

PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES

UNIT HISTORY

1950 – Mar 1953.

By Lt Col N.P. MADDEN MBE – CO PNGVR. 31 Mar 53.

Introduction.

The PNGVR is a CMF Unit. Its ARA Cadre were the first troops to move back to the Territory of Papua New Guinea in the post war period. As the first unit to be formed in the Territory, the PNGVR has in turn fostered the raising of the Pacific Island Regiment and HQ Area Comd, Papua New Guinea. In so doing, the PNGVR has had many functions and responsibilities not normally associated with a CMF unit. PNGVR interests frequently have been sacrificed in establishing the regular units.

PARENT UNIT

The parent unit was the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles. This was a volunteer – and illegal – unit formed in NEW BRITAIN and NEW GUINEA after the outbreak of WW2. Its members were plantation men, miners, civil servants, businessmen and others, all of whom purchased their own uniforms and acquired a heterogeneous collection of weapons in limited quantities.

The Territorians feared Japan and their fears could not wait upon the defence authorities in Australia who were preoccupied with war in Europe, the Middle East and an enormous commitment at home. The NGVR efforts were later recognised and an Army representative was sent to the Territory to assist them in organizing. Weapons followed shortly afterwards.

So far as is known, the NGVR never totalled more than 200 in all centres. Its ranks contained many anomalies such as the Roman Catholic priest who held the rank of WO2 and was assigned as the pilot of one of the several aircraft available to the Unit. Another pilot was Rifleman Norman WILDE who is still a resident of WAU and saw service with the NGVR and later as a pilot with the US forces.

No coherent story can be pieced together from reports of NGVR activities after Japan entered the war. Undoubtedly there were many acts of individual heroism, there were heavy lessons, particularly in RABAUL, but since the NGVR never fought as a unit no one will undertake the task of preparing a complete history.

Colonel J.K. Murray, Administrator of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea recommended the reformation of the NGVR as a CMF unit during 1949. The name proposed was “The Papua and New Guinea Volunteer Rifles”. Old New Guinea Territorians resented – and still resent – the inclusion of Papua since the NGVR never included a PORT MORESBY detachment.

PREPARATION

Maj HOBBS, GSO2 (Int) HQ N Comd BRISBANE was sent to the Territory during late 1949 to investigate and report upon the possibility of successfully forming a CMF unit in the Territory. Maj HOBBS paid a flying visit to PORT MORESBY, LAE, RABAUL, WAU, WEWAK, BULOLO, KAVIENG, KOKOPO and MADANG.

His investigations followed the same pattern in each centre. One of the leading citizens was warned in advance and a public meeting was called. On the night of his arrival Maj HOBBS addressed the meeting and outlined the proposal to form a CMF unit. The project was received with enthusiasm in every centre. It appears from subsequent events that the acclaim had no relation to the manpower available to fill the unit.

As a result of the tour the opinion was expressed that the Territory could support a CMF unit of 450 all ranks, centered as follows:

PORT MORESBY	Bn HQ, HQ Coy
LAE	One Rifle Coy, less two Pls
WAU	One PI
BULOLO	One PI
RABAUL	One rifle Coy, less one PI
KOKOPO	One PI
KAVIENG	One PI

Records in PORT MORESBY do not disclose the intention in MADANG and WEWAK. It is unfortunate that Maj HOBBS did not investigate the population thoroughly in these centres. Such an examination would have shown very few young men between the ages 18-35 years available except in the main centres PORT MORESBY, LAE and RABAU.

THE DECISION

The Military Board decided to form the Papua and New Guinea Volunteer Rifles. The unit was to comprise Bn HQ, HQ Coy and two rifle Coys. LE 11/23D/1 was produced. The unsuitability of this LE will be discussed later. The Military Board decided also that no recruiting was to commence until all Administrative details were complete, including wet weather training accommodation, lest the unit should fail later due to the lack of facilities and administrative preparation. If these instructions had been followed, the recruiting in all main centres would not have been commenced until early 1953.

INITIAL STAFF

The following ARA staff were appointed to the PNGVR and after completing a short course at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) in SYDNEY, the staff were dispatched, arriving in PORT MORESBY on the dates shown against their names:

2/80	Lt Col N. R. McLEOD	1 Sep 50	CO
1/8002	Capt H.W. WRIGHT	1 Sep 50	Adj
2/1286	Capt S.T. BENDALL	13 Oct 50	QM
3/1886	WO1 P.V. MULHOLLAND	30 Sep 50	RSM
8/300	WO2 F.W. HOLDING1	8 Oct 50	RQMS
3/786	WO2 J.H. OLDHAM	30 Sep 50	Instructor

These men were all volunteers. Apparently, there was no careful screening to obtain the best available staff for duty in a remote area. The volunteer system produced a high proportion of undesirables who were to cause unending trouble until mid 1952 when the last of them was sent South. Pacific Islands Regiment had similar trouble and finally all volunteers were very carefully screened to weed out those with poor service records and marital troubles. Men escaping from marital troubles apparently decided that the Territory provided the necessary refuge.

THE STARTING POINT

On his arrival Capt H.W. WRIGHT set about arranging for accommodation for stores and personnel in PT MORESBY. By liaison with the Civil Administration and the Department of Civil Aviation, the latter organisation allocated one building as accommodation whilst messing facilities were provided at the Civil Administration Mess. Lt Col McLeod remained only for a few days, then returned to BRISBANE.

Indents for stores had been made out in BRISBANE. Stores began to arrive during Oct 50 and QM PNGVR and his staff received stores and placed them in the DCA building and two former RAAF magazines. Since no native staff was available, this involved a considerable amount of manual labour by the ARA men. By the end of 1950, sufficient staff and stores were available for recruiting to commence in PORT MORESBY. The unit could not be regarded as administratively sound, since it had a tenuous hold on the accommodation on a permissive occupancy basis.

The Army did not lack property in the PORT MORESBY district however, Murray Barracks had been handed over to the Civil Administration and the Commonwealth Department of Works on a permissive occupancy basis in 1946. The PAGA HILL Battery site also was held by the Dept of Works. Lt Col McLEOD arranged with the Civil Administration to take over a section of Murray Barracks on 15 Apr 51 as staff and training accommodation.

THE FIRST SETBACK

There is a carnival atmosphere in the Territory and this becomes more apparent during the Xmas festivities. During 1950, an old Army siren was established at the Police Station in KONEBOBU. Its function was to sound for starting and stopping of work. During a ball at the Administration Mess, Lt Col McLEOD was encouraged by junior members of the Administration to acquire and dispose of the siren. Lt Col McLEOD did this the same night. Lt Col McLEOD was returned to the mainland on 5 Jan 51. Capt S.T. BENDALL administered command 6 Jan – 5 Mar 51.

Whether or not the incident stimulated public interest in the PNGVR is problematical. Adverse press publicity commenced and continued during the period that Capt BANDALL was commanding. This adverse publicity took no recognizance of the facts and did considerable harm. It was directed mainly at the delay in the commencement of recruiting.

