



M.S. "MONTEVIDEO MARU", 7,200 TONS GROSS 噸百金千七載噸 夫おでびてんも

Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society

# Memorial News 23

## February 2011

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

### Sandy McNab tells the story of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ind Coy on Bougainville

THIS MONTH we feature another fine effort from the fountain pen and lively mind of Sandy McNab.

In a great tribute to his mates - and a great gift to the rest of us - Sandy has recorded for posterity some important strands of the history of No 1 Independent Company.

History always needs a balanced ledger and this can be hard if not impossible to achieve unless people like Sandy - participants in history - are willing to take the trouble to put things down as they saw them.

Sandy was worried that his story was boring. I can reassure him that, far from boring, the story he tells is riveting and all the more fascinating because of its authenticity.

I'm sure readers will agree.

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### LETTER TO MEMBERS

#### CANBERRA MEMORIAL EVENTS - JULY 2011

Within the next week or so, we will be communicating in detail directly with members about events planned for Canberra on the weekend of 2-3 July this year.

When you receive this letter, could you respond to it quickly so that our planning for the commemorative weekend can begin in earnest.

Highlights will be a reunion lunch and an historic memorial service.

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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

### Montevideo Maru: Rod Miller to reveal how much the govt knew

HISTORIAN AND *Montevideo Maru* expert Rod Miller will reveal new research findings in a talk at the Australian Maritime Museum in Sydney later this month.

In an examination of evidence related to Australia's worst maritime disaster, Mr Miller, who has been researching the subject for 16 years, will address the burning question of how much the Australian government knew about the tragedy before the war ended.

He will also give his reasons about why it took until last year for the men's sacrifice and the distress of relatives to be publicly acknowledged by the Australian government.

If you wish to attend this important public lecture you should book now.

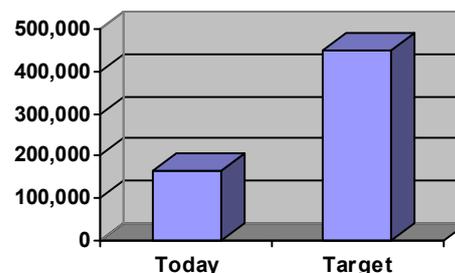
#### Details

Sunday 20 February, 1 - 3pm  
National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour  
Admission \$25 includes wine and cheese  
Bookings: Phone 02 9298 3644 or email [members@anmm.gov.au](mailto:members@anmm.gov.au)

*See Rod Miller's article on page 5*

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### SOCIETY FUNDRAISING



# The true story of the 1<sup>st</sup> Independent Company on Bougainville

BY SANDY McNAB

*Here I am again, the old dog with a bone! I have come to the conclusion that I must write my version of what happened to the 1st Independent Company in Bougainville. I condensed it as much as I could, got the salient facts on paper and gave myself writers cramp!*

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**IN EARLY 1941 a kilted soldier named Freddy Spencer Chapman visited the battalions in Bathurst NSW calling for volunteers to join a hush-hush unit. He had plenty of applications from frustrated 8th Division men.**

The first batch of us arrived at Wilson's Promontory in May 1941 and, after six weeks intensive training, were ready to travel to Guroke to join in the commando raid going on there. Instead we found ourselves on the *Zealandia* heading for the tropics.

The original plan was to be based in Rabaul. It would have been ideal for our unit, as there was plenty of jungle and mountains for operations. But the Army heads acted as they always do and, when halfway to Rabaul, we got a message to proceed to Kavieng on New Ireland.

When we got there confusion reigned; no-one knew we were coming. Eventually we found accommodation and life got back to normal. Then the powers that be delivered the final kick in the guts to us, and split the unit far and yonder. We were stretched from Manus to Kavieng, Namatanai, Buka Passage, Tulagi, and Vila in the New Hebrides: 273 men spread over thousands of miles!

No 3 Section of No 1 Independent Company finished up on Buka Island, where life was idyllic before Japan came into the war. They attacked us on 23 January 1942 with six planes. We managed to shoot one down and, after the rest went away, we demolished the airstrip and evacuated the unit to Bougainville, which was only separated from Buka by a passage 800 yards wide. Buka Island was too small and had no fresh water for the section to survive. Buka was only 40 miles long and Bougainville about 140 miles.

