



M.S. "MONTEVIDEO MARU", 7,200 TONS GROSS 噸百廿七噸噸噸 大おでびてんも

Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Society

# MvM Newsletter 14

## Mid May 2010

### Memorial resolution is tabled for debate in parliament

*"...it is a debt of justice to pay superior honours to men who have devoted their lives in fighting for their country... (Pericles' Oration p 34)*

**THANKS TO Gillian Nikakis for this quote, evincing an important part of the reason why we have joined together to ensure our nation appropriately recognises a great Australian tragedy and its consequences.**

At last count 230 people had registered to be at Parliament House in Canberra on Monday 21 June - the oldest aged 97 - for the passage of the historic parliamentary resolution.

Catherine King MP has now tabled the motion in words proposed by our Society. And it reads, that this House:

- (1) Expresses the gratitude of the Australian nation to the service personnel and civilians in Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands for their services in the defence of Australia during World War II.
- (2) Expresses its regret and sorrow for the sacrifices that were made in the defence of Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands and in the subsequent sinking of the Montevideo Maru on 1 July 1942.
- (3) Conveys its condolences to the relatives and loved ones of the people who died in this conflict.
- (4) Conveys its thanks to the relatives for their forbearance and efforts in ensuring that the nation remembers the sacrifices made.

Senator Anne McEwen, one of our few parliamentarians who have a real passion for PNG, is sponsoring the motion in the Senate on the same evening it passes through the House of Representatives.

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society was established to ensure national recognition of Australia's greatest maritime disaster, a tragedy of war that cost more than 1,000 lives and affected many thousands more. Contact the Society at [benelong@bigpond.net.au](mailto:benelong@bigpond.net.au)

We still don't know in what precise context the motion will be raised or at what exact time on the Monday afternoon. Minister Alan Griffin's office is working on this in conjunction with Parliamentary officials. But, as we've advised previously, you should arrange to be at Parliament House no later than early afternoon.

The motion and the subsequent function represent significant actions by the Australian Parliament.

Some information you may find useful:

We are encouraging veterans (and family if they desire) to wear service medals.

Spouses are welcome to attend, so long as they register.

There is no charge.

The Society will hire buses to ferry people from where they are staying in Canberra to and from Parliament House.

Film-maker Phil Donnison is making a documentary of the day, which will be sold by the Society. Phil suggests you bring memorabilia that could feature in the film.

John Schindler's *The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru* will be rebroadcast by Foxtel's *History Channel* on Monday 21 June to mark the event.

Andrea Williams is managing registration and logistics. Email [andrea.williams@bigpond.com](mailto:andrea.williams@bigpond.com)

Bob Lawrence is dealing with the media and looking for people with stories to tell. Email Bob at [blawrence@jacksonwells.com.au](mailto:blawrence@jacksonwells.com.au)

The number of Friends of Montevideo Maru increased from 200 in February to 320 by mid-May.

You can donate to the construction of a Rabaul & Montevideo Maru memorial at the Australian War Memorial. Cheques to 'Montevideo Maru Memorial Committee' at PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089. Or make a direct deposit to the Society's bank account: BSB 082-401 Account No 16-083-2367 and including your name.

## What can we do to be worthy of them...

BY CHRISTINE ARNOTT

I AM RELATED to several men who lost their lives on the *Montevideo Maru*.

My father, Eric Arnott, was in the Brunswick Salvation Army Band, the core of the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Band. He was unable to enlist with them as he was required to remain at the Commonwealth Air Force Factory where he worked.

His sister, Rose, lost her husband, Harry Desmond Harvey. My mother's brother, Neil Stanford Smith, was also on the ship. Another sad loss was Jack Stebbings, who was killed in Rabaul earlier. My father's sister, Pearl, was dating Jack. She never married and died only recently.

I am working on a series of paintings on the poetry of Dorothea Mackellar, currently painting images for her poem *Australian Men*, written in 1914 at the beginning of WW1. My current painting is of WW2: Bomana War Cemetery at dawn with an Australian digger overlooking the vista. I will send a photo when it is completed.

I think this poem is relevant to all theatres of war. Dorothea had the feel of our Australian men.

There are some that go for love of a fight  
And some for love of a land  
And some for a dream of the world set free  
Which they barely understand.

A dream of a world set free from hate –  
But splendidly, one and all  
Danger they drink as 'twere wine of life'  
And jest as they reel and fall.

Clean aims, rare faculties, strength and youth,  
They have poured them freely forth,  
For the sake of the sun-steeped land they left,  
And the far green isle in the north.