MT LAMINGTON

The Mt LAMINGTON eruption occurred on 23 Jan 51. The small Army staff immediately responded to a plea from the Administration for assistance. 5/309 WO2 F.W. HOLDING and 3/756 WO2 J.H. OLDHAM together with two Army trucks ½ ton 4 X 4 were flown to POPONDETTA by a RAAF Dakota flown by Flight Lieutenant J. CAIRNS. WO2 HOLDING did an excellent job under very difficult conditions. On his being withdrawn from POPONDETTA during early Mar 51, Colonel J.K. MURRAY cited him for the fine work that he had done under very difficult conditions indeed.

WO2 OLDHAM remained in POPONDETTA for two weeks after HOLDING's withdrawal. The Army vehicles which, according to Colonel MURRAY, "were the only ones that worked" were left in POPONDETTA and were later sold to the Administration.

STAFF VISITS

During late 1950 and early 1951 the following staff officers visited New Guinea on matters affecting the PNGVR and the PIR:

Col R.F. MONAGHAM	Col Adm N Comd
Lt Col A.S. FLETCHER	CRE N Comd
Maj P. MILFORD	DAA& QMG (Quartering) N Comd.

These officers were interested primarily in selecting a composite for the PIR. None of those officers inspected Murray Barracks. In the light of what subsequently transpired, the Col Adm's remark that "the Army will never use Murray Barracks again" was very misleading.

The PIR Composite was selected at TAURAMA, the site of the wartime 2/1 and 2/5 AGH – 9 miles from PORT MORESBY.

PNGVR ACCOMMODATION

Lt Col N.R. McLEOD had made tentative arrangements for PNGVR accommodation in LAE and RABAUL:

- LAE - Use of an abandoned Qantas Empire Airways Mess, acquisition of a block of land in LAE proper on which a training depot would be built.
- RABAUL – Acquisition of a block on MANGO Avenue, on which a training depot would be built, £1200 to be provided by the Civil Administration to offset the value of the native hospital, which was Army owned.

NEW CO APPOINTED

On the return of Lt Col N.R. McLEOD to the mainland, HQ N Comd requested AHQ to supply a new CO PNGVR capable of coping with a situation which had become embarrassing to the Army. Major N.P. MADDERN MBE, Co-ordinator, Joint Intelligence Staff, was selected and warned for early movement.

This Officer was given the opportunity for several days of examining files on the PNGVR and PIR. The reason for the interest in the PIR was the wording of the appointment:

"To be CO PNGVR and to foster the raising of the PIR"

On 2 Mar 51, CO PNGVR departed MELBOURNE for BRISBANE by rail, arriving 5 Mar 51. At HQ N Comd all files were examined and a thorough briefing obtained from the staff. As a result of these investigations, several facts became apparent;

- (a) Drastic, if not spectacular, action was required of the new CO immediately on arrival as a means of overcoming the adverse press publicity
- (b) Recruiting could not wait upon "Administrative Soundness"
- (c) The PNGVR would labour under the handicap of insufficient population from which to obtain recruits
- (d) Normal activities of CMF units such as an annual camp in which the battalion would be concentrated would be impracticable.
- (e) A role for the unit would have to be defined which would be in keeping with the peculiar conditions obtaining in the Territory.

The various matters were discussed with GOC N Comd, Maj Gen F.G. STURDEE OBE.

COMMENCEMENT OF RECRUITING

Lt Col MADDERN arrived in PORT MORESBY on 12 Mar 51. The initial conference of all officers, both PNGVR and PIR was held at 1400 hrs the same day. Those officers were:

Maj R. SHIELDS	PIR Coy Comd
Capt C.J. ORME	PIR 2IC Coy
Capt S.T. BENDALL	QM PNGVR
Capt H.W. WRIGHT	Adj PNGVR

The PIR Officers, together with several WOs, had arrived during Feb 51 as an advance party PIR to commence the raising of the unit. The outline plan for the formation of the PNGVR, which was issued at this conference was as follows:

RECRUITING

(a) Would commence as follows:

PORT MORESBY	17 Mar 51	1400 hrs
LAE	7 Apr 51	1400 hrs
RABAUL	4 May 51	1400 hrs

(b) Men would be medically examined, attested and equipped on the same afternoon.



King's Birthday Parade, Ela Beach Oval, Port Moresby, 1951. 65 members of PNGVRS paraded together with the Pacific Islands Regiment (which had just started recruiting) and the Royal Papuan Constabulary.

TRAINING

Would commence at 0900 hrs on the morning following commencement of recruiting.

ACCOMMODATING AND STORES

A team comprising CO, QM and RQMS, and SSGT NEEDHAM would proceed LAE and RABAUL several days before recruiting opened to arrange temporary accommodation pending obtaining permanent quarters, then to prepare stores and open recruiting.

PUBLICITY

Would commence, immediately by press, radio, circular and personal contact. The Army would widely publicise starting dates, then keep to them. In PORT MORESBY all preparations were made in five days.

On the afternoon and night of 17 Mar 51, with the aid of a team of three Public Health Department Medical Officers, thirty-five recruits were examined, equipped and attested. The publicity during the preceding week was excellent, and even the South Pacific Post seemed to make the utmost effort to atone for previous adverse publicity by giving almost a full-page coverage to the Army's efforts. Excellent publicity continued for some time, particularly from the Australian Broadcasting Commission's station 9PA PORT MORESBY.

Training commenced at 0900 hrs the following morning on the KONEDOBU oval, with hundreds of native spectators in attendance watching the "Taubadas" at drill. The oval adjoined the Royal Papuan Constabulary barracks and native constables were able to watch their officers – private soldiers in the PNGVR – being put through their paces by the instructors.



PNGVR marching in King's
Birthday Parade, Port
Moresby, 1951.

EARLY TRAINING – PORT MORESBY

Training in outcentres followed the same pattern as in PORT MORESBY in the early stages. The instructors in PORT MORESBY were:

Capt H.W. WRIGHT	Adj
WO1 P.V. MULHOLLAND	RSM
WO2 J.H. OLDHAM	

The last named was returned to PORT MORESBY from POPONDETTA during late Mar 51.

Training syllabii had been drawn up which were designed to give a thorough basic training with emphasis on developing the ability to instruct. The two main problems associated with training were:

- (a) The difficulty of concentrating the unit for an annual camp and the impossibility of taking men away from their employment for 14 days in a Territory where almost all organisations were badly understaffed meant that camp training had to be covered by 14 days additional home training.
- (b) Shift work for RFC officers (police), customs, airlines and civil aviation, etc prevented attendance for many men.

Parades were held:

NIGHTS	Monday	NCO's parade)	
	Tuesday	CO's parade)	All
	Wednesday	NCO's parade)	half day
	Thursday	CO's parade)	parades
DAY	Saturday pm	CO's parade)	
	Sunday pm	CO's parade)	

By having these many parades, it was intended that shift workers would be able to attend at least one night and one day parade per week. The strain on the ARA staff could well be imagined.

Many enthusiastic men attended three and four parades per week – pay was possible for all parades attended. The training was thorough and progress very good indeed. Attendances were excellent for a CMF unit. There was always the feeling that these conditions could not last.

RECRUITING - LAE.

During (Easter) weekend 23 – 26 Mar 51, CO & QM PNGVR proceeded to LAE. The task was to make preliminary arrangements for recruiting, particularly publicity and accommodation for training and stores. CO PNGVR was met at the airstrip by local dignitaries including the State President of the RSSAILA, Mr G. WHITTAKER. The District Commissioner was not present. He was annoyed that Army representatives should disturb the Administration during the Easter holidays and even refused accommodation and messing at the Administration Travelling Officers Bungalow.

