going to happen next. It just kept on going and swung around towards Madang.

### **Rescue Mission to New Britain.**

The boats were fuelled, had plenty of rations on them, rice and meat etc and we just hid them awaiting further instructions. Towards the end of February, 1942, a message came "Small ships proceed Lutherhafen. Contact Harris. Travel at night, hide during day". When we got that message we had seen plenty of Japanese planes but none of ours – nobody seemed to know where Lutherhafen was – but we found an old map to discover that Lutherhafen was on the end of Umboi Island, at Luther Anchorage.

So I got on the 'Winnon' with Alan Strachan (NGVR) which was owned and skippered by Chui Leong. We left about 4pm and kept going until nearly daylight, when we stopped somewhere up a creek. We did this for three nights and we eventually got down somewhere around Sialum. Kirkwell-Smith went with Ted Radke on the 'Totol' and another boat came with us. When we got to Sialum all we could see looking over the sea was the top of this mountain sticking up out of the water about 60 miles (96km) away – remember none of us had ever been this way before.

We took a bearing on the mountain and just steamed all the next night on that bearing across the Vitiaz Strait. We found out two or three things that night – the Vitiaz Strait has a helluva current that goes through at different times of the year, and it gets as rough as hell out in the middle – anyway we got there. We were a couple of miles off shore in the morning with the reefs. We went ashore where Bill Money (NGVR) had a plantation, Gizarum, and we caught up with him and a couple of other blokes and then we pulled out and went around to Lutherhafen.

When we got to Lutherhafen there was the 'Totol' with Kirkwell-Smith on it and 'Blue'Harris (NGVR) who had just got off the 'Umboi', a 23 tonner owned by the Lutheran Mission. 'Blue' Harris was the Kiap in Finschhafen and he was the bloke we had to contact, so I contacted him and said "What am I supposed to do?" He replied "You get on the 'Totol' and come with us. We'll shift all the cargo you have with you, put it on the 'Totol', and the 'Umboi' can go back to Finschhafen." Well, that's what we did, We unloaded the rice and meat and other tucker we had and put it on the 'Totol'. However the 'Umboi' did not go to Finschhafen but went over to New Britain also Ted Radke skippered the 'Totol' with Kirkwell-Smith, Ron Chugg

(NGVR) and myself on board. We only traveled at night and stopped during the day. In a few days we came ashore at Iboki, which has a good harbour, and a good wharf. There was quite an impressive plantation also. There were two people standing on the wharf with white tropical clothes on, obviously not in the Army – one of them was Mrs Baker, who owned 'Witu' plantation nearby and the other was a bloke named Murray who was the manager of a plantation close by – and they weren't in the Army. Then we saw, in among the coconuts about 200 troops who had escaped from the debacle of Rabual, together with a few civilians. J.K. McCarthy was in charge here, he had been the District Officer at Talasea, and had been given the authority to organise the rescue of survivors. He was given the authority over all soldiers in the area regardless of title or rank. The C.O. of the AIF from Rabaul was there, Col. Carr, also but McCarthy was in charge. We had to hang around at Iboki for about 10 days, because the Japs were by now in occupation at Lae, Salamaua, Finschhafen and Buna on the Mainland of New Guinea.

The original plan was to take these blokes across to Lae, so the Japanese occupation mucked that up. We had the boats, we could have shifted a hundred men in two nights from here to Madang and we could have shifted the whole lot, but NO, they wanted to go to Australia. Well I didn't think they had much chance myself – they had to go through where there was not much shelter, but that's the way they went eventually. But before they did that we had to move all the troops from Iboki across to the Witu Island group. We took them over in the 'Totol' and the 'Bavaria' which was one of the other boats there. In the Witu group was a Burns Philp inter-island steamer tied up at the wharf, the 'Lakatoi', some 300 tons which was in going order, the crew was on it, and the Japs knew they were there as they used to fly over every couple of days to have a look at them and ensure the boat was still there.

What McCarthy and his crowd did – they put all the troops on that boat – and they sailed her down to Cairns. Bill Money (NGVR) had the Guinea Airways boat 'Gnair' also and it had come from Lae. Bill took the 'Gnair' down to Australia also with Sno Blakley, Gus Keuster, Dave Rohrlach, Bert Gazzard and Harley Armitstead, all NGVR from Lae and Darch Hallam from Pondo Plantation on New Britain on board – a journey of 2400 km in a 15 ton launch. The 'Bavaria', a 45 ton schooner, after being stripped bare, was left in the Witu Islands on the basis that the Japanese aircrew would be a different one each day – and this apparently worked.

### **Back to Madang and on to Nadzab.**

'Blue' Harris and the crew of the 'Totol' together with Kirkwell-Smith and myself went back to Madang. We made Long Island the first night and found a good hiding place at the end of the Island, and the next night we went on to Madang. We were not sure if the Japs were there or not, so we went in there pretty cautiously, but there was no sign of



anybody, Gordon Russell, or the NGVR or anything. We let old Ted Radke take his boat back to Kranget Island and we started looking out for ourselves. We were a bit short of food so we moved across to Siar Plantation where there was a good homestead which wasn't very far away. We were there for two or three days and got ourselves well organised. Gordon Russell and the NGVR were down in the Bogadjim area, south of Madang, and they eventually came up and picked us up. We had a bit of a spell and Gordon asked me to go and follow the New Line of Communication right through to the Ramu River. Carriers were still moving cargo along this 'road' but the 'road' wasn't good – it was really only a foot track from village to village. I was just to check the track, which I did, and. Dick Monfries was up there with his wireless and when I got to where he was I stopped there for a couple of days. While I was there I received a message from Capt Edwards telling me to report to HQ NGVR at Nadzab, in the Markham River area.

The track went from Madang to Amele Lutheran Mission, then you crossed the Gogol River and kept going until you came to a village called Usini where Dick had his wireless station. He used to get messages and send them to Gordon Russell by Police Boi.

On the way to Nadzab I went up to Kainantu, in the Eastern Highlands – you just kept on walking. I crossed the Dumpu River and then another river, the Gusap, I think. When I got to Kainantu there was an NGVR bloke there, Ron Brechin, who was the Agricultural Officer at Aiyura and Kainantu – he was killed later. He had a lot of civilians there – they had walked into there up from the coast, and later a few of them walked to Bena Bena and Mt Hagen from where they were flown out. Another NGVR person, Father John Glover played a large part in their evacuation. At Kainantu there were cattle and plenty of vegetables. I stopped there two or three days and then Ned Rowlands (NGVR) and myself walked down to a village on the Markham called Marawasa. Here we made rafts and we floated down the Markham. It was not too hard and we called in at a village called Chivasing, where we made a few enquiries and kept on going to Nadzab. The Officers here were Major Edwards, Capt Lyon, Lt Keith Noblett and Lt Tuckey.

### **Soldiering in the Markham Valley**

We spent the night at Nadzab. The chain of command here meant that you couldn't use Police Bois to light your fire – you had to go through the Police Masters and they were Lieutenants, so you had to be a bit careful.

The NGVR had a truck here at Nadzab and there was a good road from Nadzab down to Nasawampum village, further down the Markham towards Lae. When rations came down from Wau by carrier they

used to load the truck and drive down to Nasawampum. From there the rations were carried up to a camp in the foothills of the Wain Mountains, called Camp Diddy. Well, I was thinking while Ned Rowlands and I were walking to Camp Diddy from Nadzab – I'd walked from Lae to Nadzab before this and knew you could drive a truck as far as Heath's Plantation. These blokes are driving a truck from here to Nasawampum and there are some pretty bad creeks to cross on the way which you could only cross with a bit of trouble. I kept thinking "Lae is heavily garrisoned by the Japs, they've got their Zeros up in the air all the time, and to drive a truck along here is a bit risky". Anyway we kept our eyes open and we walked down the track to Camp Diddy and found Maj Edwards there.

I was stationed at Camp Diddy for a while. When I first arrived there were about 120 NGVR and 2/5<sup>th</sup> Ind Coy blokes up there with 4 or 5 in the 'hospital'. High Command decided to move most of them back to Nadzab, but, instead of moving them back the easy way, decided to move them through the Wain Mountains to the North - the Wains were a hell of a hike up and around. Only about 20 or 30 were left at Camp Diddy which made sense.,

About four days after we arrived, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1942, to be exact, the truck was going down the road and it met a patrol of Japs who took the truck. I felt that anybody except our Commanding Officer could see that coming – it was so obvious to me. Unfortunately 2 men were taken prisoner and I thought it was overall a pretty lousy bit of administration. The prisoners, Troopers Mayne and McBarron, were members of the 2/1<sup>st</sup> Independent Company who had come from Port Moresby, via Wau, and, never having been in the area before, walked straight into the Japanese patrol. They were reinforcements for the 2/1<sup>st</sup> Ind Coy which had been deployed in the New Guinea Islands, but by this time most of the 2/1<sup>st</sup> had been overrun by the Japanese and the reinforcements were diverted to Wau.