What can we do to be worthy of them,  
Now hearts are breaking for pride?  
Give comfort at least to the wounded men,  
And the kin of the men that died.

To me this poem illustrates the enthusiasm of our men to go to war and protect our Australia.

My mother often spoke about seeing the men off at the wharf, with the band playing "we are off to see the wizard, the wonderful wizard of oz" - a very poignant example of the attitude that these men had when they left Australia: full of

excitement and determination, only to face a reality they were not prepared for, and to suffer great hardship and death.

## My dearest Sadie, you are continually in my thoughts

BY SUZANNE PASCOE

MUM FAITHFULLY continued to write cheerful, newsy letters every week until the end of the war about events she thought would interest her beloved Frank.

I recall, as a three-year-old, the sad look on her face when the brown paper parcels of her letters was returned, but she hid her grief from me. I now realise what a very courageous lady she was.

It was so helpful to read Rev John May's account, as it filled the gaps between the lines. Apparently in letters home, the prisoners were all told to say Japan would win the war, but not one did.

Keith Jackson writes:

*Frank Pascoe died on the 'Montevideo Maru'. As a prisoner in Rabaul, he was one of many men who, in an act of bizarre charity, the Japanese military allowed to write letters home. The letters were dropped by Japanese aircraft in a bombing raid over Port Moresby, and most found their way back to Australia.*

*Frank's letter is touching and heartening; the latter because he manages by inference to convey a sense of the reality of the conditions he's experiencing without drawing the Japanese censor's pen. We thank Suzanne Pascoe for sharing this letter with us. One must admire her mother's faith in Frank and her dedication to him. Even after nearly 70 years, this is an inspirational fragment of communication.*

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10 March 1942

My dearest Sadie,

As you can see, I am a prisoner-of-war, under the protection of the Japanese (*cut out*).

Firstly dear, I am in excellent health and never felt better. We are treated with great consideration by the Japanese who seem to want to be friendly with us.

We are fed reasonably well, although I cannot say I am getting fat! I have some good friends living with me, which helps such a lot in times like these. As for sleeping accommodation, this is quite good too, and I find myself sleeping as much as 10 or 11 hours at night. The other day I made

myself a hammock, by unpicking the sides of a copra bag and stretching it out lengthways, and it is extra comfortable.

My dear, I know the last few weeks have been very anxious times for you, but now that you have received this please do not worry any more, as I am perfectly alright.

Yourself and my dear daughter Suzanne are continually in my thoughts, and I pray daily for you. On Sunday, we had a short and enjoyable service conducted by a Methodist Minister. I do not know how you can write to me but no doubt the Red Cross could tell you.

Your loving husband, Frank

L/Cpl FW PASCOE  
PRISONER-of-WAR (*cut out*)  
RABAUL

## **I was called to the office – my father was presumed dead**

**BY MALCOLM McARTHUR**

**LIKE OTHERS WHOSE fathers were lost, their ‘whereabouts unknown’, in disasters in New Guinea in 1942, I am grateful for your Society’s advocacy and the motion of recognition to be debated in Federal Parliament in June.**

It has taken a very long time. We were not helped when we learned from your newsletter that the Menzies government of 1955 had knocked back an offer for further information on the identities of men who were on the *Montevideo Maru*.

I can’t help but feel it reflected some guilt at the way Lark Force was sent, so ill-equipped and later unsupported, on its hopeless mission to Rabaul. Our whole country was desperately unprepared for the power of the Japanese onslaught.

As a voracious young reader I remember my shock, a believer in a Children’s Encyclopedia view of an ‘Empire on which the sun never sets’, when I read (in *The Women’s Weekly* of all places) about the Fall of Singapore. The Rising Sun loomed threatening and I can still feel that seven-year old’s shock and disbelief.

We had been on the *Macdhui* - mother, baby brother and I - on Christmas day 1941 on the zigzag trip back to Australia of Rabaul’s women and children.

My home had been at Malaguna, on the shores of Simpson Harbour, just near the Burns Philp wharf. There the pumice from 1937 was still so thick that I could not float the tin Queen Mary received for

my birthday! But I could ride shady Mango Avenue home from school, climb in the frangipani that was terraced down to the sea.

Now all was uncertainty. Home was wherever a friendly aunt or uncle offered shelter.

It was October 1945 when I was called to the office of the head of a boarding school to be told by the principal my father was presumed dead.