Lt Jack Mackie, our officer, had made plans for the move and had established supplies at Rugen in the hills of Bougainville. From the coast it took us a day to stagger up to Rugen.

A journey that would take us a couple of hours once we got fit after living in the mountains for some time.

The Japs initially only visited the area and, after looting some plantations, they left. Jack Mackie set about covering the island with observation posts. He set three men at Kessa on the north coast of Buka, men at Buka Passage, four at Numa Numa, four at Kieta and four at Buin on the south coast. He had a roving headquarters: himself, a medical sergeant and me. We travelled a lot on the schooner *Malaguna*.

With things not looking too bright, the Sergeant diagnosed himself with appendicitis and the Army sent a Catalina flying boat from Tulagi to evacuate him and he was never replaced. As we were low on supplies, Mackie appealed to our platoon at Vila and they sent the schooner *Ruana* with two of our mates, Shorty Bateman and Les Goodger, to take care of that.

When our headquarters at Kavieng was attacked, they told us they were going off the air and we should take orders from the 2/22nd Battalion in Rabaul, but when we tried to contact them they were off the air too.

There settled an uneasy peace over the island. But at the end of March 1943 the Japs got fair dinkum and soon all our outposts were chased off the coast. Meanwhile we had moved our HQ from Rugen further up in the hills to Mutahi, a Seven Day Adventist village. What a man the village head Okera was. He couldn't do enough for us. He built a camp for us in the bush where we would be safe. Jack Mackie then set about the task of getting the Section, scattered all over the place, to combine at Mutahi.

At the time [Coastwatcher] Paul Mason asked Mackie could he spare a couple of men to go with him to establish an observation post at Buin. So Jack sent our Corporal Signaller Jack

Wigley and Sapper Slim Otton with Mason. Eventually Mackie got the section altogether at Mutahi and he was a much happier man to have them in one place again.

There was not much food, no medicine and no medical staff. We mere mortals wondered what we were doing there. Jack Mackie always kept us busy, doing all the tracks in the mountains until we knew the highways and byways like the back of our hand.

On 7 August 1942, it became clear. The Yanks landed on Gaudalcanal and the air was full of Jap planes hurrying down the coast while out to sea many Jap ships of all sizes and shapes headed down "The Slot" carrying supplies and troops to join the fray.

Now No 3 Section's purpose was revealed. We had established observation posts where we could watch the sea lanes and, as the bombers from Rabaul could not take fighters with them because the return trip was too far, they had to pick up fighter escorts from Buka airfield which took them over us. If [Coastwatcher] Jack Read did not pick them up, we would, and get the message to Read because he had the radio.

We used to give them two hours notice of the planes arriving and the US Air Force had plenty of time to prepare a welcome and be up in the air waiting for them. They shot them down like flies. As for the ships, we would give about two days notice of their arrival and they too got a hot reception.

So there we were, earning our keep at last and getting a plane once a month to feed us. We had the satisfaction of seeing a few straggling Jap planes limping back to Buka and the same for the very few ships that made it back. The battle raged furiously until the Japs were beaten and Gaudalcanal was safe and secure.

Meanwhile, as this was going on, Paul Mason with Jack Wigley and Slim Otton down south were doing excellent work and reporting any planes or ships the north missed.

One fly in the ointment was that Eric Feldt, in an act of lunacy, put Jack Reid in charge of the whole island, including our Section - an untrained government official put over Lt Jack Mackie OIC of No 3 Section. Reid came down from his camp far back in the mountains to exert his power and tell us

what he had planned for us. He was soon sent back to the mountains, being told we had no intention of taking any notice. Jack Mackie was our officer and that was that.