There was a patrol right on the edge of Jacobsen's Plantation in the foothills up from the Markham. Lt Bob Phillips was in charge and after they had been there several days, had camped and were looking quietly around, doing a good job. They were surprised in their pyjamas one morning – if I'd been there I wouldn't have been in pyjamas. They all got out and turned up at Camp Diddy about 12/24 hrs later, barefoot and in pyjamas. Things started to hot up a bit from then on – prior to this the Japs didn't know we were there, but increased their patrols after this.

### **Tragedy at O. P. over Heath's Farm**

We also had a watching post up behind George Whittaker's house which was part of a plantation on the side of the road. There were some pretty high hills overlooking the plantation and NGVR had a small camp and watching post on one of the hills. This was established before I got to Camp Diddy and I reckon NGVR knew all about the Jap movements in the plantation. About 20<sup>th</sup> May, together with Lt Noblett and my

brother John Emery and another couple of NGVR, we re-occupied that post. Dave Woods (NGVR) had been there before and told us he had two tents rigged behind the hill, good tents, waterproof and they had left behind four or five bags of rice, a couple of cases of meat, tins of soup and all sorts of rations.

We walked in and it was a long hike as we were carrying a fair bit of gear. We were supposed to sleep in a bit of a humpy past Jenyn's Plantation the first night, but when we got there the roof had blown off it, so we slept in the rain. The next day we staggered on until we got into the vicinity of Dave Wood's camp about 4pm. We approached the camp cautiously as there was a fair chance the Japs had found it. We walked around it and inspected it very closely, and found they hadn't been there and the bags of rice, cases of meat and soup etc, were still untouched. So we hopped in, rigged up our beds and put up our mosquito nets. My brother John and Lt Noblett went up the hill from the camp and to the top where you cautiously looked over the top in the high grass. If you got behind a particular stump you could sit and look straight down at Heath's Farm, about 4/500 yards (4/500m) away with a pair of binoculars. We got the fire going and rigged up the camp night, and, when it was nearly dark, Lt Noblett and John came down and we had a big pot of rice with meat and veges cooked. Sugar was very short in our rations, but, as this was a special patrol, we were issued with enough sugar to allow each man to have one spoonfull of sugar per day. We carefully carried this jar of sugar and each night we'd have a nice cup of coffee with sugar in it. After that we went to bed and slept like logs with no guards out.

We were up early in the morning, as soon as we had faint light, and John took Frank Anderson up to the O Pip – Frank was going to sit there quietly and John was to come back, have his breakfast, and then relieve Frank Anderson. Off they went – I was out of bed and two chaps, one I think was Jack Piper (NGVR), were trying to light the fire with wet wood and doing a bit of swearing and cursing – you could hear the birds moving around whistling. The camp was in rain forest and outside the rain forest it would probably have been a bit lighter.

John and Frank had been gone about 10 minutes – I'd just finished cleaning my rifle – when I heard a shot, or I could have sworn I'd heard a shot. Lt Noblett, who was just getting out of bed, had a hurricane lamp lit and was writing in his notebook. I looked at him and he just kept on writing in the notebook – I said to him "Did you just hear that shot?" He replied "What shot?" and I said "I could have sworn I heard a shot, and if I could hear it the Japs could hear it" – I was a bit concerned because it was my brother up there. Nobody else seemed to give a stuff about it.

The other two blokes had just got the fire going so I stood there for a few seconds waiting for Lt Noblett to tell me what to do – he was running the show – I wasn't. I was a Sgt and he was a Lt. The next thing I heard footsteps coming down the track and I look up the track and there was my brother John, just arriving in a hell of a hurry. I asked "Was there a shot?" and re replied "Yes! The Japs are up there and they've got Frank Anderson".

Again I looked at Noblett and he looked a bit stunned so I

said “Oh bugger this! I’m going to see if I can give Frank a hand”. Then I said to John “Grab your musket and follow me” – why I don’t know but he had gone up there without his rifle. Then we started walking up the track with my rifle fully loaded. We got up the track about half way and were walking fairly cautiously because it was still pretty dark, but up ahead of me up the hill, about 40 or 50 yards (40/50m) I could see a little patch of light that had filtered through from outside the rain forest. I thought I heard a noise and I slowed down and stopped when somebody stepped into that patch of light. I was just about to sing out “Frank” when the bloke who stepped into the light bent down and pointed to the ground. He had a tin hat on, and we didn’t wear tin hats, and he also had puttees or something on his legs, and I thought “God! That’s a Jap”.

He was pointing to the ground at this stage of the game so I got down behind a big log lying by the track and another Jap stepped alongside him and I thought “Yes

– they definitely are Japs”. Well I cocked my rifle and sighted on the first one – I’m in the dark but I could see my sights up against the light where he was standing and I shot him – I didn’t wait for orders. He folded up looking a bit crook, and I

cocked my rifle and put another bullet into the breech. Then the other fellow stepped over into the light pointing his behind at me and I thought “Gees! I’ll get another one”. I pointed my rifle at the second one, when up the hill behind him I could see all these spots of light and the next thing I hear “Tat tat, tat a tat, tat a tat” and there’s twigs being chopped all around me, so I dropped to the ground and thought “Gee! That’s funny! These buggers are shooting at me”, so I thought “I think I’ll go down below and get some help”. It was the slope that saved us – they didn’t allow for the downward slope and were firing high. I was all right up until then, so I didn’t worry about the second one. The other thing I remembered was that, when I fired the rifle in the dark, there was a great jet of flame shooting out of the barrel. I hadn’t fired my rifle in the dark before, so I guessed they knew where I was. We then headed down the track pretty fast and when we got to the camp there was no sign of anybody, no-one at all anywhere, so I grabbed my ‘braspan’ (haversack) and just kept on going. John and I split up at this stage.

Well I spent the rest of the day crawling on my stomach across Whittaker’s Plantation and up towards Jernyns Plantation and within half an hour of this I thought “They’ll never find us now – they’d need dogs to find us for sure”, but within half an hour there was a Zero up circling around just above the tree tops and you could see a face sticking over the side. They also started shelling the bush around with a field gun they had at Heaths. And I thought “I’m on my own again as usual, the same as I was at Madang when the buggers bombed us”, but anyway, they didn’t find me and I survived.



When it was nearly dark I thought “Bugger it, they haven’t found me now so I’ll get out on the road and walk home” which I did. By then it was drizzling rain and I just walked straight up the Markham Road from Whittakers. I got to Munum village about 4am and by then I was weary. I knew the natives there and they knew me so they gave me a cup of tea. They had plenty of supplies there – they had been doing the same thing at Lae as we had been at Madang (that’s not looting – that’s looking after yourself). I stopped there because my feet were in a bit of a mess. I used to have a lot of trouble with the soles of my feet while walking when they were wet. I was going to stop there and have a bit of a spell, so I wrote out a note to give to one of the natives and told him to take it to Capt Lyon. I thought I was the only bloke that had got out. I didn’t know where the hell the rest of them were, but they all got away. The only bloke that didn’t get away was Frank Anderson – we heard no more about him. Some of these things where good men

got thrown away like that for practically nothing makes me sick just thinking about it sometimes.

I can’t understand, and I’ve often thought about it – the Japs must have known the camp was there. If they knew it was there, why did they leave all that food there for a

couple of weeks untouched. We arrived and slept there all night with no guards out, and John and Frank got up to the top of the hill before daylight, and there’s a Jap patrol waiting for them. The only thing I can think of is that the afternoon before John and Noblett were up there with a pair of field glasses looking down at them from the west, and they were looking into the sun, and the Japs might have seen a reflection from the glasses. Why didn’t they come in the middle of the night and get the whole lot of us, it would have been so easy. Anyway that was that.

#### **Arrival of the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Independent Company at the Markham**

I have already mentioned members of the 2/1<sup>st</sup> Ind Coy arrived in May. I think it was early June when members of the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Ind Coy came down from Wau – they had flown in from Port Moresby. This cheered us up quite a bit because it looked as though we were going to get a bit of help. These chaps came in with all new equipment, new boots, new rifles, Tommy guns and everything you could think of. The first thing the C.O. of the 2/5<sup>th</sup>, Major Kneen did was carry out a recce down to Heath’s Farm himself escorted by my brother John, who knew the way.