More than a year later, War Memorial archives show, there were still letters going from a pro bono solicitor in Adelaide to the Federal Government seeking death certificates and some kind of answer to my father’s whereabouts. There seemed to be a conspiracy of silence.

In 1974, as Deputy at Goroka Teachers’ College, I was able to go to Rabaul and speak with Tolai men who had worked with my father, Laurie, and who believed they had seen him with fellow Methodist Missionary Laurie Linggood after the sailing of the *Montevideo Maru*. There were stories of machine-gunning near Malmaluan like those at Tol Plantation and Kavieng.

That more than a thousand died off the coast of Luzon we know: who died there and who elsewhere we may never know. For that reason I am grateful that your organisation now has the inclusive name Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society.

I am delighted that Australia’s greatest maritime disaster is now to be acknowledged. Thank you, one and all.

## **A stretcher-bearer of the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion**

**BY LINDSAY COX**

**THE MEDICAL CORPS of any army faces the horrific task of addressing horrendous and inevitable battlefield casualties**

When the AIF was deployed overseas in WW2, an Australian General Hospital was mobilised and travelled with the Division. The AGH was a large base hospital with several hundred beds, and usually administered a number of auxiliary hospitals such as Field Hospitals at Brigade level. Attached to the Field Hospitals were Casualty Clearing Stations, which sent their Medical Corps’ stretcher-bearers forward to recover battle casualties.

However, it was usually a combat unit’s own stretcher-bearers who were first on hand to succour and retrieve their own wounded comrades. It provided a measure of comfort for

the frontline soldier to know one of his battalion-mates was there help him if he copped one.

For the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, and indeed Lark Force, health was the concern of the Battalion Medical Officer, Captain J Ackroyd, with his medics and stretcher-bearers from the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Band.

It was traditional in time of war for Bandsmen to be stretcher-bearers, and they trained extensively to this end. Captain Ackroyd had very strong views on the role of the band in wartime; and it didn't include playing music!

One of the Bandsmen-cum-Stretcher-Bearers of the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was Herbert William Morgan, who enlisted at the age of 25 at the Melbourne Town Hall on 29 June 1940. Bert Morgan had previously served in the Militia, as a Gunner in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Medium Artillery Battery. He was also a member of The Salvation Army and played tenor-horn in the Fairfield Citadel Band.

Bert was married to Mavis, had a young daughter, Eleanor, and was employed as a jam factory storeman. Inducted into the AIF with the number VX40805, Bert was posted to a Training Battalion at Balcombe before transferring into the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Band at Trawool on 31 July 1940, eventually serving with 23 other Salvation Army Bandsmen under the baton of Sergeant Arthur Gullidge.

He perished on the *Montevideo Maru*.

The 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's Medical Officer, now Major Ackroyd, having survived incarceration in Japan, recommended Bert for an award; submitting the following report on 5 July 1940:

Corporal Morgan was No.1 of the bearer squad allocated to A Company and moved with that company when it occupied the Lakunai drome. Prior to action Corporal Morgan took over the mosquito control measures of the drome area, which were being abandoned by the Public Health Department, in view of labour shortages.

He also obtained coppers and his squad provided hot drinks to all patrols, sentries, etc. at night. On the occasion of the aerial strafing of the drome on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January 1942, his squad assisted in the evacuation of airforce casualties and on the morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1942, on the bombing of the fort he proceeded



independently with his squad to the fort to assist in the collection and evacuation of casualties.

With the transfer of A Company to Vulcan and the R.A.A. [Royal Australian Artillery] coming into reserve, Captain Silverman took over the medical care of the company in action. On the withdrawal from the beach it was found impossible to get all transport up the escape road and the medical personnel abandoned its transport. Several members of the squad were immediately taken prisoner. Corporal Morgan remained with Captain Silverman and they gradually worked their way out to the north coast, crossing the Keravit on the following Monday. The party with which they were travelling was ambushed some two or three miles beyond the Keravit. Captain Silverman and Corporal Spence being taken prisoner, and Corporal Morgan with one malaria patient escaping by taking to the swamp and remaining partially submerged for some hours. The remainder of the party were killed.

Corporal Morgan with his patient then retraced their steps, re-crossed the Keravit and finally were taken prisoner in the vicinity of Vuzarina.

On arriving at the Rabaul prison camps Corporal Morgan took part in the organisation of the P.O.W. medical service. He was responsible for the collection of drugs, dressings, text books, etc. from the R.A.P. [Regimental Aid Post] of pre-invasion days in Malaguna camp. He continued as a dresser and medical orderly in the camps and was responsible throughout for the messing of the hospitalized sick.

