

Welcoming Address 50th Anniversary Disbandment of PNGVR.

I welcome you to our luncheon to acknowledge the 50th Anniversary of the disbandment of PNGVR.

A special welcome to our esteemed guests:

- Alex Garlin, President of NSAAQ
- Steve Ford, President of West Lakes RSL Sub-branch, and
- Andrea Williams , Acting President of PNGAA

It is appreciated that many of you have travelled some way to be here, thank you.

- PNGVR was the successor to the WW2 NGVR militia battalion.
- PNGVR was the only Australian post WW2 militia (C M F) battalion which was:

Formed , served and disbanded overseas

Never served in Australia

Always on Australia's Order of Battle

Always commanded by a Regular Army Officer

Always a widely dispersed unit with Companies in Port Moresby , Lae , Rabaul and Goroka and platoons in Bulolo/ Wau, Samarai, Madang, Wewak , Banz and the University of PNG.

From 1964 began enlisting Papua New Guineas (non- Australian)

From 1964 was a fully-integrated unit comprising Australian and non- Australians in all ranks.

Just as NGVR provided the initial defence of Australia , PNGVR role's was similar.

- It assisted to re-establish the Pacific Island Regiment and provide initial aid to Popondetta after the
- Mt Lamington eruption In 1953 when over 3000 people were killed including 31 Europeans..

As PNG's development process increased , the battalion's role was expanded

and Papuan New Guineans were welcomed enlistments into the PNGVR military community.

The battalion played an important role during the anxious time the governing of West Papua was transferred to Indonesia from the Dutch in the late 1960's.

Another anxious time was in the Gazelle Peninsula when the District Commissioner was killed over land issues.

As the country rapidly moved towards its own independence, there was no need for an Australian CMF unit in PNG and the unit was disbanded.

Many of the expatriate Australians remained in PNG after Independence in 1975 and further assisted the country in its development.

The bonding created by the unique shared experiences within PNGVR remains strong today, 50 years after it's disbandment, and is exemplified whenever a group of former PNGVR soldiers meet.

We can be proud of the legacy created in PNGVR which continues in our Association today.

Please enjoy your lunch.

Phillip Ainsworth

President

NGVR & PNGVR Ex-members Association