The Command structure altered with the arrival of the 2/5<sup>th</sup> and now NGVR, ANGAU and 2/5<sup>th</sup> Ind Coy, a few reinforcements of the 2/1<sup>st</sup> Ind Coy and other units located in Wau were part of ‘Kanga’ Force and the C.O. was Colonel Fleahy, located at Wau.

#### **Attempted Reconnaissance into Lae**

Col Fleahy came down to Bob’s Camp on the Southern

side of the Markham and I was sent for because he wanted some information on Lae, and seeing that I had lived in Lae for a long time I knew a bit about it. A lot of the other chaps in NGVR had never been to Lae, they had been flown into Bulolo and that's where they had stopped. I crossed the river and reported to Fleahy and he asked "Can you suggest some way of getting a reconnaissance party into Lae and getting them out again with information?" I replied "Aw, yes, I can do that easy enough". "Well!" he said "I understand our men have been caught on all their private secret tracks" and I replied "Yes! That's right, but there's one track that they haven't been caught on yet" and he asked "What's that?" I replied "Well! Before the war I used to get coconuts from Nadzab and we used to float them down the Markham, and I can't see any reason why a recce party couldn't float down the Markham at night and get out again. I'm not sure how they are going to get out, but it would be an easy way of getting in".

That night Maj Edwards sent for me. "Righto Bob" he said "We want you to go down the Markham and do that Recce". I said "Christ! Me!" and he replied "Yes!" I asked "What about those commandos you've got here. They are all young blokes, they are all athletes and goodness knows what. I'm about 40 years old and I'm a rotten swimmer." "No! No! No!" he said "You can't get out of it like that. You're the obvious bloke to do the trip. You've done it. It's an important recce and if you want somebody to go with you, just ask for him, and if there is any equipment you want that we've got – you can have it".

Every patrol we'd ever done before this we were always issued with rice – we didn't have biscuits down there. The biscuits were what we wanted – something you didn't have to light a fire to cook. I had a lot of confidence in one of my mates Bill Murcutt (NGVR) and I asked him to come with me. "Righto" he said "and what will we want?" I asked for a pair of field glasses, a revolver, a compass and a few other odds and ends. Everybody in NGVR knew that Bill Edwards had private supplies of grog, but we never got any, so I said "We could do with half a bottle of rum". "Rum? all right" We spent a couple of days getting ready, drew the rations, and he gave us a sauce bottle full of rum – the small sauce bottle. Prior to this I had thought that if we were going down on a raft we didn't want the natives to know because they could walk down just as fast as the raft and tell the Japs. We knew some of the natives were working both sides, and you couldn't really blame them, so we decided we'd build the raft ourselves. Bill got hold of a great cord of light rope- I never knew where the hell he got it from – but we couldn't have done without it - the natives use bush rope and kunda (vine). We just carried all our gear down to the bank of the Markham one day and spent the rest of the day picking up drift wood and anything that would float.

Without a map it is a bit difficult to explain but we intended to float the raft from Nadzab almost to Lae. We could do it in one night as I had done it before with coconuts. We would come ashore in thick jungle and walk right through under cover to Lae airstrip. Our job was to find out where the guards were posted around the air-

strip. The Japs were using that airstrip all the time, and every morning they would put a plane up in the air at daylight and it would just circle around all the time, then, about every half hour another one would go up and relieve it. Every now and then they would do a swoop up the Markham. We reckoned that the 2/5<sup>th</sup> were going to carry out a Commando raid on the airstrip if they could find out where the guards were.

We spent most of one day making the raft, and around about dusk we just chucked our gear on to it and pushed it out in the river. It floated quite well and we thought this was all right so we just kept going. There was no moon at all so it was very dark. There were sand banks all the way down and we had to look out that the raft didn't run up on to one of them or we would have to shove it over the bar, but the worst thing that we struck were big trees that had floated down and all that was sticking out was a branch of the tree – fortunately as you were approaching them in the dark you could hear the water running around it. If you hit one the raft would start going up in the air, and with a bit of luck, it would slide off and splash back into the water. This happened a couple of times and it was a bit nerve wracking. We weren't worried about puk-puks (crocodiles) – I'd been down the river several times and never seen one, but I knew they were there.

We stopped at a little island about midnight and we had a couple of rums each. What we were trying to do was to get further down by daylight. We went past Markham Point which we could make out as the point sticks straight up in the air. Around about an hour before dawn we were going along as happy as hell ban we shot around a corner and went into a side stream. We couldn't stop the raft – we just had to go where it was going. The water here started to run downhill very fast and all of a sudden we found a big log across the water, and up against the log is all sorts of flotsam and jetsam banked up, and before we knew it our raft was going underneath. We had to jump off the raft onto the log and we lost 3/4 of our supplies and equipment.

I grabbed my 'braspan' (haversack) and Bill grabbed his but we lost a bag full of tucker and our sleeping gear and mosquito nets. We were now stranded on a beach well above where we wanted to be so, when it got light enough, we tried to walk south-east towards our objective, but the bush was absolutely impassable. I'd never been there in my life before although I'd been up and down the river before – it was very swampy with lots of sak sak and kunda (vines) I'd never seen kunda like it in my life. We tried to cut our way through for about an hour and a half with the one Bowie knife which I had hanging on my belt, but couldn't make any progress and all the time were getting tirades and tireder, having been awake all night. So we just camped there and had a bit of sleep and then planned our next move. The only thing I could think of was to cut back towards the road and follow it into Lae, moving only at night.

Over the next two days we slowly got back past Edward's Plantation and on the third night decided to walk down the road because it was taking so long, and we both had sandshoes on, so the noise would not have

been much. So we went along the road – it was dark, no clouds, but no moon – and I had Bill Edwards revolver, a grenade which I held in my hand, our rifles and one ground sheet between the two of us. We had a tin of milk and two tins of compressed Army rations which had just been invented – you get a tin about 6"x3"x3/8" with three meals in it. We each had one in our hip pocket. Anyway we were walking down the road very quietly and came around a corner near Jacobsen's Plantation where I knew there was a bridge, and a house built over the bridge – they used to build these houses to keep the weather off the bridges. I thought that if there was a guard anywhere this is where it would be.

About 2am we came to about 200 yds (190m) from the bridge and there was not a sound – you couldn't hear a thing – we had been walking so quietly it almost seemed we could walk right on to the beach – no shots, no speech, no nothing. I said quietly to Bill that we would wait here for a bit, so we lay down by the side of the road where, by looking up at the sky, you could just see the top of the house over the bridge against the starlight. We lay there for quite a while, we were only too pleased to have a spell. I was the leader of the party and was trying to think what we were to do next, and had just about made up my mind to cross the bridge when someone struck a match to light a cigarette. Then we heard voices and there were 2 or 3 Japs sitting on the bridge. We decided to go around the bridge so we headed up into the hills and pushed as far as we could, somewhere behind Jacobsen's Plantation and slept under a couple of banana leaves until daylight.

The next day we kept going and came to my Plantation. There was plenty of cover and I knew just where we were and knew that we could keep going right down under cover almost to the 'drome – there was a reasonable chance we could do it anyway. About 4pm I stuck my head around a bend and saw a parade of Japs, about a couple of hundred of them. They were just having a meal parade with cooked rice and something else. I just stood there looking at them – not one of them looked at me, so I motioned to Bill to go back. If they'd seen us it would have been a matter of who could run the fastest I suppose. Now I realised that we didn't have much chance of getting through to the 'drome without being spotted – I hadn't realised that they would be camped here.

We had been out for 4 nights by now so I decided to head for home – I couldn't see much sense in trying to get some information now, as we would have had to walk it back for 20 miles (32k). If we had a wireless it would have been different – something you could just talk on. So I said to Bill "Blast this! I've had a gut full, so let's head home", so we turned and walked back. The next day we had to walk along a track and got to the Bumbu River about daylight. We kept going all day and got to about Yalu where Bill packed up, so I left him there and got to Munum about 3am. The 2/5<sup>th</sup> Ind Coy was there but I managed to get in without getting shot – they were all trigger happy. I told them Bill was back on the road and I wanted someone to go back and help him so about half a dozen galloped off and picked Bill up and carried

him back.