After Gaudalcanal was secured, Mackie looked at the situation. Half his section was very ill and the natives were being put under enormous pressure by the Japs. So, on 22 February 1943, Mackie sent out this message:

Army Moresby from Mackie: If enemy contacts or occupiers Teop, my position on Bougainville will be hopeless and value nil. Native problem acute. My movements now confined to area from Inus to Raua. If forced to take to interior, reception of stores will be impossible. Have good knowledge of most areas on island and suggest immediate evacuation to preserve same. Accept no responsibility as to fate of Section if nothing done. Acknowledge immediately.

We had to get Read to send this message, which he did. But added his own message, stating the situation was not as dire as Mackie reported and that, under the circumstances, No 3 Section was of no practical use on Bougainville except under more experienced leadership. It would be wrong to construe that as derogatory to Lt Mackie, who I hold in high esteem.

Read pointed out the AIF had by then spent 18 months continuous service in the jungle and were susceptible to imaginary grievances that inevitably sprang up against their superiors (whom they felt had abandoned them) and against each other. Read believed many of these problems could have been alleviated by activities like short patrols, but this was against army defensive training.

I say this was a lot of garbage. Read did not know about us. He had no contact with us, staying in his camp high in the hills - with us always between him and the enemy.

Read arranged with Feldt to have a relief section sent because he had an idea of covering the whole of Bougainville with observation posts and was confident with a fresh AIF squad he would achieve this aim.

So the die was cast. Our second-in-charge, Corporal Don McLean, told me he and Mackie

received a message stating, "Your job is done, come home!" As Gaudalcanal was now secure, other messages were relayed to us:

From Admiral Turner, US Navy: Large share credit of our success against enemy due to splendid men in coast watching service.

From General Patch, US Army: Your magnificent and courageous work has contributed to success of operations on north Gaudalcanal.

Our two Coastwatchers, Mason and Read, would not have survived a month without No 3 Section's protection and No 3 Section wouldn't have lasted a week without the loyalty, courage and care of the local people of Bougainville.

On 29 March 1943, half the Section boarded the US submarine *Gato* and half stayed to familiarise the new men with knowledge of the land and the people. With only a month to do it, it was an impossible task. On 29 April 1943, we, the last of No 3 Section, boarded the *Gato* on our way to our beloved Australia. As soon as we left, the grapevine knew and the Japs and a lot of the natives moved into the hills and started harassing the new boys.

After six weeks, Read had to radio that the situation was so bad Coastwatching was impossible and they should be evacuated immediately.

So what was accomplished? Half the relief section had been captured and either executed or taken prisoner.

Before we left we had to arrange a supply drop to let the new men know how to manage the operation. But, just as Mackie had forecast, because we couldn't arrange a drop on the coast, we had to arrange it in the hills. The plane crashed and eventually only two of the crew got off the island. So that was a Catalina flying boat lost.

In the meantime Mason had led a party to the south. He had the idea he would return to Buin, but the southern part of the island was swarming with Japanese and they soon found Mason's party and killed Lt Stevenson, another Coastwatcher. Mason and the party had to flee northward, being harassed all the way. They eventually linked up with the rest

of the group just in time to board the submarine and evacuate.

This sad ending would have been avoided if they had taken heed of Jack Mackie's appraisal of the situation. And I am sure not one Coastwatching report got out in the six weeks.

I am convinced that Jack Read had the ambition to be on the beach when the Americans landed. This is the man who early in the piece remarked, "If there is only one man left alive on this island it will be Jack Read."

A few interesting facts. Comparison of the strength of No 3 Section and the Relief Section:

No 3 Section: one Officer; two Section Corporals; one 1 Corporal Cook; one Signal Corporal; one Engineer Corporal; two Signallers; one Engineer; two Lance Corporals; 14 Privates. We had one medical Sergeant who was evacuated early.

Relief Section: one Officer; 11 Sergeants; two Corporals; five Engineers; five Signallers; two Privates.

I don't know who selected this Section and I venture to say whoever it was had no knowledge of Army protocol on the workings of a Section. I must say many of these men finished up great mates of mine and they were all good soldiers. Lucky Radimey, Ken Thorpe, Harry Broadfoot, Bernie Bastick, Colin McKenzie and Syd Stonehouse all attended many reunions. Sadly they are all gone now.