The RSSAILA members were suspicious and unfriendly. Their main interest was in the PIR and the statement was made that "if the Army does not appoint experienced Territorians as Officers and NCOs the RSL will withdraw its support".

It is of interest that in all Army activities, during the next two years, the RSSAILA made little or no attempt to be of assistance. Meetings were addressed by CO PNGVR and at different times by Maj Gen F C SECOMBE CBE, Maj Gen R. KING CBE DSO and the Honourable the Minister of the Army (Joe FRANCIS), but none were productive of co-operation. Destructive and ill-informed criticism seemed to be the keynote, stemming not from the rank and file of the organisation, but the State Executive.



There is no record of the RSSAILA ever having produced a single recruit for the PNGVR or having offered any encouragement to potential recruits. The District Commissioner, Mr H. NIALL MBE, states without hesitation that he "hates the Army". His actions have never belied the statement, even to unnecessary persecution of two unfortunate 1 Aust Bomb Disposal Section NCO's. Arrangements proceeded for the commencement of recruiting on the advertised date (7 Apr 51).

Training and Stores accommodation was by courtesy of the Department of Civil Aviation, an organisation which never failed to assist where possible. It occupied the old Qantas mess on the West side of the airstrip.

On 4 Apr 51, CO & QM PNGVR again arrived in LAE, accompanied by the RQMS and OR SSgt. The latter men were to remain in LAE as instructors until RABAUL project commenced. The Director of Public Health (Dr J.T. GUNTHER) and the Bde Coy resident medico (Dr. C GUNTHER, not related to JTG) both flew to LAE for the recruiting. The Press, Radio and circular campaign was sufficient stimulus to produce 24 recruits on the afternoon of 7 Apr 51.

Accommodation arrangements for the PNGVR, made initially with the District Commissioner in LAE during the Easter visit and followed up during the second visit, are of interest.

CO PNGVR went to the DC's office at 0900 hrs Easter Saturday. He made no reference to the former's rudeness the previous day, but gave details of his task. He mentioned that arrangements had been made in PORT MORESBY for the Army to take over LOT 4 in the LAE town plan – possibly the best available lot and, in fact, such arrangements had been made by Lt Col N R McLEOD.

LTCOL N.P. Maddern MBE

The DC was advised that the lot had just been inspected and that it was excellent for the purpose. An hour later the DC contacted CO PNGVR and informed him that he had a better plan, he would hand over to the Army EMERY House and a large black iron building adjacent. The buildings were inspected immediately and CO PNGVR enthusiastically accepted the buildings and two areas of adjacent land for a parade ground.

The DC mentioned "minor" difficulties:

- (a) The land and buildings belonged to the Forestry Department
- (b) Under the terms of sale Mr EMERY had unrestricted use of the black iron building for storage purposes until Feb 53.

CO PNGVR contacted Mr J. McADAM, Forestry Dept, on his return to PORT MORESBY. He learned from Mr McADAM that Mr NIALL, DC LAE, was his bitter enemy.

After a lengthy discussion, CO PNGVR agreed to relinquish his non existent right to the two acres of land (which were required for a forestry experimental station), in return for the EMERY House and black iron building. Mr McADAM accompanied CO PNGVR to the Department of Lands, Survey and Mines where a handover was drawn up and a telegram sent to the surveyor at LAE (Mr Brooke WEBB) to survey the PNGVR area. A letter was sent to Mr NIALL informing him of the handover.

During the visit to LAE for recruiting the following week, CO PNGVR contacted the local Forestry representative, Mr NIALL and Mr Brook WEBB and arranged for all concerned to be present on the Tuesday at 1400 hrs for boundary definition. Mr NIALL did not turn up and QM PNGVR was instructed to collect him, which he did. Mr NIALL witnessed the definition of boundaries and was requested to send a copy of the survey to PORT MORESBY during the following week.

After several letters on the subject had been sent to Mr NIALL the Government Secretary PORT MORESBY directed him to produce the plan. The Government Secretary then wrote the memorandum handing the property over to the Army. Fifteen months and many letters later, EMERY House was finally handed over by the District Commissioner.

By letters to Mr EMERY who was then resident at KINGSTON, S Aust, and his agents – Messrs DUNCAN & ROEFOD, RABAUL, liaison visits to owners of gear stored in the black iron building and on examination of litigation proceedings by the Agents against Mr NIALL for forcible entry into other buildings to which Mr EMERY had rights of occupation until Feb 1953, CO PNGVR obtained a waiver of rights from the Agents in Sep 1952. Mr NIALL then became solicitous of the PNGVR's welfare and advised against occupation of the building in view of the litigation. A Coy PNGVR took possession.

ANZAC DAY 1951.

PNGVR paraded in LAE and PORT MORESBY on Anzac Day 1951. In PORT MORESBY 74 members were on parade. They paraded with the Royal Papuan Constabulary and the infant PIR, which had commenced recruiting and was already building the cornerstone of a fine unit at TAURAMA.

CO PNGVR accompanied by His Honour, the Administration Colonel J.K. MURRAY to the RSL Club, Ela Beach, after the parade. At the Club CO PNGVR and Col MURRAY were attacked by a drunken ex-soldier, who was forcibly removed. Apparently, the carnival atmosphere in the Territory bred such behaviour, since it was unusual for CO PNGVR to appear at any RSL Club in the Territory without some unpleasant incident with inebriated and disgruntled ex-soldiers. These conditions do not apply in other clubs.

MESSING PORT MORESBY

From 15 Apr 51 until 3 Jul 51, all ARA PNGVR members in PORT MORESBY lived at Murray Barracks and drove 5 miles each way three times per day to meals at KONDOBU. There was not Mess staff provided for on the establishment and in the early stages in Murray Barracks, no mess building available.

The long drive for meals was still the case when GOC N Comd came to PORT MORESBY in Jun 51. His opinion was that the PNGVR members should eat at PIR TAURAMA, an eight-mile turnaround and, even if we formed a mess, we would not get a cook. On the other hand, the Brig Adm (Brig WHITE) sent a cable instructing CO PNGVR to form Officers and Sgts Messes. There seemed to be some misunderstanding of the conditions under which we lived and worked.

A combined mess – Officers and OR's – was formed and members contributed towards the cost of a native cook boy until the issue was fought out. Eventually a native cook was authorised.

MURRAY BARRACKS

The next task was to shift the centre of activities in PORT MORESBY from KONEDOBU to Murray Barracks. The Department of Civil Aviation had been compelled to terminate the permissive occupancy in favour of the Department of Public Health Infant Welfare Clinic.

Murray Barracks comprised 604 acres between the 3 and 4 Mile on the ROUNA Rd. It was being used mainly as married quarters by the Civil Administration, but the commonwealth Department of Works also maintained workshops and quarters. The Posts and Telegraphs Department had one section, which they still occupy. The area to be resumed by the PNGVR included eight buildings:

- 7 married quarters
- 1 Dept Works Mess.

Over the years, the area had degenerated to a slum, overgrown with kunai grass and littered with debris.