That was the end of that trip – we didn't do much. One of the officers said "You didn't do what you were sent in to do, did you?" I replied along the lines that, if we hadn't been wrecked and managed to raft further down river, and got some decent sleep, we could probably have done it, but I insisted the trip was not wasted. We proved we could get into Lae and out again, and if we could do it, a hundred men could do it, but he didn't think much of that.

### To be continued

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### MESS BELLS

A number of Australian Army messes, particularly Sergeants messes, have a bell that is used to bring the mess members to order for a particular announcement – the arrival of a guest or perhaps for an announcement by the Mess President.

The bell is more often than not in the shape and design of a ship's bell and indeed, in some cases, that is exactly what the bell is. Two examples are the bells in the Regimental Sergeants messes of the RAA and the RA Inf.

The bell in the Gunners Mess is a copy of that from HMAFA (His Majesty's Australian Fleet Auxiliary) 'Biloela'. Upon decommissioning in 1930, the crew of the Auxiliary presented its bell to the Garrison Artillery Sergeants Mess, at South Head in Sydney

This goodwill gesture was promoted by an incident when a team from the Mess went aboard the 'Biloela' some years earlier for a convivial evening and later departed – with the bell. The Navy viewed the incident somewhat dimly and it was only after the bell was returned that harmony was restored, a relationship that lasted to the end of the 'Biloela's' life.

The Coast Artillery moved out of South Head in 1953 and the bell then moved across to the gunners at North Head, where it was positioned at the top of the parade ground. The bell was rung every day for Regimental Training Wing's on-parade calls.

When the Wing moved to Holsworthy in 1969, as 123 Training Battery, the bell remained at the School of Artillery. However, a copy was made and it accompanied the Wing on its move across Sydney. When the Battery was disbanded and the Wing returned to the School, the replica bell moved into the Regimental Sergeants Mess.

The bell in the Infantry's Regimental Sergeants Mess is that of the former aircraft carrier HMAS 'Sydney'. The story of the association between the Carrier and the Royal Australian Regiment goes back to the Korean War, when the Sydney's aircraft flew in support of the Regiment's Battalions.

In later years, the Sydney was converted to a troop carrier and carried all the RAR Battalions to and from South Vietnam. Over all those years a firm bond of friendship was established, through all rank structures, between the crews of the 'Sydney' and members of the Regiment.

Upon the 'Sydney's' decommissioning, the Carrier's bell was selected as being an appropriate gift to present to the Regiment as a token of that long-standing friendship.

On 14<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1975, it was handed over on permanent loan to the Infantry Centre, to be held in trust for the Royal Australian Regiment.

There really is no one story behind the traditions of ships' bells in messes; it is just a tradition that has come about over time, simply because people thought they looked nice in a mess and they are a very good device for getting the attention of all within the mess.

Of such things traditions are made.

**Chris Jobson, Former RSM Ceremonial ADHQ**

**NONE SO DEAF—THE RECAPTURE OF LAE IN WW2**



Patrolling high in the Saruwaged Mountains north of Lae, my little group of tough constables and I were most unreasonably fired on one day by a strong Japanese patrol traversing what we had hitherto regarded as "our patch".

Pato and Watute, two barefoot black veterans, volunteered to investigate. Minus their uniforms, suitably dirtied up, and clad in grubby, ragged loin-cloths, they vanished for a week to move about among the locals, chewing betel nut and smoking as they gossiped the nights away. (Pato understood the local language.)

They returned with an account (in Pidgin) of a detailed plan by the Japanese high command to evacuate their entire garrison. (Too hazardous to maintain it, with the Americans now in such control of air and sea.) Here, surely, was golden intelligence for General Herring, GOC of New Guinea Force.

As soon as its rendition into passable English could be drafted, it was radioed to Port Moresby. There followed a rather long silence.

His [Herring's] eventual response was to disparage Watute and Pato's masterly deductions as mere "native rumours".

Herring's reward came a couple of months later when, with sound and fury, strong Australian forces "burst" their way into Lae. There was nobody there.

Game, set and match to two elderly black detectives.

**Peter Ryan**

**PIGEON DD43T139**

**An on song hero of WW2**

The Dickin Medal was instituted in 1943 in the United Kingdom by Maria Dickin to honour the courage and dedication of animals in wartime. It is a bronze medallion, bearing the words "For Gallantry" and "We Also Serve" within a laurel wreath, carried on a ribbon of striped green, dark brown and pale blue. It's awarded to animals that have displayed "conspicuous gallantry or devotion to duty while serving or associated with any branch of the armed forces or civil defence units" and is commonly referred to as "the animals' Victoria Cross".

The medal was awarded 54 times between 1943 and 1949 to 32 pigeons, 18 dogs, three horses and a cat to acknowledge actions of gallantry or devotion during World War II.

Perhaps less well known is that one of the recipients of this award was a pigeon which served in Papua New Guinea - known only as Australian Pigeon DD43T139.

The notes on the award say:

*This certificate accompanied the Dickin Medal awarded to Australian Army Blue Bar cock pigeon DD43T139 for gallantry as a result of a flight he undertook through a severe tropical storm near Madang, New Guinea, on 12 July 1945. At the time the bird was located at 10 Pigeon Section (Type B) attached to Detachment 55 Port Craft Company, Madang.*

*On that day he carried the following message, from a foundering boat to Madang, flying 40 miles in 50 minutes: "To: Detachment 55 Australian Port Craft Company, MADANG. From: AB 1402. Date: 12.7.45. Engine Failed. Wash on to beach at WADAU owing very heavy seas. Send help immediately. Am rapidly filling with sand. TOO: 0800 - Senders signature - HOLLAND Cpl. TO Liberation 0805 - No. of copies 2. TOR at Loft - 0855".*

As a result of the successful delivery of the message the boat, together with valuable stores, ammunition and equipment was salvaged. The bird had previously completed 23 operational flights over a distance of 1,004 miles.

The citation for the award reads:



Awarded to Pigeon DD43T139 for gallantry carrying a message through a severe tropical storm thereby bringing help to an army boat with a vital cargo, in danger of foundering.

The bird had been donated to the army in 1943 as a patriotic gesture by a civilian pigeon fancier, George Adams of 11 Vigo Street, Footscray, Victoria, for use in signals units in New Guinea.

Mr Adams was not the bird's breeder but had approached members of pigeon clubs in Melbourne seeking the donation of birds for wartime duties.

After he approached the Yarraville Pigeon Club, one of its members, Gordon Whittle, whose family had bred and raced pigeons for many years, donated a number of birds. One of the pigeons he bred was DD43T139

Peter Kranz



How many are still alive? Do you recognise anyone?

PNGVR mortar shoot near Salamaua, 1956

PNGVR member, the late Brian William Crane front left in RP&NGC uniform. Photo from Max Hayes' Portfolio, original in Museum

## WAR'S HORRORS FOR DIGGERS IN NEW GUINEA

### Military History

#### "Hells Battlefield" The Australians in New Guinea in WW2

by Philip Bradley Allen & Unwin 506 pages. \$49.99

Reviewer Michael McKernan

Many of us, I'm sure, have taken the opportunity of walking in the cloisters of the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour. There are 40,000 names, or thereabouts, of the Australian dead of the Second World War. As I've often lamented, it is impossible for each of us to know the details of even more than a handful of these men and women. But the founders of the memorial wanted us to know the details and assembled mighty archives to enable us to do so. It just takes so much hard work.

Phillip Bradley has done that work for those Australians who fought in New Guinea from 1942 to 1945. His research and work on the ground is inspiring and impressive. There have been many books about the fighting in New Guinea over the past few years and those of Peter Brune stand out. Gritty, informative, angry even. Brune has written about the Kokoda track and Gona and Buna. He also gave us an inspired biography of Ralph Honner, perhaps the greatest battalion commander Australia ever produced.

Bradley set himself a different task and, as it turns out, an important one. What about, he wondered, putting all the battles in which the Australians fought in New Guinea into the one book. Why separate Kokoda from Wau or Shaggy Ridge? Why not tell of the last Australian fighting on Bougainville or Wewak as the war came to an end, as well as the very first of the fighting on New Britain and New Ireland? For the New Guinea battlefields were the same awful conditions in which to fight, they faced the same fanatical enemy. Taking all the battles together, Bradley is able to show the "generational change" in the three years of the fighting, as few, either leaders or soldiers, would last long in the appalling conditions. Bradley gives you the feel, from the very start of his book, for just what a hellish place this was to fight a war.

It was a neat idea, the first single book to tell the whole story of the Australian fighting in New Guinea across the whole war. And it works, up to a point. There is a sense of rush, or of urgency, in the writing which is a bit breathtaking.

