



Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society

# Memorial News 22

## January 2011

*Warmed by the embrace of the dear lost of the Montevideo Maru - Kim Beazley*

### Another major milestone: AWM identifies site for our memorial

BY DON HOOK

ON THURSDAY 16 December, accompanied by Australian War Memorial staff members Nola Anderson and Stewart Mitchell, I inspected the site proposed for our memorial by AWM Director Steve Gower.



The site is located in an area known simply as the Eastern Precinct. It is in an elevated position close to a path leading from the upper car park and terminating near the 'Weary' Dunlop statue at the Eastern Plaza.



The site has the Charles Bean Building to the rear with the dome of the AWM dominating the view to the north-west. Black Mountain Tower is in the distance. Looking forward over the new restaurant is Canberra City with the AWM's flags in the foreground.

The area is well located, well developed and is well integrated with the AWM.



It is handy to the underground carpark, the coach carpark, the restaurant, the popular Dunlop statue and the entrance to the memorial itself.

Overall, an attractive and a well-located prospective site.

Our collaborative activities with the Australian War Memorial now move forward to commissioning a design for the memorial sculpture.

---

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society was established to ensure national recognition and commemoration of the tragedies that ensued after the Japanese invasion of the New Guinea Islands in early 1942, including Australia's greatest maritime disaster, the sinking of the Montevideo Maru with the loss of more than 1,000 lives. The Society is registered in the Australian Capital Territory (No A04977). ABN 960 583 442 11

## Publication of war roll creates further confusion

BY KEITH JACKSON

**IN A MOVE made without fanfare, not even an announcement, the Australian Army History Unit has published a direct translation of the Japanese roll that lists the names of soldiers and civilians captured in Rabaul and who died on the prison ship, the *Montevideo Maru*.**

We've got to thank reader Martin Hadlow for spotting the emergence of the list on the internet in late December.

Perhaps the Army should have consulted the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society before publishing the roll, which is a significant historical document.

In an introduction on the website - which it says is "a memorial to the Australians lost" - the Army says the roll, originally compiled by Japanese occupation forces in Rabaul and translated after the war, contains the names of 845 Australian soldiers and 113 civilians (including 16 missionaries) together with a further ten names added by Australian Army staff in Tokyo after the war.

By my calculation, that's 952 names: 855 servicemen, 113 civilians. But the published roll contains 984 names: 818 servicemen, 166 civilians. The Army's going to have to clear that up for starters.

The number of prisoners who died on the ship has been estimated at 1,053 for many years, but the new list - if the numbers can be sorted out - should become the definitive record.

It is remarkable that the confusion surrounding who exactly was on the ship should be perpetuated nearly 70 years later by an act designed to throw more light on the matter.

The Army History Unit says the roll, retrieved from Army archives last year and subjected to a process of rigorous authentication, is "the first translation of a Japanese roll that was sent to Australia by Major H S Williams of the Recovered Personnel Division on 3 October 1945.

"Major Williams had been sent to Japan after the surrender as part of the Australian effort

to find out exactly what had happened to Australians captured by the Japanese.

"The Japanese Navy provided a roll of POWs in Rabaul which had been made in Japanese by transliterating the sound of European names into Japanese characters.

"This process was carried out in reverse by Major Williams' team. This gave the Service number of military personnel and a reasonable spelling of the name."

"Once in Australia, this roll was compared to lists of people known to have been in Rabaul at the time of the Japanese invasion to confirm details of number and spelling of names."

But the Army now needs to clear up the latest confusion about the numbers of men on the ship, and exactly who they were.

You can check out the roll for yourself at:  
[http://www.army.gov.au/ahu/Montevideo\\_Maru\\_Roll.asp](http://www.army.gov.au/ahu/Montevideo_Maru_Roll.asp)

## A critical year if the memorial is to be realised in 2012

**AS ALL MEMBERS WILL KNOW, next year is the seventieth anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands and the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*.**

It is also the year when we'd like to see the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial established at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

At the time of writing, about \$165,000 of the required \$450,000 had been raised for this important national project.

Unfortunately our hope that a member with requisite skills might offer to become the Society's Vice-President (Funding) has so far come to nought.

A big ask we know, but the Society's goals from the very beginning have been as big ask.

We will be delighted to hear from members, preferably with fundraising experience, who are interested in volunteering for this vital and rewarding position, which will have the active support of all committee members.