The Administration had ten weeks' warning, but ten days before the people were to move out, they received notices to quit, with the terse statement "no alternative accommodation is available". The PNGVR took over three buildings only and two years of constant prodding produced all but one of the remainder. Murray Barracks was later to house HQ Area Comd Papua New Guinea, PNGVR and all dependents of ARA members.

The major task was to improve the area. Most of the work was done by the ARA men themselves, with pick, shovel and demolition tools. At least one load of rubbish daily was removed for three months and cleaning up continued intermittently for two years. In Jul 51, beautification works, including the planting of hundreds of trees, commenced.

It was a source of constant wonder that the area had been permitted to degenerate to a conglomeration of shacks, surrounded by rubbish, and with ducks and fowls penned beneath houses. The only parallel case perhaps was the entry of the Darwin Mobile Force into VESTEYS MEATWORKS in 1939, when an accumulation of 20 years of goat droppings was the only obstacle to clean living.



Lt Col Maddern with children, Port Moresby, 1952

RECRUITING RABAUL

The RQMS, WO2 HOLDING, accompanied the stores shipped from LAE for the opening of recruiting in RABAUL. WO2 OLDHAM, a WO2 Instructor who had to date been retained in PORT MORESBY on account of his general instructor-worthiness, was sent to LAE to take over A Coy PNGVR.

WO2 HOLDING met CO & QM PNGVR and SSgt NEEDHAM at the airstrip on 1 May 51. He apologized the lack of transport for the CO, but stated that his request to the A/District Commissioner for a vehicle to meet CO PNGVR had been met with the reply "can't the Army hire taxis". WO2 HOLDING already had made tentative arrangements for the loan of a Copra drying shed at the accommodation.

CO and QM PNGVR visited the hotel manager and discussed this accommodation with him and several directors. They agreed to permit the unit to use the shed for three weeks then to charge a nominal rental.

Six weeks later the hotel sent in a claim for 6 weeks rent at £10 per week. The shed was evacuated and the claim was NOT paid.

The hotel tariff was 30/- per day. Obviously, NEEDHAM and HOLDING could not afford it and QM PNGVR was dispatched to the A/District Commissioner to arrange messing at the Administration mess. The two men intended to sleep in the shed.

CO PNGVR received a ring at the ASCOT HOTEL from the Administration Chief Clerk to the effect that the Army was responsible for its own messing. CO PNGVR instructed him to put the line through to the A/District Commissioner who was informed that:

- (a) CO PNGVR had no transport in RABAUL because the Army had flown the RABAUL jeep into MT LAMINGTON. Therefore, whenever CO PNGVR required transport in RABAUL from the Administration he would get it
- (b) Messing for Army personnel was provided under an agreement made with the Administration. The two men would have their first meal at midday and would eat at the Administration Mess thereafter.
- (c) He would be in his office at 1330 to see CO PNGVR. Any attempt at co-operation with the Administration in RABAUL (LAE and WAU also) has met with frustration.

During the next few days arrangements for recruiting proceeded. A publicity campaign was carried out. On 4 May 51, 22 recruits were enlisted during the afternoon. They were examined by Dr. R K WILSON, PHD RABAUL, who had been a combatant officer in the British Army 1917-1946 (Lt Col).

Training commenced on the following morning, culminating in a march down MANGO Avenue, which was responsible – because of the fine show – for several more recruits enlisting.

As in PORT MORESBY and LAE, Captain S.T. BENDALL and WO2 HOLDING performed a Herculean task in producing, from a conglomeration of boxes scattered in stores or still on the wharf, all the required equipment to outfit the troops immediately after attestation.

In RABAUL CO PNGVR discovered a strange order which was quickly remedied. Two young patrol officers, anxious to enlist, stated that there was an order, extract, forbidding their enlistment in PNGVR. The two men were immediately enlisted and on his return to PORT MORESBY the matter was investigated and the Director of District Services and Native Affairs informed that such an order was unnecessary and would be disregarded.

VISIT TO WAU

CO, QM & RQMS PNGVR returned to PORT MORESBY on 6 May 51, leaving the Orderly Room Staff Sgt as instructor in RABAUL. Such expedients were necessary, sufficient instructors had not been provided and progress with the means available was essential. The charges of sloth against the Army had to be refuted.

On 11 May 51, CO PNGVR proceeded to LAE, BULOLO and WAU. Whilst recruiting in LAE, a telegram had been received from the president of the WAU RSSAILA Sub Branch.

"Come and recruit in WAU. You will get a good response here".

Training was satisfactory in LAE and further recruits were being obtained. On 12 May 51, CO PNGVR took the Dragon to BULOLO. On his arrival at 1500 hrs, CO PNGVR was received with the utmost courtesy by Mr Largs BERGSTRAND, the Manager of Bulolo Gold Dredging Co. Until 1300 hrs on the Sunday the following was accomplished:

- (a) Discussions with miners in the mess re enlisting in the PNGVR
- (b) Discussions with RSSAILA Sub-Branch officials.
- (c) A meal and discussion with Mr BERGSTRAND.
- (d) Tour of BULOLO.

The RSSAILA sub-branch Secretary warned against opening in BULOLO since very few men would enlist. Discussions with the men confirmed this. WO2 HOLDING paid a visit in Oct 51 and after a thorough investigation his conclusions coincided with those of CO PNGVR – BULOLO was a bad risk.

CO PNGVR was driven to WAU by Mr CAVANAUGH, the Forestry Department representative and taken to the home of Mr Jack GRAINGER, the WAU Police Officer. Mr GRAINGER had been at the Golf Club when it was mentioned that CO PNGVR was arriving that afternoon. Mr SEALES comment, echoed by the RSSAILA Sub Branch president was “....MADDERN – he is not going to spoil my golf”.

CO PNGVR stayed at the WAU Hotel. He set about compiling a list of names of eligible young men. The list when completed totalled 32, five of whom were average – but not too much so – and six of whom were miners from the New Guinea Goldmine at Golden Ridges.

Mr ELDRED, local president of the RSSAILA was much in evidence during the next few days. He was preoccupied chiefly with ways and means of acquiring arms for older men ineligible to enlist. These men would become a private army under Mr ELDRED. He had produced a platoon Commander for No 3 PI PNGVR which CO PNGVR had decided to form at WAU.

CO PNGVR interviewed this Officer (Lt G CORLIS) at Mr ELDRED's home. After being assured that there was no other ex-Army Officer in WAU, CO PNGVR agreed that Lt CORLIS would be PI Comd, and handed him AAF A28's to complete. Mr ELDRED instructed Lt CORLIS to hand the AAF 28's to him after they were completed, since as local president of the RSL, No 3 PI was to be right under his (ELDRED's) thumb.

Following on a long and tedious discussion with Mr ELDRED in an attempt to convince him that private armies were no longer in vogue, this apparently was Mr ELDRED's final attempt to salvage something from the wreck of his military ambitions. CO PNGVR left WAU feeling that a platoon at half strength could be maintained in WAU and that recruiting could later be extended to BULOLO, which would produce recruits on the example set by WAU.

GOC's VISIT AND FIRST CEREMONIAL PARADE.