There is so much to cover, so detailed a narrative to unfold, that Bradley cannot afford the more leisurely ways of official historian David Dexter or even Peter Brune. There is almost an encyclopaedic feel to this book.

Each episode of the war is dominated by those who were killed or were wounded, and there is little opportunity for pause and reflection.

There is plenty of time, though, for a few key themes to emerge. The first is the astonishing bravery of the Australians and their extraordinary capacity to endure and to keep on giving. Readers of this book will share. I believe, Bradley's intense pride in the qualities of the Australian soldiers of the Second World War. They will be infuriated, though, by elements of the leadership the Australians had to endure.

One of the real shockers, I've always thought, was that pompous ass "Ned" Herring. Blarney wanted him in charge in New Guinea because he would do what Blamey told him and could get on well with the Americans. As Bradley tells us, he was no brilliant strategist". What would you make of a general who told you as you prepared for battle, "You should be proud to live at a time like this when you can die for your country"? What would you think of a general who reported up that one of his battalions was "slightly shaken" at the extent of Japa-

nese resistance when, in fact, his orders had meant that the battalion was all but destroyed?

So this, then, is his second theme. The incompetence of much of the leadership. I can't say I'm always in agreement with Bradley's judgments, and I'm more than surprised by his distaste for Brigadier Arnold Potts, whom I'd thought to be one of the genuine performers.

The third theme to emerge is of the variety of ways to be killed in this hellish place. Death stalks every page of this narrative. Men are shot, obviously, they drown, are swept out to sea, waiting in trucks men are incinerated by a crashing aircraft, other men plunge to their deaths as they struggle up precipitous ridges, men die of exhaustion and, unlike Ned Herring (who did not die), few of them rejoice in their impending demise. This is a very human book, written with a deep empathy for all this suffering humanity, Allied and enemy alike.



The research is astonishing; readers will be awed by the extent and range of the materials uncovered. Not so the writing, sadly. Bradley is not a natural writer, if such has ever existed. Too often he tries too hard and should excise the telling single sentence meant to give emphasis to the narrative that precedes it. As in, to pick a near random example, Horace Harris "a banker by day was having more excitement by night" (blowing up fuel drums). Better, by far, as a writerly technique is the opening paragraph of each new chapter. Here Bradley tells a story of an individual who will take some part in the coming fighting. Each man will have approached his coming ordeal differently and these vignettes give a feel for the incredible variety of an army at war.

This is a book to treasure, to be read slowly and thoughtfully, and to return to frequently. An encyclopaedic approach to the fighting in New Guinea, comprehensive, complete, clear and deeply moving. I'd like to go back to the War Memorial and look at the Roll of Honour for the names of some of the many men in Bradley's sympathetic narrative. These men live again through Phillip Bradley's eyes and we are all in his debt for that.

**Michael McKernan is a Canberra historian**



Native  
canoes  
Solomon  
Islands

### PREGNANT SHEEP

*A Kiwi man in New Zealand buys several sheep, hoping to breed them for wool.*

*After several weeks, he notices that none of the sheep are getting pregnant, and phones a vet for help. The vet tells him that he should try artificial insemination. The farmer doesn't have the slightest idea what this means but, not wanting to display his ignorance, only asks the vet how he will know when the sheep are pregnant.*

*The vet tells him that they will stop standing around and instead will lie down and wallow in grass when they are pregnant. The man hangs up and gives it some thought. He comes to the conclusion that artificial insemination means he has to impregnate the sheep himself.*

*So, he loads the sheep into his Land Rover, drives them out into the woods, has sex with them all, brings them back, and goes to bed.*

*Next morning, he wakes and looks out at the sheep. Seeing that they are all still standing around, he deduces that the first try didn't take, and loads them in the Land Rover again.*

*He drives them out to the woods, services each sheep twice for good measure, brings them back, and goes to bed exhausted.*

*Next morning, he wakes to find the sheep still just standing round.*

*Try again, he tells himself, and proceeds to load them up, and drive them out to the woods.*

*He spends all day servicing the sheep and upon returning home, falls listlessly into bed.*

*The next morning, he cannot even raise himself from the bed to look out of the window.*

*He asks his wife to look, and tell him if the sheep are lying in the grass.*

*No, she says, they're all in the Land Rover, and one of them is beeping the horn.*



### ARTILLERY

#### MOTTO

The cap badge depicts the colours of the Royal Regiment of Artillery [and the Australian and other Commonwealth Countries]. Australia is known as the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery. These are The Guns. Therefore, the Regiments of Artillery

of the Commonwealth, unlike other Units whose Colours may be Guidons or Flags, are to this day accompanied into battle by it's Colours.

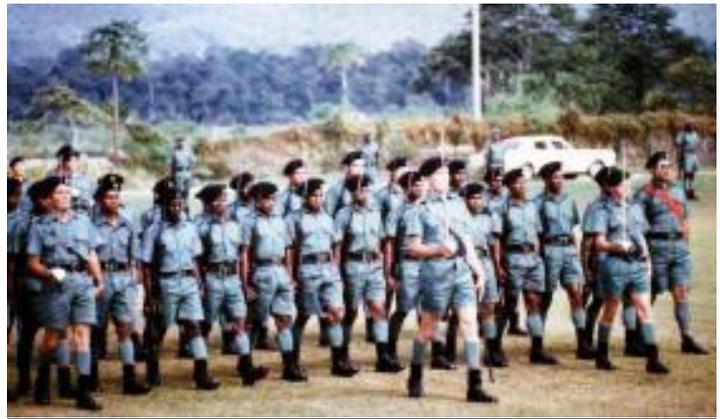
The motto **UBIQUE QUO FAS ET GLORIA DUCUNT** means 'Where Right and Glory Lead' and **UBIQUE** means 'Everywhere'.

#### THE RAISING OF THE REGIMENTS

Ever since the Chinese invented gunpowder and then guns some time in the 13th century, there have been Gunners.

Through the next 400 or so years there were many forts around Britain with Master Gunners appointed permanently by the British Board of Ordnance.

Trains of Artillery for campaigns both or either at home and abroad were raised using press gangs [similar to ships crews] scouring pubs and bawdy houses to provide gunners to man the guns. [probably that's why Gunners like their grog]



C Coy PNGVR at the Presentation of the Colours to PNGVR, Lae, 17th May, 1969, Igam Barracks, Lae.

Photo courtesy Stewart Lewis

Following the Jacobite Rebellion in 1715, when it took too long to raise a train of artillery, it was decided to form a regular force of artillerymen, to ensure that gunners were available when needed. Thus on 26 May in 1716, under a Royal Warrant, two companies each of 100 men, were formed at the Woolwich Warren [later The Royal Arsenal]. A company **detached** men for the guns, and when in action, they were said to have **gone into battery**. Hence the development of the title of **battery** for a formed body of guns and gunners, and even today guns are manned by **detachments**, never by crews.

The foregoing information is provided to all new gunners generally in their first lecture and is general knowledge to all gunners thereafter. The information is provided by the Royal Artillery Institution, Historical Section, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich.