You should email Keith Jackson at [kjackson@jacksonwells.com.au](mailto:kjackson@jacksonwells.com.au)

## Memoir of a doctor-soldier who did no harm



*DR NX22*, the memoirs of Dr Tom Selby, is based on two books that Tom wrote about his life for friends and family in the 1980s - *A Doctor Leaves Port* and *How to Treat Your Doctor*.

In 2008 Benn A Selby (Tom's youngest brother, then aged 93) began the task of arranging for these manuscripts to be edited and combined into one book. The editing was done by author and military historian, Lex McAulay, who also included a number of informative editor's notes.

For two years Benn and Lex worked on this project to bring Tom's singular life story into a form in which it could be made more widely available.

Tom Selby (1908-96) was a multi-faceted Australian personality, who lived life to the full as an Australian doctor and soldier. He lived through the World War I, the Great Depression, pre-war New Guinea and experienced front line combat in the World War II as a member of the Sixth Division in the 2nd AIF.

His career in medicine began as a ship's doctor. He served on the *SS Changte*, *SS Montoro*, *MV Parrakoola* and *RMS Orcades* and, from his memoirs, it seems to have been a cavalcade of wild parties and comedic episodes.

The sea voyage to New Guinea in the 1930s introduced him to the world of gold miners, patrol officers and the exploration of that exotic and beautiful country at a time when few white tourists had visited.

He was a passenger in some of the small aircraft that opened up a mountainous and dangerous country.

His book is peppered with his views on the practice of medicine and his guiding principle of "Do No Harm". Occasionally he is critical of modern trends and fads which he saw as being regressive and bad for patients.

*Dr NX22: the Memoirs of Lt Col (Ret) Dr Tom Selby. A project initiated and coordinated by Benn A Selby. Published by the Selby Family. Edited by Lex McAulay OAM - \$30 plus \$6 postage in Australia. Email [roger@selbyonline.com](mailto:roger@selbyonline.com)*

## A macabre end awaited the Butcher of Tol

**IT WAS LATE 1946** and Colonel Masao Kusunose, 58, was about to be tried by the Allies. The reason: at Tol Plantation on New Britain on 4 February 1942, he had authorised the bayoneting to death of 160 Australian prisoners.

The prisoners were military and civilian escapees from the Japanese invasion of Rabaul. Tired, hungry and demoralised after nearly two weeks in the jungle, they had decided to surrender. A couple of men miraculously survived the slaughter, and escaped to tell the story.

The Colonel, according to his peculiar code, was a man of honour. For him there was only one possible course: suicide. He could not commit hara-kiri because his samurai sword had been confiscated by the Allies. Death by drowning or jumping in front of a train would be improper. So he decided to end his life by starvation and exposure in the sub-zero weather.

While Allied authorities hunted him, Kusunose went to the foot of Fujiyama, to a deserted army barracks where he had soldiered as a youth. He sat down facing the great mountain, which rose so steeply above him he had to bend his head back to see the splendour of the

sunlit, snowcapped summit. Kusunose sat down on December 9. On December 17 or 18, Death, which had been creeping nearer for nine days, sat down beside him.

As he sat dying, Kusunose covered 15 pages of his small black Japanese army notebooks with entries. He had been a soldier; he was dying as a soldier. The last entries concerned food and hunger. On the last two days, he mentioned pains in his stomach and legs. His last entry was scrawled in red crayon: "Heaven will preserve Japan and the Emperor."

When an Allied search party reached the barracks at the foot of Fujiyama, they found an old straw sandal, a chopstick and a rusty can. (Japanese lacking Kusunose's peculiar sense of honour had long since looted everything else.)

The searchers also found Kusunose's body. But it no longer faced the sacred mountain. Before he died, Kusunose had found the strength to turn away. The diary explained why: "It would be disrespectful if I died in the presence of revered Fuji." Kusunose's left eye had been eaten away by rats.

*Source: Time Magazine, 3 February 1947*

## List of Allied prisoners found in Japanese temple

**A NOMINAL ROLL of 48,000 Allied servicemen who died in camps and elsewhere after being captured by the Japanese forces in World War II has been found in Kyoto, Japan.**

The roll recording the deaths of foreign POWs was prepared by the former War Ministry and was never made public except for names provided to bereaved families who requested them. Members of the POW Research Group, composed of scholars and others gathering source materials on POWs, found the records preserved in a war dead memorial in a corner of the Ryozen Kan-non temple's premises in the East Ward of Kyoto City.

"(The records) are important materials to shed light on the last of the POWs on whom there are many issues yet to be understood," Japanese researchers said.

The nominal roll is in six volumes of files bound by a black leather cover. Some 7,630 Australian servicemen are included. The records are in English in respect of name, unit, date of death, cause of death, place of death and burial condition (interment or cremation).