At the request of His Honour the Administrator, CO PNGVR arranged to put on a combined ceremonial parade on the occasion of the King's Birthday 1951. The units parading were the PNGVR, PIR and the Royal Papuan Constabulary.

The GOC N Comd, Maj Gen V C SECOMBE CBE notified his intention of visiting the Territory during the same period. Units commenced training and arrangements were made for a rehearsal at SOGERI, in the mountains 27 miles from PORT MORESBY on the Sunday prior to the parade on the ELA Beach oval, PORT MORESBY. The GOC was to witness the rehearsal since he would not be in PORT MORESBY for the ELA Beach parade.

The setting at SOGERI was magnificent – a beautiful grassed parade ground on the banks of a river and surrounded by green kunai hills. The parade did justice to the setting. The khaki clad PNGVR with white belts and gaiters, green clad native troops of the PIR, and Royal Papuan Constabulary with their black cloth smocks with scarlet edging made a more colourful display perhaps than has been seen in the Commonwealth.

Gen SECOMBE was most enthusiastic and stated that it was the best parade he had seen. The PNGVR troops had no equal outside of regular regiments in his opinion. It would be difficult indeed for any unit to produce the standard in physique and intelligence represented by the 64 PNGVR men on parade that day. After the parade, GOV N Comd departed for RABAU, MANUS, LAE, WEWAK and WAU accompanied by CO PNGVR.

The GOC was again impressed by the PNGVR at RABAU and LAE. The unit was riding the crest of a wave in recruiting, attendances and continuity in thorough basic training.

In RABAU the block of land in MANGO Avenue on which it was intended to build a PNGVR training depot was refused on the grounds that it was too small and by arrangement with the Trustees of the recreation reserve and the District Commissioner, a section of the recreation reserve was made available.

In MANUS, 1 Aust War Crimes Unit had almost completed its task. Several days were spent disposing of their accumulation of stores. The Administration hospital at LORENGAU was outfitted with hospital beds and bedside lockers and a great deal of furniture was handed over for Administration married quarters.

Enroute to WEWAK, the aircraft landed at AITAPE to permit the GOC and CO PNGVR to visit AITAPE. A check was made there on reports of so-called 'Indonesian Infiltration' across the Dutch New Guinea border. The patrol officer at AITAPE and the local inhabitants were amused at the reports and confirmed that fears on this score were groundless.

At WEWAK, an investigation was made into the possibility of establishing a Pacific Islands Regiment Company at VANIMO, 13 miles from the Dutch New Guinea border. This possibility had been discussed with District Commissioners in each centre, and all were in favour of the project.

In LAE, for which CO PNGVR had developed an aversion, a meeting of the RSSAILA sub-branch was addressed by the GOC, Group Captain T CARR, AOC NE Area who had accompanied the GOC, and CO PNGVR. It was a disorderly meeting characterized by rude questions and a dictatorial attitude on the part of RSL members. Once previously and during a later visit by the Minister of the Army, CO PNGVR was to witness similar unfortunate proceedings which did nothing to enhance the prestige of the RSSAILA.

WAU was a very pleasant interlude. The RSSAILA was hospitable – not that the organisation can be criticized anywhere for its excellent hospitality – and most constructive in its comments on the proposed PNGVR platoon. However, while the ex-servicemen were enthusiastic, apparently none intended to enlist but all were anxious to lend their moral support. CO PNGVR had already visited WAU and had a fairly accurate knowledge of those who intended to enlist. Two only of the potential recruits (including one officer) were at the RSL meeting on the occasion of the GOC's visit. This indeed indicated the unsound basis on which Major HOBBS had concluded that a CMF unit could be formed. He mistook enthusiasm at public meetings for intention to enlist, without a clear assessment of recruiting potential.

The GOC concluded his visit quite pleased with the Army in the Territory, both PNGVR and the infant PIR. He had been most annoyed to learn that Commissioner J.S. GRIMSHAW MC (Lt Col R of O) of the Royal Papuan Constabulary had commanded the combined ceremonial parade on the King's Birthday and was not mollified by the explanation that he had been asked to command on account of his co-operation with the Army in its early efforts to re-establish itself in the Territory.

RECRUITING AT WAU

PM 9 Jun 51, CO & QM PNGVR proceeded to LAE to prepare for recruiting in WAU. The two officers left for WAU by jeep and trailer on 11 Jun 51. Pte B A FOSTER – who had arrived in the Territory on 15 Apr 51 and been sent to LAE as a storeman the following week – followed on a NGG Coy diesel truck with 3 PI stores. The 90 mile drive from the coast to the highlands was a very pleasant experience with a hint of adventure in fording swift flowing streams.

On arrival WAU was found to be torn by internecine strife. Mr Cyril ELDRED, in producing Lt G CORLIS as the only possible PI Comd, had deliberately ignored the presence in WAU of Lt J F DAVIS, an ex-infantry officer. Mr ELDRED and DAVIS were enemies. Since Mr ELDRED had widely publicized the appointment of Lt CORLIS, the general public in this small and isolated centre had split on the issue and had ranged themselves solidly behind the man of their choice, either DAVIS or CORLIS.

Men previously assessed as potential recruits declared stoutly for or against one or the other, with refusal to enlist as the penalty for flouting their wishes. Advice on the capabilities of the two officers concerned was offered by many. Since DAVIS appeared to be very capable and had the background of infantry experience, CO PNGVR decided to appoint him as PI Comd, with Lt CORLIS on the Regimental Reserve as deputy PI Comd. This appeared to satisfy everyone.

The use of the Memorial Hall, WAU, was obtained as a training depot at a nominal rental. The recruiting campaign was pursued by personal contact and CO PNGVR visited the mine, businesses, and stopped young men on the roads.

Mr ELDRED, who had been so confident of an excellent response during April and May, decided that very few recruits would be obtained, and seemed to welcome the suggestion that the centre would not be opened if less than ten men enlisted on 16 Jun 17 men enlisted, two of whom were whisked from their homes by Mr ELDRED when they did not appear voluntarily. Four recruits were miners from NGC mine at GOLDEN RIDGES. It was a disappointment when three excellent men (former PW's 8 Div) from KORANGS Gold Sluicing did not enlist, since they had had their fill of service during the war. Training commenced at 0900 hrs 17 Jun 51. After making arrangements for the transport of troops from the mines to parades, the recruiting team departed WAU on 18 Jun 51. Lt CORLIS never played an active part and was returned to the R of O Sep 51.

THE SECOND SETBACK – FALLING OFF IN ATTENDANCES AND RECRUITS.

After the four centres were opened, unit strength increased rapidly to its peak at 201 all ranks. For a time attendances were good and the men keen. A slump was anticipated when the initial enthusiasm wore off. Fewer recruits and a falling off in attendances were expected. These things happened and they could not be countered immediately. Many men began to apply for discharge. Some of the many reasons are as follows:

- (a) In each centre the unit was working with primitive accommodation and inadequate ARA staff.
- (b) In the Territory, permanent residents have 3 months leave on the mainland after 21 months and a proportion of the men had gone south.
- (c) A large proportion of the labour force is in the Territory on one or two year contracts and such men either will not enlist for that reason or will fail to attend parades for some time prior to their contracts expiring. For this reason also, men had applied for discharge – some have come to the Territory, enlisted and departed in one month.
- (d) Shift workers such as police officers had arranged for others to take over shifts in the initial stages, but this arrangement could not continue permanently.
- (e) Some had decided that military training under tropical conditions was tiring and uncomfortable – cool clubs with cold beer were a more attractive alternative.
- (f) Men were being transferred in their civil jobs to centres in the Territory in which the PNGVR had not opened – the unit's first recruit was transferred to MANUS one month after he enlisted.
- (g) Short staffs and high overtime pay.