Thank you Jes Hansford

### UNIFORMS

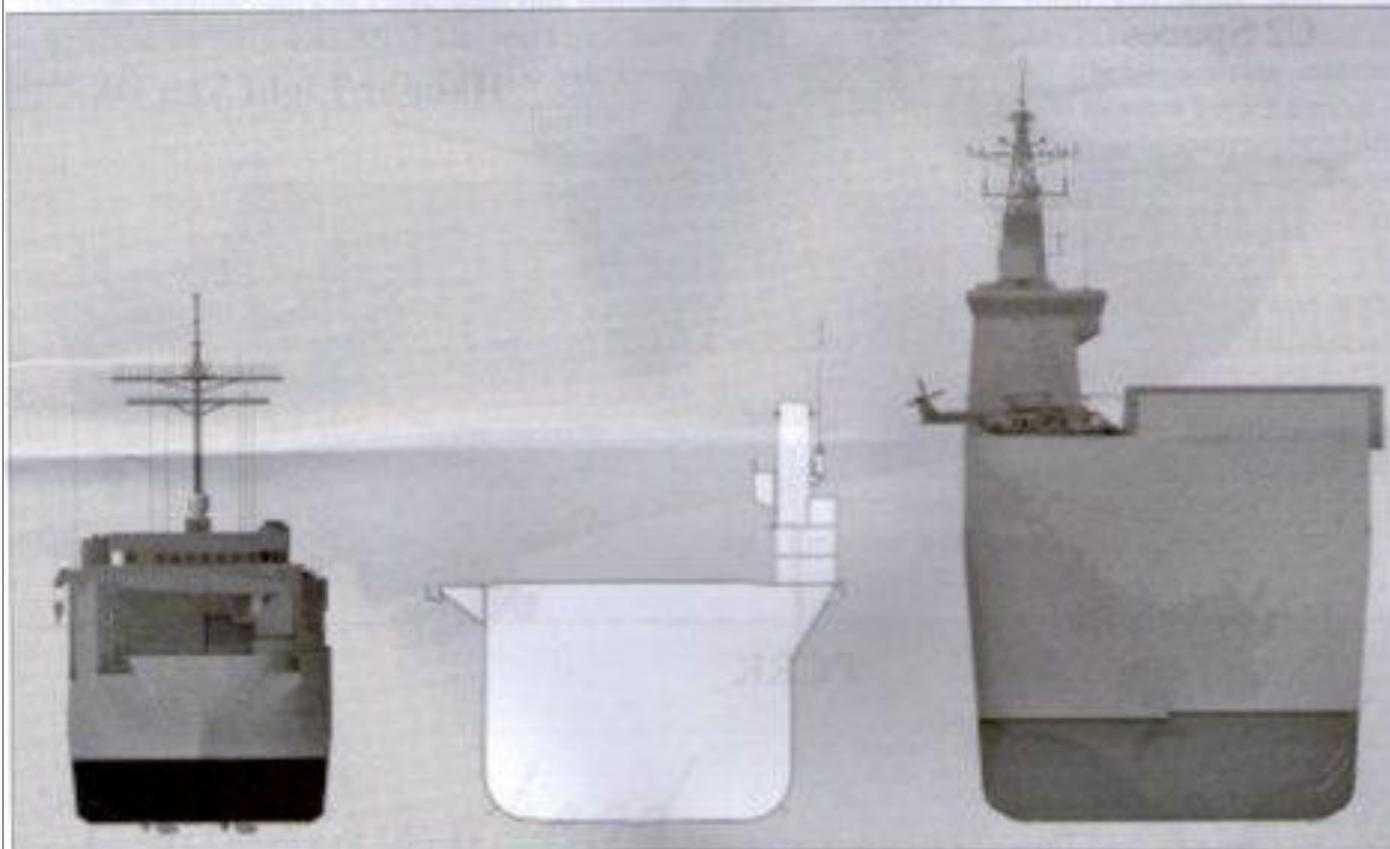
The uniforms of the Australian Colonial armies of the 1800s were based on the British Army's, and the designs and colours of the dress varied from corps to corps. However, the South African (Second Boer) War of 1899 changed the style of uniforms worn into battle by soldiers across the world forever. Gone were the bright colours (which prevented the troops from merging into the terrain, thus making them easily identifiable targets) and the redundant bulky accoutrements such as the sabretache and the aiguillette; in their place appeared the basic and practical drab combat uniforms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

However, the Australian Army still wore the uniform styles of the British Army until the early 1960s, when the current 'polyester shirt and trousers' uniform was introduced; this was, in turn, closely followed by an Australian version of the British Army service dress (coat and trousers). The servicewomen's uniform was changed to an Australian style in the early 1970s and they too adopted the servicemen's 'polyester uniform' (with the addition of the skirt) in the 1980s. The exception to all of this was the distinctly Australian slouch hat; a practical item of dress that was introduced in 1885 by the Victorian Mounted Rifles.

The Australian Army uniform underwent another style change in 1997; however, the uniforms and accoutrements currently worn by the Diggers are still, in essence, either adopted or modified from those of the British Army. They are still appropriate and are very much a part of the Australian Army of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Chris Jobson, former RSM Ceremonial**

HMAS *Canberra*, the first of the Royal Australian Navy's amphibious assault ships, has arrived in Australia from a Spanish shipyard.



Comparison in sizes: (L-R) LPA, HMAS Melbourne (CV), and LHD. (Landing Helicopter Dock)

The hull was delivered to Williamstown shipyard in Melbourne in a heavy lift vessel, for the installation of the island structure. The island modules will be constructed at a number of sites around Australia before being moved to Williamstown for final installation on the flight deck. The construction, of the vessels, each bigger than HMAS Sydney and Melbourne, is being done using the modular approach whereby the ship is divided into modules, which are built and fitted out as discrete units, before being welded together to form the completed ship. This allows the ship to be built at a number of different sites across the shipyard before being brought together for final joining.

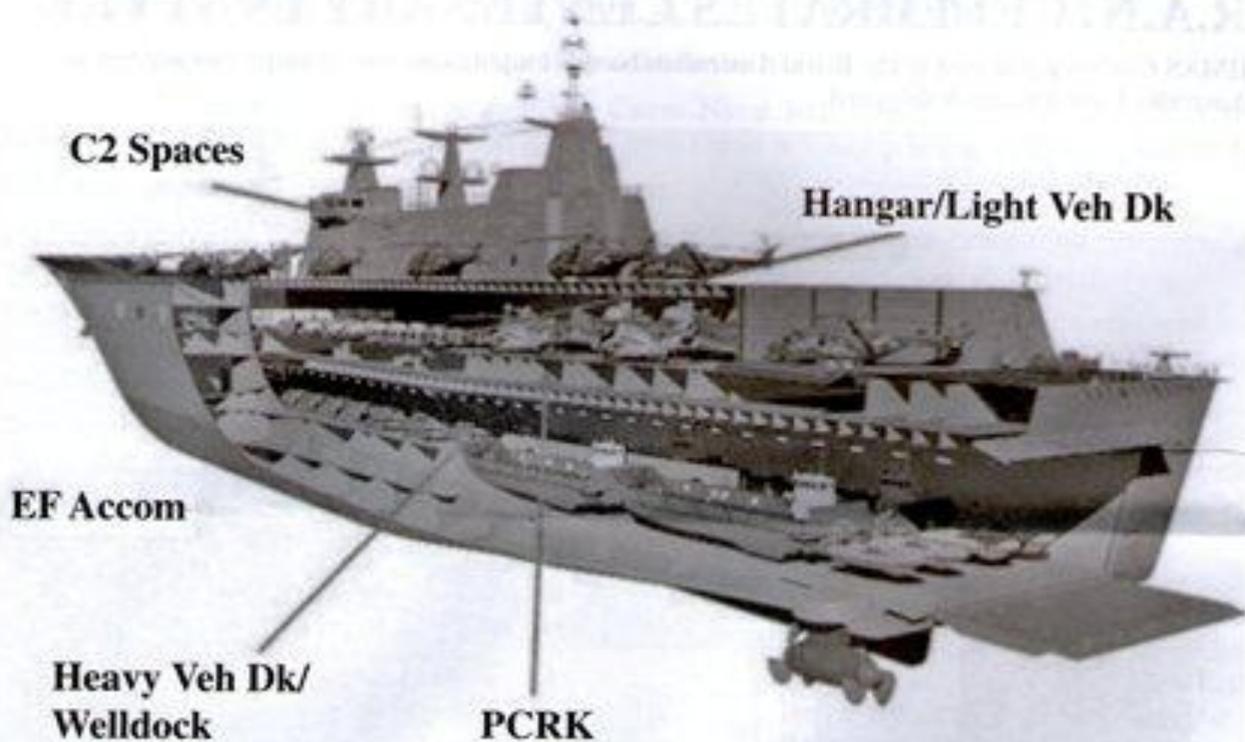
The ship's roles are to:

embark, transport and deploy an embarked force (Army in the case of the ADF but could equally be an allied Army or Marines), along with their equipment and aviation units, and carry out/support humanitarian missions

The first LHD, named HMAS *Canberra*, is due to be commissioned in January 2014 and the second ship HMAS *Adelaide*, is planned to commission in June 2015.

The statistics are:

- Length Overall 230.82m
- Moulded Beam 32.00m
- Beam Waterline 29.50m
- Flight Deck height 27.50m
- Draft at Full Load Displacement 7.08m
- Full Load Displacement 27,500 tonnes



The LHD has been designed with the shallowest possible draft to allow her to operate in secondary ports and harbours as well as manoeuvre tactically in the shallow waters common in the littoral regions. Maximum speed is in excess of 20kn with a range of 6,000nm, a sustained maximum speed of 19kn under full-load conditions and an economic cruising speed of 15kn with a range of 9,000nm. She can also reverse with full directional control at up to 8kn.