But 11 Sergeants in the one Section, the mind boggles. And only two Privates. Everyone knows the Privates do all the work.

Here is another interesting fact. By the end of the war, the decorations won by members of No 3 Section were: four US Silver Stars; one British Empire Medal; three Military Medals; three Mentions in Despatches.

Sandy is author of the history of the 1st Independent Company: McNab, Alexander, 1998, *We were the first: the unit history of No 1 Independent Company / Alexander 'Sandy' McNab* Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, NSW

## New evidence on Australia's greatest maritime loss

BY ROD MILLER

IN 1941, WITH WAR against Japan threatening, the Menzies government dispatched Lark Force (nearly 1,500 men) to garrison Rabaul in what was then the Australian Protectorate of New Guinea.

On 1 July 1942, around 800 of these soldiers, along with 250 Australian civilian internees, died when the 7,000-ton Japanese vessel *Montevideo Maru* was torpedoed by the American submarine *Sturgeon*. The currently-accepted historical explanation of what happened to the men of Rabaul can be summarised as:

*The garrison of Rabaul was abandoned to their fate by the Australian government. Those captured were removed on the Montevideo Maru on 22/6/42, later sunk by friendly fire. Some Japanese crew saved themselves, but none of the prisoners. (Most of the surviving Japanese were later murdered by Filipino guerrillas.) The Japanese POW Information Bureau [PWIB] did not respond to enquiries about the fate of the prisoners. The Allies had intelligence which indicated the true story, but kept it secret. The scale of the disaster, and the desire of the Australian government not to rake over their original military mistakes, led to later bureaucratic corner-cutting.*

The terse news released post-war by the Australian government drove an unfortunate contagion of rumour and innuendo amongst the grieving families (often amplified by publications pushing massacre conspiracies). Many people were unable to accept their loss. The only official investigation was compiled by a lone Australian officer, Major Harold Williams, relying (officially) on only one source, the Japanese PWIB. In 1946, this drove calls for a further inquiry in the Australian Parliament, but Prime Minister Chifley staunchly refused. This fed suspicions of a cover-up.

Although today there is no doubt more than 1,000 Australians died when the *Montevideo Maru* was torpedoed, there is still scope for researchers to add to the history. Possibly, the Japanese were sending the Rabaul civilians to Hainan Island in China for exchange with Japanese citizens held in Australia. Also our National Archives reveals that individuals in the Australian government knew much more about the fate of the Rabaul men than was ever admitted in the official investigation process.

In 2009, Harumi Sakaguchi was the first historian in 68 years to view the single extant Japanese file on this tragedy. It contains a memo noting that the Japanese advised International Red Cross delegate Dr Fritz Paravicini of the sinking in August 1942:

*Confidential Memo. 18 August 1942*

*Research Department, 5th Section, Chief (Choukai);  
America Bureau, 1st Section, Deputy (Takeuchi);  
South Pacific Bureau, 1st Section Chief.  
Treaties Bureau Chief  
Treaties Bureau 3rd Section Chief*

*RE: Sinking of our Ship (While Transporting Australians) by a US Submarine*

*On 17th August, the PWIB's Captain Yamazaki conveyed by phone the following to the Treaties, 3rd Section, Officer.*

*"In early August, during a party hosted by Japan-based International Red Cross Committee Representative Dr. Paravicini, PWIB Director Murakami informally conveyed to him [Dr Paravicini] that while the Imperial Force was transporting Australian Prisoners of War to the rear, aboard a Japanese ship, a US submarine attacked and sank it. This confidential information was given with the intention of having Dr Paravicini transmit it in an open cable to the Geneva-based International Red Cross Committee so that it would:*

*“(a) Suppress attacks by US submarines; and*

*(b) Act as propaganda on the inhuman act of the US submarine on sinking a ship with POWs*

*from an Allied country aboard; but which would avoid a formal announcement of the details on this sinking.*

*“At that time the Navy Ministry also made a broadcast on the sinking by short-wave.*