The PNGVR will labour always under many of these difficulties. Recruiting and maintaining attendances will be the major problems and at times they will seem insurmountable.

RECRUITING CAMPAIGNS

Recruiting campaigns so far conducted at the following times have followed the same pattern:

- (a) On opening each centre
- (b) Jul, Sep and Dec 51
- (c) Jul 52
- (d) Dec 52
- (e) Apr 53 – projected

The elements of the campaign were:

- (a) A letter to the Administrator asking for his support. The Administrator has sent a personal letter to each Government departmental head.
- (b) From a list compiled from the Territory telephone book, a personal letter from CO PNGVR to every business manager, head of every government department and sporting body, president of every club or organisation such as the RSSAILA, and many private individuals, requesting assistance in recruiting.
- (c) A circular campaign – hundreds of circulars delivered to messes, clubs, business houses, works and mines.
- (d) Press advertising, radio announcements.
- (e) A personal approach to young men wherever they may be found by CO PNGVR – not done during later campaigns.
- (f) Letters to young men listed by members of the unit as potential recruits. In the initial stages, excellent co-operation was received from the Commonwealth Bank, Royal Papuan Constabulary and Bank of New South Wales and the Department of Works.

It is interesting to note that the Civil Administration has produced few recruits indeed. The Department of Works is the backbone of the unit – but the men are mostly contract workers and excellent men come from this department. Of the 23 men from the Commonwealth Bank enlisted when centres first opened, none remained in the Territory after 18 months.

The most interesting aspect is the apathy with which the barrage of letters and circulars has been received. The first campaign produced three replies:

- (a) One from the Administrator
- (b) One from Mr Bill WYETT of WYETT's LTD, PORT MORESBY, advising that his son would enlist and wishing the unit the best of luck
- (c) One from an Administration employee, which was in fact the letter he had received from CO PNGVR with a footnote "Thanks for the offer, I prefer a commission with the RAAF unit".

The many letters to the RSSAILA State President (Mr WHITTAKER) or to the Presidents of sub-branches have never produced a single reply, nor have those to hundreds of other organisations except for odd official acknowledgments of correspondence from Government departments. In spite of these criticisms of the Territory response, the unit at its peak strength had enlisted 3% of the population in main centres and about 10% of the population of WAU.

MOTTO AND SLOGAN

The training slogan of the PNGVR was "The more you sweat in training the less you bleed in battle". This was the training slogan of Gen SUB KI-JIN, Chinese Nationalist Army. The slogan offended some mothers and it was suggested that it should be "The more you perspire in training, the fewer expire in battle".

The unit motto "Per Angusta ad Augusta" – 'Through Trials to Triumph' was selected by Mr G. WHITTAKER, a former member of the NGVR, and now State President of the RSSAILA.

CMF OFFICERS

CMF Officers selected were as follows:

Maj C J MacFARLAND MC	21C
Maj J BUCKRIDGE	OC Hq Coy – to R of O Dec 52
Lt W.S. KERR MC	PI Comd, later OC HQ Coy
Lt C RAFTERY	PI Comd HQ Coy
Lt. K HOLLOWAY	Pnr PI Comd HQ Coy – to R of O Apr 53.
Maj M THOMPSON MC	OC A Coy
Lt J. McKEAN	2IC A Coy
Lt G CORLIS	No 5 PI WAU – to R of O Sep 51
Lt J F DAVIS	No 5 PI WAU – to R of O Mar 53
Maj (H Lt Col) R K WILSON	OC B Coy RABAUL
Lt F HOLLAND MBE	2IC B Coy – to R of O Mar 53
Lt R SCOTT	PI Comd B Coy

Lts P HARBECK and P BROMAN qualified for first appointment to commissioned rank at examinations held Jul 52, and both were appointed to HQ Coy. Those were the first men who had enlisted as privates to be commissioned.

ROLE OF THE PNGVR

Initially the role of the PNGVR was to:

- (a) Provide local defence detachments in the event of war
- (b) Collect information for the revision of wartime terrain studies

It was decided during early 1951 that the transient nature of the population rendered this role impracticable. It is very likely that, in the event of war, most of the men will return to the mainland. A small proportion only can be regarded as permanent residents of the Territory.

The role of the unit now is:

"To provide officers and NCO's for an expanded PIR in the event of war"

Most of the men have some contact with natives and accumulate some experience in the handling of them, particularly those who can be regarded as permanent Territorians. Of the men in the unit at any one time, approximately 20 would be available for Aust Staff of the PIR and about half would be officer material. The remainder of the unit would be men who had some military training. These men probably would enlist in mainland units. First class material such as Royal Papuan Constabulary Officers would be key men in their own organisation in war.

INTELLIGENCE

A great deal of basic intelligence is available from such organisations as:

- (a) Companies engaged in oil search
- (b) Department of District Services and Native Affairs patrol officers reports and other Government Departments.
- (c) Missions
- (d) Native labour recruiters

From Jun-Sep 51 Capt R MATHAMS was attached to PNGVR to organise the collection of such material. A great deal was accomplished and much material sent south.

On the return of Capt MATHAMS to 11 Inf Bde TOWNSVILLE, Sgt B E PARKER took over intelligence duties. He was a qualified projectionist and had no intelligence experience. He remained with the PNGVR for 14 months and accomplished nothing. He was entirely unsuited for the job and although he was tried in other appointments, he was finally returned to the mainland.

Sgt R EFFORD, formerly Int Sgt 3 Bn RAR, KOREA, was posted to the unit in Feb 53. Within one month EFFORD had restored the flow of material and over a period all wartime terrain studies should be greatly improved.

RIFLE RANGES AND RIFLE CLUBS

In Apr 51 a reconnaissance was made for a rifle range in PORT MORESBY. The old wartime range was located. It had degenerated to a jungle patch and the butts and target mechanism were buried by soil washed down from the hills. Prison labour was obtained and the butts dug out and the range cleared. GOC N Comd inspected the range in Jun 51 and was of the opinion that its restoration was a major task beyond the capabilities of the unit and that we would never get the target mechanism to work. However the following was done:-

- (a) 200 sheets of Marsden (airfield) matting was obtained free from the Dept of Civil Aviation
- (b) Unit ARA personnel went into the hills and salvaged a number of 80lb steel rails for uprights.
- (c) An ex RAEME Officer (Capt W MAY) restored the target mechanism and the concrete pit. When this was done, 407 pounds (Dept Works estimate) was required to:
 - (d) Set the steel rail uprights in concrete
 - (e) Bulldoze earth for the mantlet.
 - (f) Back the uprights with the Marsden matting.

Getting the £407 was a difficult task. Firstly, the range was declared unsafe by HQ N Comd and eventually an MBI was necessary revisiting safety regulations. Although the range did not have 3,500 yards clearance beyond the butts, it did have a 604 ft feature rising steeply enough at the butts to make it safe. The new Garrison Engineer decreed it uneconomical.