I recommend that in view of his continuous devotion to duty over a prolonged period of adversity and display of initiative, Corporal Morgan be considered in the award of decorations.

Bert Morgan was Mentioned In Despatches.

*Photo: Bert Morgan sitting on the steps of the hut in the Malaguna Camp beside fellow Bandsmen Harold Pannell (reading War Cry), Ron Cook and Jim Thurst*

## **FEEDBACK**

### **BARRY ANGEL**

I am the nephew of NX53269 Gunner Eric Kenneth Triggs [enlisted name; real name Keith Trigg ] and have just become aware of your website after discussion with my uncle Edward, also known as Ted Trigg. I would like to become a Friend of Montevideo Maru and receive the monthly newsletters and updates on this long overdue quest.

### **CARA FLETCHER-MURPHY**

I have been made aware of the Resolution and function regarding the *Montevideo Maru* in Parliament on 21 June and would like to attend with my husband and two sons. I believe that my cousin, Helen Larkin tried to contact you last week. I know that she, her husband, her sister and my mother also wish to attend.

I am a niece of NX191445 Gunner John William O'Shea of the 1st Anti Aircraft Brigade (Lark Force) - who died on Montevideo Maru. Many thanks for organising this event. We have waited a very long time to have Parliament recognise what happened. My boys are very familiar with their Great Uncle Jack's story and this will be a very symbolic and important event for all of us.

### **SHELLEY MAREE CLARKE**

My grand-uncle, my mother's uncle and my grandmother's brother, Lance Corporal John McIntosh (Jack) Spence VX23625 lived with his father and other family members in New Britain before the war. He returned to Australia to enlist (7 June 1940 at Caulfield, Victoria) and was sent back to New Britain due to his knowledge of the area and his language skills.

He was presumed to have been killed by the Japanese on or around 30 January 1942. His grave is cited as unknown and his name appears on Panel 18 of the Rabaul Memorial in Papua New Guinea.

I so wish my grandmother was still alive to witness the imminent wonderful tribute for her brother's companions. She died six years ago.

As a direct response to your newsletter item about my grand-aunt Pat Porcuite, a woman who had known Jack as a visitor to her home when he was on leave with her brother (one of those lost on the *Montevideo Maru*), has been in contact with both Pat and myself. It has been very exciting for me to speak with her and we plan to meet when she visits Canberra in June.

Thank so much for all your efforts. What you are doing means a great deal to many people and is much appreciated.

### **JENNIE COOPER-PENROSE**

Thank you for keeping us all up to date. My Uncle Albert LE Cooper VX23857 was on the *Montevideo Maru*. My 11 year-old son and I will be coming from Castlemaine with the Bendigo 2/22 Remembrance Group. This is an important historic event and we wouldn't miss it for the world.

My three Castlemaine Primary School children laid a wreath for the 2/22 at school. Later we all attended the dawn service in Castlemaine - and my three Scouts and Joey Scout laid a wreath at the Castlemaine Shrine. Be assured, we will ensure that these great men and woman did not die in vain. Lest we forget.

### **PROF HANK NELSON**

Thanks to Stan Cooper for his amendment to the motion. We should also be aware that men from RAAF crews had died earlier - particularly the six pilots and observers in the Wirraways on 20 January 1942.

The first to die in the Japanese assault on Rabaul were Papuans and New Guineans. About 15 were killed in the bombing on 4 January 1942 and 30 injured, some seriously.

By a terrible irony, Papuans were included. They were Trobriand Islanders, crew of a canoe that had been drifting at sea, picked up, taken to Rabaul and housed at Rapindik waiting repatriation.

## **MAXWELL HAYES**

It has just occurred to me that RAAF aircrew were lost in Wirraways even before 22 January. Strictly speaking, I don't think that they should be grouped under *military*. Perhaps your present attribute to military personnel could be changed, for convenience, to service personnel.

Sorry to throw this in at the last minute but, as ex RAAF, it seems to me that these very few "Battle of Rabaul pilots" who were sacrificed in flying outdated aircraft have been well and truly forgotten.

I believe that, in the face of superior and overwhelming odds, the unit CO radioed the words, "We who are about to die, salute you" but in the Latin quotation.

Keep up the great work in Canberra and elsewhere.