The LHD has a stern ramp/door that provides access to the well dock for landing craft and vehicles along with a fixed ramp (steel beach) between the well dock and the heavy vehicle/cargo deck (1410m<sup>2</sup>). Additionally two lateral ramp doors are located on the starboard side and provide wharf access to the heavy vehicle/cargo deck for vehicles up to 65T. Vehicular access between the heavy and light vehicle decks is achieved via a fixed ramp located on the port side.

The well dock is 69.3m long and 16.8m wide (1165m<sup>2</sup>) and the LHD will normally carry four landing craft. The main accommodation deck is located above the well dock and heavy vehicle/cargo deck and includes crew accommodation, mess decks, medical spaces, galley facilities, office spaces, and recreation rooms.

Accommodation is provided for 1400 personnel; approximately 400 ship's company including the watercraft and flight deck crews and 1000 embarked force personnel..embarked flight, HQ staff and landing force. The LHD will be jointly crewed with personnel from Navy, Army and the Air Force forming the ship's company.

The LHD's flight deck is 202.3m long and 32m wide (4750m<sup>2</sup>), allowing the ship to operate a range of ADF rotary wing aircraft including:

- NRH-90 helicopter
- CH-47 Chinook helicopter
- Blackhawk helicopter
- Seahawk
- Future Navy Aviation Combat System (Seahawk replacement).

#### THE CATAFALQUE PARTY & REST ON ARM'S REVERSED

A catafalque is a raised structure supporting a stand, upon which a coffin is placed for display before the burial; people may then file past and pay their last respects to the deceased. In times gone by a watch or vigil was mounted around the coffin to ensure that the body was not interfered with when it lay in State.

Today vigils, or catafalque parties, are mounted as a sign of respect around personages as they lie in State and around memorials on occasions of remembrance such as ANZAC Day (it could be said that a memorial is a "symbolic coffin" for those who have

As with funerals and gun carriages the origin of the tradition of resting on reversed arms is lost in time. Its symbolism is, however, the same. It was used by a Commonwealth soldier at the execution of King Charles 1 in 1649 (the soldier was duly punished for his symbolic gesture towards the King's death) and it is recorded that at the funeral for Marlborough, in 1722, the troops carried out a formal reverse arms drill which was especially invented for the service, as a unique sign of respect to the great soldier.

The modern trend of sticking rifles upside down into the ground as a temporary memorial to a fallen soldier, with a helmet or hat over the butt, originated with the introduction of tanks during the Great War (WW1).

When a soldier fell during and advance his mates would pick up the rifle and stick it into the ground by the bayonet as a marker to indicate to the tank crew that a wounded or dead soldier lay there. In this way the armoured vehicles would not accidentally run over the body.

**WO1 C.J. Jobson, former RSM Ceremonial ADHQ**

**ROCKY CREEK MEMORIAL PARK**

Association member John Mudge recently visited the Rocky Creek Memorial with Senator Michael Ronaldson, then Shadow Minister for Veteran's Affairs, and reports that the NGVR/PNGVR memorial is in good condition and graffiti free.

John & wife Sharon are donating the timber necessary for the complete restoration of the Rocky Creek/Tolga WW2 Igloo where thousands of convalescing diggers were entertained and looked after in WW2

A wonderful gesture John and Sharon and we look forward to a more detailed article complete with some photographs.

**THE KOKODA CAMPAIGN 1942  
-MYTH AND REALITY**

By Dr Peter Williams.

I think it is fair to say that in recent years Kokoda has come to have the same emotive effect on the Australian national psyche as Gallipoli. It defines Australians as individuals and as a nation. However, after having read *The Kokoda Campaign 1942—Myth and Reality*, by Dr. Peter Williams, one has to ask how much of that definition is based on myth and how much is based on fact.

I have read any number of books and articles on the desperate early days of the Pacific War, when Australians feared their survival as a people and as a nation might fall to the overwhelming force of an upstart Asian nation less than a hundred years on the world stage. It seems almost every year of late another book about Kokoda comes out. Almost all of them retell the story of how Australian citizen soldiers, poorly trained, underequipped and overwhelmed managed an almost textbook-like fighting retreat over the Owen Stanley Range in Papua New Guinea, slowing and then eventually stopping a Japanese force estimated at—depending on the book—two-to-one to six-to-one, thus saving Port Moresby and also Australia.

Dr. Peter Williams, in his five-year research on Kokoda has done what all historians should do when researching and writing on any topic of historic significance. He wiped the slate clean and started almost from scratch, questioning every aspect of the campaign that others have repeatedly expounded upon as if it were part of some holy grail.

To begin with, enlisting both Australian and Japanese documents, Dr. Williams dispels the reader of the notion that the Diggers saved Port Moresby. He then sights numerous sources

pointing to the fact that contrary to most books and articles written on the subject, the Japanese knew that Kokoda was a track and not a road, and that it led over a high mountain range. The Australians fighting against the Japanese troops of Nankai Shitai (South Sea Force) were not pushed back because they were outnumbered. Meticulously consulting Japanese sources, Dr. Williams, doing the math, shows again and again that during each stage of the retreat Australian forces were up against numbers equal to what they had.

Dr. Williams also points out that the Japanese on Kokoda did not eventually retreat because they had run out of supplies and were starving. They were ordered back, at least



L. Museum curator John Holland presents Ken Duus with photo of Kyalla VHUI, the aircraft in which Ken's grandmother was evacuated

from Rabaul. John was on the same plane. Ken's grandfather was with NGVR & Kanga Force.



Photos Left. Top Photo On Right is Lt Donald Chester-Woods.



He served :- 1945-48 British Army Singapore & Malaya.



1948-50 CMF Scottish Regt Victoria 1950-51 3 RAR Korea. 1956-62 PNGVR



**EVER WONDER WHERE THE OLD WORLD TRADE CENTRE BUILDINGS HAVE GONE?**  
**The USS New York.**

It was built with 24000 tons of scrap steel from the World Trade Centre.

It is the 5th in a new class of warship designed for missions that include special operations against terrorists. It carries a crew of 360 sailors and 700 combat ready marines.



Assn member Karl Aschhoff in Assn member Greg Shaw's plane with John Hayes, a grazier from Roma, who had hired Greg's aircraft. Karl and Jenny Aschhoff travel from Charleville to Roma monthly for eye treatment, and stay with Greg and Ann Shaw.

temporarily, due to the turn of events on Guadalcanal that required the full attention of the Japanese military before they could focus their attentions once again on earlier objectives.

Without making this too long, briefly, Dr. Williams also dissuades the reader of other myths such as the use of air-power in defeating Japanese forces on the trail and the supposed better medical care received by Australians.

None of the above should be seen as a denigration of the

Australians of that generation who saw their fight at Kokoda as a do or die situation that would decide the fate of Australia. General

MacArthur and Blamey may have known from intelligence that the Diggers were not fighting against overwhelming odds, but the bloke at the front didn't know that. Most thought, like Brigadier Potts, that they were hundreds up against perhaps thousands.

Also, as a result of having read Dr. Williams' book, I have a whole new appreciation for both Gen. Douglas MacArthur and Gen. Thomas Blamey, two rather enigmatic yet controversial individuals.

Dr. Williams also reminds the reader that Kokoda was not a battle of and within itself, as if it was something organic. Everything at Kokoda, as Dr. Williams points out, had to do with other events—the Battle of the Coral Sea, Milne Bay, and most importantly the large force of U.S. Marines that landed on Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942, and their subsequent defeat of all Japanese attempts to remove them. At a recent symposium on Kokoda at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, someone commented that *Guadalcanal*, by Richard Frank is the definitive book on that Pacific War battle. I am tempted to say the same thing about *The Kokoda Campaign 1942—Myth and Reality*.

**Bruce M Petty. Bruce is an historian, author and researcher and maintains close contact with the Assn.**

**New Defence Discount program - Exclusive to Defence members and their family**

**1<sup>st</sup> October 2013, Canberra:** Australian Partners of Defence launched a nationwide discount website to all serving and retired military personnel (including reservists and APS employees), and their families. These discounts are available through a membership program called APOD – Defence Discounts Online available at [www.apod.com.au](http://www.apod.com.au)

Products discounted include attractions, dining, accommodation, fashion, jewellery, alcohol and more come on each week.

Check out their browse page <http://www.apod.com.au/browse-defence-discounts> for latest offers online, national, local and in the UK through an affiliate program called Rewards For Forces.

To become a member for 2013, membership is free, simply go to <http://www.apod.com.au/membership> and sign up to have immediate access/.