- (a) The access road would be impassable in wet weather.
- (b) The access road was 1 ½ miles in length and would be a major maintenance problem
- (c) The butts would fill with water

CO PNGVR disagreed violently with these views. Maj Gen R KING visited PORT MORESBY in Feb 52 and the morning he inspected the range followed a night of heavy rain. The access road and the butts were dry. The £407 quickly became available and the first practices were held in Jul 52. Self-help often meets with many frustrations.

In LAE an excellent range site was obtained. Clearing commenced with prison labour and a great deal was done. The District Commissioner Mr NIALL who had approved of the range, then withdrew the land since he had discovered that it would eventually be bisected by a road. A new site was obtained and clearing commenced in Jun 52 – one year had elapsed and no range yet available. £200 was made available for initial clearing. A further £500 was requested and hire of labour continued pending allocation of funds. When a total of £800 had been spent, work was stopped. CO PNGVR was in trouble for continuing to incur expense without authority. A total of £2,000 became available in Feb 53. At the same time, by arrangement with the Government Secretary, prison labour continued clearing. The range still awaits work by the Dept of Works.

In RABAUL, a civilian rifle club commenced to make a range. CO PNGVR assisted with cash for bulldozing. After some work was done the District Commissioner withdrew the land. The PNGVR will not build a range in RABAUL. When the PIR becomes established there, a range will be constructed for them and for use also by PNGVR.

HQ PNGVR was concerned directly or indirectly with the formation of rifle clubs in:

- (a) KOKOPO NB
- (b) SOHANO, BUKA PASSAGE, BOUGAINVILLE
- (c) MADANG
- (d) LAE & RABAUL – still forming or in abeyance
- (e) PORT MORESBY – sponsored by HQ PNGVR

The KOKOPO Club built an excellent two target range in one weekend. These rifle clubs ask for more “encouragement”. This is difficult to give except by speedily passing on any requests to HQ N Comd. It is felt that they accomplish very little. However, a civilian group of good rifle shots, armed and with a small supply of .303 ball, exists at each of the places listed above. They could perhaps be regarded as “local defence detachments”.

NCO's AND OFFICERS EXAMINATIONS.

The first NCO's examinations were held in Jul 51. The troops had had a thorough basic training and in each centre the standard was high for CMF troops. NCO examinations have been held half yearly since a high standard is expected and there are usually a number of failures. Failing men leads to their applying for their discharge.

A subject A examination held on 14 Mar 53 was witnessed by Maj NICHOLLS, GSO2 Trg N Comd. He considered that the standard was well above normal CMF standards and that the four men who qualified compared very favourably with ARA instructors on the mainland.

All individual training in the PNGVR is designed to produce instructors. In this way the primary function of the unit can best be fulfilled.

Subjects A and B for candidates for first appointment are made difficult. There are usually 50% failures in Subject B because the men are not to officer standard in tactics. This aspect received emphasis hence only a high standard will be accepted.

As a matter of interest, if men are informed at the commencement of basic training that they are being trained to become instructors, their interest is stimulated considerably. If from the first day, men are called out to give words of command to the squad, a competitive spirit rapidly develops.

In Sep 51 CRE N Comd witnessed some NCO training. He complimented CO PNGVR on having a good ARA instructor with the squad. The man was, in fact, a CMF Corporal.

STAFF SHORTAGES

Dec 51 saw the commencement of a very difficult period for the PNGVR owing to staff shortages. These conditions persisted until Jan 53. Firstly, Adj PNGVR Capt H W WRIGHT was promoted and posted to 11 NS Trg Bn. The instructors at LAE and RABAUL each became severe disciplinary problems and both were returned to the mainland. Later two drivers and the Cpl mechanic – a psychopathic kleptomaniac and confidence man – were returned.

RSM PNGVR was discharged late 1952. RQMS PNGVR was absent in WAU as instructor and PI Comd Oct – Dec 51. To aggravate matters, 1 Aust Bomb Disposal Section was placed under command Nov 52, and HQ Area Comd Papua New Guinea was formed 5 Dec 51, with CO PNGVR as concurrently Area Comd and CO PNGVR.

PIR became an independent unit on the arrival of CO PIR Lt Col H L SABIN on 8 Sep 51.

For some time, the PNGVR ARA staff consisted of five men. It had centres in PORT MORESBY, LAE and RABAUL. It had the following additional duties or duties not normally performed by CMF Cadres:

- (a) HQ Area Comd Papua New Guinea with all its ramifications.
- (b) Its ARA messing and single quarters
- (c) Unloading ships, transport of stores
- (d) Intelligence
- (e) Liaison with Civil Administration
- (f) Ammunition, and furniture storage for married quarters
- (g) Movements, including K Force transit troops.
- (h) Daily radio schedule with outcentres

Between Mar 51 and Jan 53, days – or even nights-off were luxuries rarely enjoyed. Manual labour was performed by all ranks including CO PNGVR. For a short time in 1951 CO PNGVR was also the typist. Except for the men returned to the mainland for disciplinary reasons or the Int Sgt who did not know how to work the ARA staff responded extremely well. Capt S T BENDALL, QM PNGVR and SSgt E W NEEDHAM both have been deserving of the highest praise. It is difficult indeed to work at high pressure for long periods in a tropical climate and under primitive living conditions.

THE NEW SYSTEM

It was necessary to change the whole approach to training the PNGVR. The unit had no ARA Instructors. The many parades were too much for the Administration staff in PORT MORESBY since they both administered and instructed. The parades were too many for the CMF men. From Jul 52 the Unit changed to:

- (a) One monthly weekend parade in all centres – a different weekend in each centre
- (b) One night parade weekly (Tuesday nights).

Later, Thursday night parades were held for Subject C instruction for potential officers.

An instructor (RSM PNGVR or, on one occasion the Garrison Engineer) was sent to outcentres for the weekend parade after the parade had been held in PORT MORESBY.

Enlistments again increased and this system seems to be the answer to instructor shortages and maintaining the interest of the CMF component.

Since the PNGVR still provides the Area Comd, Chief Clerk (RSM PNGVR) and ACMS (instructor) for HQ Area Comd, the system is still necessary. There is a resident instructor in LAE who also instructs in RABAUL on weekend parades.

CLOSING OF WAU.

Lt G. CORLIS applied for return to the R of O shortly after No 3 PI was formed. His duties as Native Labour Officer took him away from WAU very frequently. Lt J F DAVIS was a very able officer, but a most impatient man. He wrote a letter to HQ PNGVR on 27 Jun 51 requesting certain supplies. He wrote a follow up on 28 Jun pointing out that the supplies were urgent. On 3 Jul 51, he wrote a letter threatening to resign if the supplies were not speedily forthcoming and intimating that perhaps No 3 PI was "out of sight – out of mind". All three letters arrived at HQ PNGVR on 4 Jul 51 – the mail to WAU is anything but regular.

DAVIS had accomplished a great deal. He had erected a small building as a Q store beside his home without cost to the Army. He rapidly rehabilitated the WAU rifle range and had built an excellent assault course. His training was thorough and administration excellent. All conditions were ideal – if only the recruiting potential had been better. In Sep 51 CO PNGVR inspected the WAU det and was very pleased indeed with it.