*We adopted Max's suggestion for refining the resolution - KJ*

## **PATRICK BOURKE**

I have noticed that the National Library has put a lot of their material on-line, including newspapers from 1803 to 1952 at [www.trove.nla.gov.au](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au). There are many articles including death notices from Rabaul and the *Montevideo Maru*. It was reported in *The Argus* on 6 October 1945 that the brother of Sir Earle Page (Country Party, NSW), Harold Page, was among the missing from Rabaul.

## **NOLA McCANN**

I'd like to say how much your efforts on behalf of us all are appreciated even though I'm sure you have been told that lots of times lately.

## **MARGARET HENDERSON**

Stan Cooper sounds a lovely man. Scott and I are so looking forward to the 21 June in Federal Parliament and meeting up with over 150 like-minded people. What an emotional day it will be for all concerned.

## **SUE BUSSELL**

The newsletter was passed onto me by Tony Ganly after we met up at the Bells Hotel following the Anzac Day March in Melbourne. My dad (Gordon John Bussell VX46451) was an officer at the time of the Japanese invasion of Rabaul.

Amongst many stories he used to tell me as a child was that he actually boarded the *Montevideo Maru* with his troops but was recognised as an officer by the Japanese and sent back ashore.

I am planning to attend the Canberra Parliamentary session on 21 June. Keep up the excellent work on the newsletter.

## **CHERYL RAJAMAE**

I appreciate you sending me the newsletter and I hope all goes well on 21 June in the Parliament. I just wish I could be there to honour those who went down on the *Montevideo Maru* especially my uncle Francis Meddings and his best mate Wilfred Trigg who were both bandsmen from the Geelong Central Salvation Army.

A few months ago there was a segment on TV about Arthur Gullidge. He wrote a lot of music for the bands in the Salvos.

## **MAXWELL CLARKE**

I am the nephew of Neil Stanford Smith VX 37494 (my mother's brother). He was a member of the 2/22 Military Band. The bandmaster of the 2/22 band, Arthur Gullidge, wrote copious amounts of music, and although it may not be within your powers I do hope that as much music as possible from his pen will be used on the day.

## PETER MURRAY

I was born at Keravat in 1939. My father was the late Hon George Hugh Murray MLC FRES FRS, Director of Agriculture in the Mandated territory from 1928-42, and formerly in Papua from 1910-28.

My grandfather, with his wife, was the first of the Murrays to come to Papua in 1872. He went to Daru as a member of the London Missionary Society. Needless to say they all lived a special PNG lifestyle until the advent of World War II.

My mother and I were evacuated from Rabaul on the *Macdui* in 1942. My father was captured by the Japanese and brought to Rabaul for internment. General rumour has it that he was beheaded behind Matupit by the Japanese General Hiroshi Imura. However his name is included in the list of civilians registered as being on the *Montevideo Maru*.

## CLIFF ROBERTS

My uncle, Samuel Livingstone Roberts NX69464 was on board the *Montevideo Maru*. I have read up to MvM Newsletter 6 [October 2009] and would be pleased if you could send any further updates. Keep up the great work and let these men and women be recognised for their achievements and sacrifices.

## HELEN BOUTELL

I write about Charles James Campbell. His last letters home showed a number fo wonderful attributes:

**Humour:** “We are having good practice for the 100 yard foot race,” commenting on the frequent dashes to the air raid shelters when the bombs fell [8 January 1942]

**Concern for his parents:** “... enclosed find a bank draft for £25 which I know you could do with down there”

**His unsettled future:** “Enclosed find my power of attorney... I am still in Rabaul and expect word from Bulolo next mail. I hope to get the job there as the timber here is at a standstill.” [14 April 1942]

## FRANK RYAN

A 1948 tribute: “I am particularly indebted to Frank Ryan, an outstanding Queensland teacher whom I knew in 1939 as Headmaster of the European school, Rabaul, and who lost his life in the Japanese invasion of New Guinea” [Preface to *Essential Mapping* by SJ Campbell]

## WARREN TURNER JP

Whilst not being directly involved in the tragic circumstances of the *Montevideo Maru*, only through my good friend Andrea Williams, I nevertheless have taken more than a passing interest in the whole story and have begun to obtain a number of books on the subject.

The contact made by Stan Cooper probably won't be the last time someone says to you, “you should have added this or that, or you should have done it this way” as more and more people become aware of the excellent work that you and the Committee are doing.

More facts will come to light that were not apparent at the time when suggestions are being made to governments to acknowledge the tragedy and the sacrifices made by those left in Rabaul, but I don't believe that you should hang off and wait for potential future comments.