The nominal roll is well-preserved. The section on the deaths of servicemen includes "shot to death", "malaria" and "dysentery". Servicemen who died when transport ships were sunk are described as "went missing during voyage".

In the section for place of death, there are rows of place names within and outside Japan where camps existed. In addition to mining sites within Japan where POWs were used as forced labour, names such as Kanchanaburi and Chonkai in Thailand are noted for servicemen who were forcibly deployed for excessively hard labour on the Burma-Thai railway.

"According to the Ryozenkan-non, how the nominal roll was obtained is not clear, with no record left at the temple," the *Asahi Shimbun* reported. "It is presumed that in 1958, when a memorial of the unknown soldiers was erected within the temple, in memory of the military servicemen of various countries who lost their lives in the Pacific War, the roll was dedicated to the temple."

"I heard a story that at that time a woman office worker made the record by typing from the original register," said one temple worker.

The original register remains in the Ministry's storage but the state of preservation is bad, and deterioration is advancing. For the reason of protection of private information, the record is treated as "out of access to the public" except for a small party such as bereaved families.

*Source: Asahi Shimbun. Translation by Harumi Sakaguchi*

## FEEDBACK

### KEN HAYES

Somerton Park, SA

Firstly, thank you for the many interesting newsletters that I receive on a monthly basis. I trust that Xmas went well for you, and that 2011 will be a good year. One of the gifts I received was the book *Willingly into the Fray*, the stories of one hundred years of Australian army nursing. I am up to the chapter on WW11 where there is a section on "The Nursing Sisters of Rabaul".

Two of the photos in the book are labelled 'Rabaul, New Britain, 1942' and show Daisy Keast and Jean Anderson. Others are taken after the nursing sisters came home from Japan in 1945. I presume that the first two were taken prior to the 23 January, 1942. Any information readers have would be appreciated.

### PETER JACKSON

Christchurch NZ

Sandy McNab is a real gem, a tremendous blend of feistiness and good humour.

### W APPLEBY

Zillmere QLD

My wife Dulcie has passed away and I am too old and too far away to appreciate the literature you are so generously sending. Will you please remove us from membership and stop sending articles to us. I appreciate the Society and what it stands for, and I wish you well.

### DOREEN WILSON

Emerald Beach NSW

I am making enquiries about my brother Ronald Elphinstone Marks 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion VX56053, POW 12187. I presumed he was on the *Montevideo Maru* but have received confusing information. I realise you must receive a lot of letters like this but naturally I would love to know definitely.

*I've advised Doreen that it's highly unlikely Ronald was on the Montevideo Maru, even though he was a member of the 2/22<sup>nd</sup>. His name appears on none of the lists. Information from readers would be appreciated - Keith*

### DELORES HOLDER

Winmalee NSW

My name is Delores Holder nee Hobbs. My father was Corporal Harry Hobbs SX2773, who was born on 13 December 1917 in Broken Hill. He enlisted on 14 May 1940 in Adelaide and was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Independent Company. His wife was my mother, lby Hobbs.

My father was taken as a POW from Rabaul to the Japanese ship Montevideo Maru and I am interested in any information you may have. I was born in 1938 but have no memory of my dad. I am now a 72-year old pensioner. It seems unbelievable that he was only 25 years old when he died.

### CAROLE WORTHY

Ormiston QLD

I found a reference in one of the PNG email newsletters to a book by Sue Lawson called "Finding Darcy", about the events in Rabaul and the Montevideo Maru disaster. I was intrigued, so I ordered a copy online from Black Dog Books, the publisher, and found it an

exceptionally good read. It is aimed at teenage readers, with the wartime story unfolding as the protagonist, Darcy Abbott, has to prepare a report for her SOSE (Studies of Society and the Environment) teacher, on her family's stories and memories of WWII. Young Darcy has a problem because the War is a forbidden topic in her mother's family, amongst whom she lives in rural Victoria. In addition, peer problems distract her from the task. The challenge forces the family to confront shadows from the past and takes Darcy on a healing journey of uncovering the truth. As an educational tool, particularly if it could get into the schools, this book is ideal. It is well researched and thoughtfully and imaginatively crafted and hooks the reader from the first page until the very end. Well done Sue, well done!

It would be good to get behind such an excellent resource such as this, especially as the National Curriculum is in the drafting process. Are there any members out there who might have ideas or connections in this area?

### **JEANNE BANBURY**

Chancellor Park QLD

Please find enclosed bank cheque for \$150 being \$50 for membership and \$100 towards the memorial in Canberra in memory of my cousin 'Slog' Steward Graham Raff.