During early Oct 51 Lt DAVIS contracted scrub typhus. He was sent south for convalescence. WO2 F W HOLDING was sent to WAU to carry on. Unfortunately this time the Australian miners left Golden Ridges mine, reducing the detachment to 13 all ranks. Several men also were on leave. Finally we saw attendance average 4 OR's.

WO2 HOLDING carried out a thorough investigation of the potential in BULOLO and confirmed CO PNGVR's opinion – it was unwise to open there. Lt DAVIS returned to WAU in Jan 52. By Mar 52 he was thoroughly disgruntled and over the SBE network which had been functioning for one month, he advised that he had closed down.

He wrote a very rude letter indeed, insisted that all the gear should be removed from the area forthwith. Authority was sought and obtained to close WAU.

Lt DAVIS was most repentant later and until Feb 53 he continued to man the SBE relay station. He was enlisted in the ARA 10 Mar 53 and posted to 11 NS Bn WACOL.

SBE NETWORK

SBE sets were installed in PORT MORESBY, LAE, WAU and RABAUL in Feb 52. For the first time the PNGVR had close contact with outcentres and nightly schedules were conducted until Mar 53, when improved aerials made daytime schedules possible. The network reduced PNGVR correspondence to one third. High aerials were erected in each centre with the assistance of the Garrison Engineer Capt A V GILES. A SBE network can be recommended for all units with distant outcentres

MARRIED QUARTERS

When the DAA&QMG HQ! Area Comd Papua New Guinea arrived in PORT MORESBY during Jan 52, 12 ARA families were resident in Murray Barracks. As a matter of interest the following gives an indication of the Administrative detail involved in quartering these families:

- (a) Liaison with the Civill Administration for each individual house resumed and with N Comd on policy.
- (b) Takeover of house
- (c) Arranging for essential repairs, electricity and water.
- (d) Notification of availability of quarters to N Comd
- (e) Indents for furniture, receipt and cartage from wharf, unpacking and storage, placing in houses (furniture provided by Army for all houses).
- (f) Notification of occupancy to N Comd for furniture and house rentals, refrigeration charges.
- (g) Receipt of family, check of furniture inventory.
- (h) Investigation of breakages personal effects and arranging claims.
- (i) Adjustment of electricity etc, breakdowns.
- (j) Inclusion of details in monthly reports, stocktake of furniture.

Until Mar 52 HQ PNGVR had no native labour for handling and stores and it was all done by the ARA staff. All the administrative detail was done by HQ PNGVR for all the ARA members, including PIR.

HQ AREA COMD PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

HQ Area Comd Papua New Guinea was formed at PORT MORESBY on 3 Dec 51. A separate narrative covers its activities to date. The additional staff allocated was one Garrison Engineer, Capt A V GILES, followed by a DAA&QMG Maj W F ROBESON, but not until Jun 52. Otherwise all appointments were filled concurrently by PNGVR (depleted) ARA Cadre.

This headquarters was responsible for:

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

HQ PNGVR had been carrying these responsibilities from its inception, but the commitment became a major one as more and more dependents arrived to fill the emergency quarters in Murray Barracks resumed from the Administration. The formation of the 'separate' headquarters merely gave PNGVR staff additional specific appointments, eg CO PNGVR was at one time concurrently:

Area Comd
DAA & QMG
CO PNGVR
Adj PNGVR

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

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

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

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

HISTORIC PARADE

On 26 Nov 51, CO PNGVR commanded a combined PNGVR, PIR and Royal Papuan and New Guinea Constabulary Parade on the inauguration of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea Legislative Assembly. The Inspecting Officer was the Acting Governor, General NORTHCOTT. This inauguration was a great step in self-government for the Territory and the Army played a leading part in the ceremonial attending the inauguration.

KOKODA TRAIL

At Dec 51, no white man had traversed the historic KOKODA TRACK since 1946. Even then, the patrol officer had penetrated only half way. Some had attempted the feat and turned back. During the Xmas period 1951, CO PNGVR led a party of 19 over the trail. It was a harrowing but satisfying experience since the track had not been kept open and its condition was a mystery. Signs of the great struggle over the trail remained. The party took 6½ days PORT MORESBY to KOKODA.

During Easter 1952 the trail was traversed KOKODA – PORT MORESBY in 5½ days. CO PNGVR again accompanied the party. The going was easier since ADO KOKODA had had the native villages clear the trail on the KOKODA side of the Owen Stanley Range. The first party had to cut the trail on this side during the previous attempt. The aim was to stimulate an interest in “Jungle walking”. It was not successful.

JUNGLE TRAINING

Unit members have approached jungle training with enthusiasm. Much has been gained from the experience, but the turnover in personnel is too great to permit a thorough grounding. The training emphasizes the necessity for perfect physical fitness. In fact, the aim in all jungle training should be “To train men to maintain themselves fit to fight under tropical conditions”, with all that it implies. If men can maintain themselves fit to fight under tropical conditions, the greatest problem in the jungle warfare is overcome.

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

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

In Jungle Training men fail in the simplest things, eg lighting fires from wet wood, preparing simple meals, making comfortable beds and adjusting their gear for comfortable marching. Discipline must be maintained under most difficult conditions – and it is never more necessary than in the jungle.

BEAUTIFICATION WORKS

In April 1951 the ARA cadre PNGVR commenced work in beautifying Murray Barracks. It had been regarded as a slum area and almost as a municipal junk heap for six years. All ranks participated. Old buildings were demolished, gardens dug and grass cut. In Jul 51, 600 peltiferin trees were planted, including a 350 yard avenue to the headquarters. Watering was done each night with the aid of a jeep and trailer filled with water and poured with buckets. Officers and OR's worked together in a fine spirit of co-operation. In Mar 53, the results of these labours are becoming apparent. Many of the total of 1400 trees have died, but many remain.

HONORARY COLONELS

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

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

CITATIONS

QM PNGVR, Capt S.T. BENDALL and SSgt E.W NEEDHAM, Orderly Room Staff Sergeant, have both been recommended for Awards. These men have both worked extremely hard under trying conditions for two years, both on their own jobs and is sponsoring and fostering other units.

MARCH 1953

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

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

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

Radio communications with outcentres are excellent.

There has been no recruiting campaign for some months.

Training has been thorough under adverse conditions.

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

The unit can now be maintained – this has at times been doubtful. Its strength will never exceed 200 all ranks and its strength will vary between 140 and 200.

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

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

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

This report was submitted by Lt Col Maddern, MBE, shortly before his departure from PNG.. He was 31 years old when he took up his post as CO, PNGVR. He was Adelaide born, and a graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon. Early in WW11 he served with the Darwin Mobile Force, and later became the Adjutant of the famous “Sparrow Force”, trapped by the Japanese in Timor. He was captured by the Japanese in February, 1942, and he was taken to Singapore. He was awarded the MBE for his efforts for other prisoners. After the war he spent 3 years in Washington as a member of the Australian Military Mission. He left PNG to become Assistant Adjutant-General in Victoria. He was replaced by Lt Col T.W. Young, aged 39, a Duntroon graduate also, who had served in the Middle East, Britain and New Guinea during WW11.

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