I think that the timeframe that you have set and the research that you have put into the proposed motion is suitable to set the wheels in motion now, with the possibility of adjusting it in the future should it need it. Keep up the good work, good luck in Canberra and I continue to look forward to receiving my copy of the monthly *MvM Newsletter*, reading it and filing it away.

## JOHN SCHINDLER

In making our documentary, *The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru*, we interviewed a veteran in the UK by the name of Denis Morley, but we did not use this interview in the film, although we may use excerpts for a British version.

Denis was one of the few survivors of the sinking of a hellship near China. In this awful event, the Japanese had tried to murder all the prisoners by locking them in the hold and mounting a machine gun

crew as a precaution against anyone managing to escape. Out of around 1,000 POW's just a few did manage to get out of the hold and silence the machinegun crew.

Dennis was one of these men and he eventually worked, as a POW, on the docks in Osaka as a crane driver and said he and his fellow POW's knew everything that went on around the docks. When I asked him if he ever heard of any *Montevideo Maru* survivors working there, he said "No"

## **ANDREA WILLIAMS**

David Harper has told me that both he and his wife June will attend the Canberra event. David is 90 and was with 1st Independent Company in Kavieng. He went to Rabaul on the *Induna Star* and managed to get on a ship to Buka and the Solomons, where he got malaria and was evacuated. David asked if any other 1st Independent's are attending and Stan Cooper is the only one I think. Lorna Whyte (who was a POW in Japan for over three years is hoping to come but unsure, as she has to travel from New Zealand to Australia in May for the filming of the ABC documentary, *Sisters at War*.

## **CHRIS HIETBRINK**

My cousins Lucy and Rob Adams put me on to the information they receive from you about the *Montevideo Maru* and I would like to be added to the list of subscribers. Rob and I share great grandparent (his maternal grandmother and my maternal grandfather were brother and sister). I grew up always knowing the story of Mum's favourite cousin Bob Page and the fateful trip he made in the *Krait* while trying to find Uncle Hal - his Dad. I knew about the *Krait* long before I went to school - my family all revered Bob and the bravery he and his fellow soldiers showed. I so admired my Great Aunt Ann Page who never failed to attend the Hyde Park War Memorial Dawn Service all of her life.

Our family is steeped in military history and in my case this is on both my Mum and my Dad's sides. I served in the Army Reserve and my son is an officer with 3RAR (he loves that his mother understands his life - particularly the highs, the lows and the tactics of warfare). My husband was a national serviceman and served for 3-1/2 years in New Guinea leading up to Independence. I think he was posted only a couple of weeks before that day and he remained in the Army for over 12 years transferring to the Reserve where he remained in service for another almost-12 years.

I also have a Navy connection, with both my parents in the Navy during WWII. Dad a signalman on HMAS Strahan (he is now the President of the NSW Corvettes Assn - a very active group for recognition of their own and I have sent on this info to him); he was one of the movers and shakers behind the lighting of the *Sydney* mast at Bradleys Head. My beloved Mum was a teleprinter operator at Garden Island. They were only babies - born in 1926 and demobbed before they were 21! Anyway thanks for your ongoing work.

## **BILL SYKES MP**

There has been a very enthusiastic response to commemorating the 70th anniversary of the march of Lark Force and Gull Force from Trawool to Bonegilla in September 1940. Accordingly I have commenced arranging a commemorative ceremony in Benalla's Botanical Gardens on Sunday, 26 September 2010 from 2-4pm.

Details of the day are yet to be finalised, however the program will include: attendance by veterans including Norm Furness [President Lark Force Association], Des O'Brien [President Gull Force Association] and hopefully Fred Kollmorgen [Salvation Army Lark Force; The Salvation Army Band; address and display of memorabilia by Lindsay Cox, Salvation Army Historian; brief informal speeches by people with memories of the march

I have been touched by the fond and poignant memories of many people who extended hospitality to the soldiers en route and the descendants of members of the Lark and Gull Forces who lost their lives or endured so much in defence of our country.

The Botanic Gardens in Benalla are a beautiful setting for the gathering with magnificent roses and impressive monuments to those who served including Weary Dunlop and Captain Hec Waller. There is also a wonderful Art Gallery nearby. I invite you, family and friends to put this date in your diary. Contact me on 03 5762 2100 or email [bill.sykes@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:bill.sykes@parliament.vic.gov.au).

*Bill Sykes is the State Member for Benalla and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture & Water*