### **CLAIRE DÉGLON MARRIOTT**

Bangalow NSW

I enclose a cheque for \$100 to cover Gold Membership of the Society. My interest stems from the memory of my step-mother, Alice M Bowman of the Administration Hospital, Rabaul - POW internee with the Rabaul nurses during World War II and author of *Not Now Tomorrow*.

### **REV GEORGE GARNSEY**

Morpeth NSW

Thank you for your excellent newsletters and congratulations on all that you do.



A rare photograph taken on board the *Montevideo Maru*. This Japanese family is emigrating to South America on the ship in the 1930s.

The *Montevideo Maru* was used primarily for migration before World War 2, when it was commandeered as a POW vessel.

Could there be a greater contrast of purpose?

(cc) [www.br101.org](http://www.br101.org)

## MEMORIAL NOTICEBOARD

### INVASION OF RABAU - 23 JANUARY 1942

Andrea Williams writes: I think people should write to their State and local RSL newsletters about the loss of brothers/fathers as a way of remembering the invasion. You could mention our fund-raising efforts for a memorial at the AWM to create awareness about what we wish to achieve.

You could also approach your local newspaper and radio and television stations to tell them about this major wartime event, its impact on your family and what the Society is doing to commemorate its consequences. If you need advice on what to say and do, contact Bob Lawrence on 02 9904 4333.

---

### LOCAL FUNDRAISING IDEA 1 - ORGANISE A COMMUNITY FILM SHOW

Local groups could think of using the ABC-TV documentary *Sisters of War* as a platform for a fundraising event. This will provide local people and communities with an opportunity to take on some responsibility for fundraising. Want more information? Contact Andrea Williams at [andrea.williams@bigpond.com](mailto:andrea.williams@bigpond.com) or 0409 031 889 or 02 9449 4129

---

### LOCAL FUNDRAISING IDEA 2 -ASK YOUR RSL TO JOIN THE SOCIETY

If an RSL donates \$500 or more to the memorial fund, we can enroll it as a Life Member of the Society; which, in addition to making a fine contribution to our work, will entitle the RSL to receive DVDs, newsletters and other information, which may interest their members. Thanks to Elizabeth Fletcher for signing up the Dee Why RSL Sub-Branch as a Gold Member.

---

### A NATIONAL TIME OF REMEMBRANCE - 69<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

Two major events will be held in Canberra in July to mark the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*. On Saturday 2 July there will be a reunion lunch at the National Press Club and on Sunday 3 July an ecumenical memorial service is planned. You should register interest in attending with Andrea Williams at [andrea.williams@bigpond.com](mailto:andrea.williams@bigpond.com) or 0409 031 889 or 02 9449 4129.

---

### REGRET & RESOLUTION - HISTORIC DVD AVAILABLE

Phil Donnison's DVD of the historic parliamentary proceedings to mark the invasion of the New Guinea Islands and the loss of the *Montevideo Maru* is available from Society Treasurer, Teddy Haryjanto, for \$20 (\$40 for non-members) including post and packing.

The DVD is in two parts: a short version, *A Flame Never Extinguished*, providing highlights of the events in Parliament on 21 June; and *Regret & Resolution*, full coverage of all the events that memorable day. See payment options on previous page

---

### REGISTER YOUR MEMORABILIA

Register your New Guinea Islands, Rabaul and *Montevideo Maru* memorabilia with Lindsay Cox at The Salvation Army Heritage Centre in Melbourne. Contact [lindsay.cox@salvationarmy.org](mailto:lindsay.cox@salvationarmy.org) or write to PO Box 18137, Collins Street East, Melbourne VIC 8000.

## HOW TO REMIT FUNDS TO THE SOCIETY

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY

Life membership - \$500    Gold membership - \$100    Ordinary membership - \$50

### BY INTERNET

Transfer the appropriate funds to the Society's bank account BSB 082-401 Account No 16-083-2367. Notify us of the deposit in an email to tharyjanto@jacksonwells.com.au

### BY MAIL

Cheques to Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Society at PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089. All funds devoted to constructing a memorial at the Australian War Memorial

### BY CREDIT CARD

CREDIT CARD AUTHORISATION FORM	
Card type:	 
Credit card number:	_____
Expiry date: _____ / _____	CVV: _____ Last 3 digits printed on the back of credit card
Amount to be charged: \$ _____	
Complete mailing address:	_____ _____
City: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____	
Name on card: _____	
Authorised signature: _____	
Description of what is being paid for:	