“Like” their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianPartnersofDefence> and follow to keep up to date with new discount offers as they come on board.

**Please tell all your friends in Defence including ex serving members as they are all entitled to become members in their own right.**

APOD is a private organisation run by partners of Defence, for the whole defence community, so any help you can offer to get this message distributed will benefit us all. APOD is not a charity nor is it supported in any way by the Commonwealth Government.

For any further information or should you have any queries about the program please contact [hello@apod.com.au](mailto:hello@apod.com.au)

**Thank you Brian Jones for this information.**

Sorry about this.

To write with a broken pencil is . . . pointless.  
 When fish are in schools they sometimes . . . take debate.  
 A thief who stole a calendar . . . got twelve months.  
 When the smog lifts in Los Angeles . . . U.C.L.A.  
 The professor discovered that her theory of earthquakes . . .  
 was on shaky ground.  
 The batteries were given out . . . free of charge.  
 A dentist and a manicurist married. . . They fought tooth and  
 nail.  
 A will is a . . . dead giveaway.  
 If you don't pay your exorcist . . . you can get repossessed.  
 With her marriage, she got a new name . . . and a dress.  
 Show me a piano falling down a mineshaft and I'll show you . . .  
 A-flat miner.  
 You are stuck with your debt if . . . you can't budge it.  
 Local Area Network in Australia : . . . The LAN down under.  
 A boiled egg is . . . hard to beat.  
 When you've seen one shopping centre . . . you've seen a mall.  
 Police were called to a day care where a three-year-old was . . .  
 resisting a rest.  
 Did you hear about the fellow whose whole left side was cut  
 off? . . . He's all right now.  
 If you take a laptop computer for a run you could . . . jog your  
 memory.  
 A bicycle can't stand alone; . . . it is two tired.  
 In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, . . . it's  
 your Count that votes.  
 When a clock is hungry . . . it goes back four seconds  
 The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine . . . was fully re-  
 covered.  
 He had a photographic memory . . . which was never devel-  
 oped.  
 Those who get too big for their britches will be . . . exposed in  
 the end.  
 When she saw her first strands of gray hair, she thought she'd  
 dye.  
 Acupuncture: . . . a jab well done

#### Email received by President, Phil Ainsworth.

My name is Kate Gregory and I head up the content department of MilitaryOnlineColleges.org. My team has created a great new resource titled: 99 Crucial Sites On 20th Century American Military History. To view the resource please follow our link: <http://militaryonlinecolleges.org/history>  
 Our resource list 99 great military history pages for your readers to check out. We are dedicated to informing the public of America's greatest heroes and our bravest hours. We believe your readers may benefit from our list, and we believe it would make great content for your site.  
 Feel free to share the list with your readers. I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks and have a wonderful day.  
 Regards,  
 Kate Gregory  
 Content Editor  
 MilitaryOnlineColleges.org  
[kate@militaryonlinecolleges.org](mailto:kate@militaryonlinecolleges.org)

#### Email received from Max Hayes

I suspect that you will have heard that the Police Overseas Servicer Medal (POSM) has now been awarded to regular ex RPNGC as well as the ex Kiaps. Comes with miniature and 2 clasps "TPNG". Perhaps you might include an item in HTT that this posthumous Commonwealth award being currently distributed by the Feds is available to ex RPNGC who were contemporaneously PNGVR. I know that several, Holloway, Harbeck, Gould, Inch, Allman etc were.

The reason why I resigned from PNGVR in 1963 was an ultimatum from Jack Carrol (Supt at Rabaul) that, as I was never a policeman before RPNGC, I would have to devote much more time to my RPNGC duties instead of 'playing soldier', as Jack so delicately put it to me.

#### VALE

860418 Capt **Alan Wadsworth** died Nov, 2013. more detail in next issue of HTT

**Russell Turrill** . Rus was an early member of PNGVR at Port Moresby. His body was donated to medical research.

**Ovoru Indike**, of Nandure Village, on the Kokoda Track, Nov, 2013, at the age of 108. He was a fuzzy-wuzzy angel of WW11, one of hundreds of Papua New Guinea men whose heroic and selfless deeds saved the lives of countless Australian soldiers during the Kokoda campaign. He was awarded two Pacific Star medals and recently a Fuzzy Wuzzy Commemoration medal for his efforts in the war. Indiki had been an icon for the Kokoda Track. He travelled extensively to promote the track. According to his son Andy Ovusuru, he is survived by five children, 18 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren. Andy said his father was in Port Moresby working as a road maintenance labourer when news of the war broke in 1942.

"My father and a few of other villagers made their way back to the village to get away from the war, not realising that the biggest battle of the Pacific would be fought in the areas surrounding our village," he said. "With the Kokoda campaign looming, my father along with other men from our village were recruited as carriers for the Australian army. "Among many of his deeds, I think the highlight was saving Butch Hasset (Australian soldier)." He said after the war, his father served as a village policeman until retiring in the early 70s. He said his father was heavily involved in carrying wounded soldiers and transporting military supplies through the Kokoda campaign.  
*Source. The National, Tue Nov 19. 2013.*

#### LEST WE FORGET.

#### Email from Burnie Gough

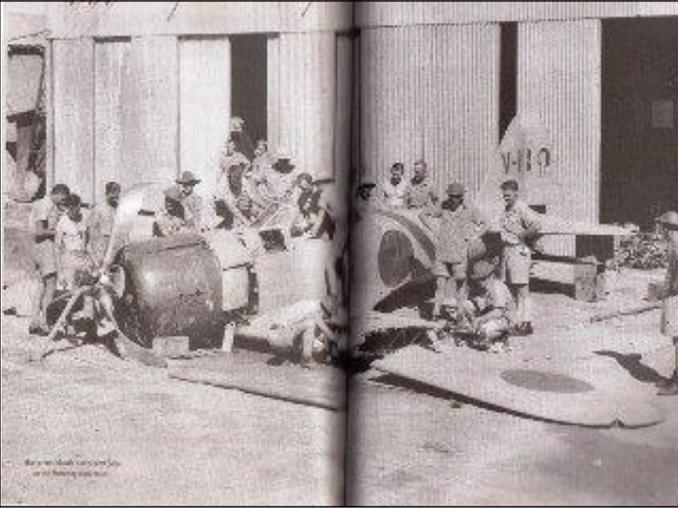
I discovered this photo in Peter Ewer's book 'Storm Over Kokoda' published in 2011. Chapter 9 relates the final flight by Squadron Leader John Jackson of 75 Sqn RAAF over Moresby on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1942 in which he tragically was KIA. Dad, Omar White, Damien Parer and the whole of the Moresby garrison witnessed this dog fight of 5 Kittyhawks against 8 Betty bombers escorted by 11 Zeros. The dog fight was a draw, both contestants losing 2 fighters, including John Jackson, who most likely downed a Zero, possibly PO. Yoshimitsu Maeda, but the bombers unloaded their bombs in disorder.

PO. Hideo Izumi claimed 1 Kittyhawk which was John Jackson's who was seen to crash at high speed into Mount Frank Laws at Bomana. Jackson's body was recovered and buried at Bomana War Cemetery.

In 1961 I climbed Mt. Laws to look for the crash sight. Dad called for police boys to accompany me but they were all too afraid. I climbed both peaks and returned by a different route but could find nothing.

The attached photo was taken by Damien Parer.

Thanks Burnie.



#### RECEIVE HARIM TOK TOK BY EMAIL

We are still looking to cut costs of producing HTT and, if you have the capacity to receive it by email it will assist the Association in cutting running costs by up to \$1,500 per issue. You will also then receive it in full colour and be assured that the quality in colour is much better than in B & W.

If you are willing to receive your HTT by email please email your name and email address to:- [bob-collins@bigpond.com](mailto:bob-collins@bigpond.com) You can rest assured that your email address will only be used by the Association to communicate information to you.

#### FUNCTION DATES

**Sat 15th March** Formal Mixed Dining Night, Jimboomba.  
Contact Bob Collins 55268396 or Barry Wright 55469865

**Sat 22nd March.** 10.00 am Committee Meeting Museum. All welcome. Contact Secretary Colin Gould MBE 0424 562 030

**Fri. 25th April.** Anzac Day march followed by NGVR Memorial Service at Anzac Square or venue to be advised (Hall of Memories may be closed for renovations), then camaraderie at our old venue, The Exchange Hotel, cnr Edward & Charlotte Sts, Brisbane. Final details will be in the April issue of Harim Tok Tok.

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**Bob Collins—Editor**



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