*“The Japanese Red Cross Society however prevented Dr Paravicini from transmitting the cable on this matter, which is contrary to the intention of the [Japanese] PWIB and such should be told to the Japanese Red Cross Society. This is for your reference.”*

**Opinion of the Treaties, 3rd Section, on this matter:**

*To use the International Red Cross Committee Representative for the purpose of making anti-enemy propaganda out of such ambiguous information, as in this case, is an inferior tactic, which would risk having the enemy side doubt if this sinking might not have been of the making of the Japanese with their own hands; and also lead to the questioning of the overall trustworthiness of the Representative’s cables.*

*Therefore, we intend to give guidance to Dr Paravicini, through the Japan Red Cross Society, that a cable, which is both unclear and lacking in details such as on this matter, may result in the loss of credence in the Representative’s cables in future, and that such a cable should be prevented from being sent as an independent cable but transmitted as an annex (a supplementary item) when sending reports on other matters*

This document raises more questions than it answers. In 1945 the *Pacific Islands Monthly* mentioned the Japanese radio broadcast:

*The Montevideo Maru was torpedoed - presumably by an Allied submarine off the coast of Luzon (Philippines)... An announcement to that effect was made by the Japanese radio.*

*Two people have reported to us that they heard the announcement-Captain Bertie Hall, a well-known New Guinea shipmaster, who was in a prison-camp in Amoy, China, and who has just arrived in Sydney; and a brother of Mrs Peardon, of Rabaul, who heard it on short-wave when he was in the Morobe district of New Guinea.*

*This report from Tokio in 1942, and a statement recently obtained in Tokio, said that the vessel was lost with her entire company.*

Although Australia was monitoring radio broadcasts from Japan from the opening of the war, strangely no official record of this broadcast has survived. It was at this time that some of the officers of Lark Force (taken to Japan on a separate ship) broadcast messages to their families. Despite numerous requests for information from Allied governments and the Red Cross, the Montevideo Maru men were never heard of again.

At the end of the war, Major Harold Williams was rushed to Japan to investigate the fates of missing Australian POWs from the Pacific. Although his report stated the Japanese had destroyed many documents, he managed to locate the nominal roll of POWs (written in Japanese phonetic Katakana script) and a separate roll of civilian internees held in Rabaul in 1942. (Williams also extracted a few index-cards of POWs who had broadcast for the Japanese. Sensationally, nearly 20,000 similar cards survive today in the Japanese archives - potentially invaluable for understanding the dates of captivity and movements of most Australian POWs of the Japanese. The Australian government secretly declined to receive these cards in the 1950s.)

The Japanese rolls were translated by Williams (with Japanese assistance) and reportedly retained by him. Although several (inconsistent) translations of the rolls survive today in Australia, the original Katakana version cannot now be found. Williams’ final report in December 1945 closed the case on the greatest loss of Australians in a single maritime event. His report blamed the Japanese PWIB for concealing the loss. He surmises that this was due to the “bureaucratic ineptitude” of a “notoriously inefficient” Agency. He then, surprisingly, notes:

*It is however necessary to report that both the Swiss Legation and the IRC officials have unofficially, but in no uncertain terms, stated that in their opinion the information was deliberately withheld.*

Considering the Japanese evidence in the memo above, it is surprising that Williams didn't investigate this matter further. So, what did the Australian government know of the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*? There is fragmentary evidence that they knew during the war that the ship had sailed and its destination, when it sailed, how many men were aboard - and that it had been sunk.

There is also evidence that this information was "secret" (possibly sourced from Allied code-breaking). Frustratingly, the Admiralty Intelligence Report for the exact week of the *Montevideo Maru*'s departure and sinking is missing from the files. Also, many 'Rabaul' files which may have shed light on the state of Australian government knowledge have been removed or culled.

Before he arrived in Japan, Major Williams probably knew that the Rabaul men had been torpedoed. His "task" was probably to obtain a piece of Japanese paper that could be publicly revealed. (The relatives of the lost men waited in hope for nearly two months after the Japanese Surrender before the sinking was publicly announced.)

Although Williams' account of the *Montevideo Maru* sinking has been accepted by historians for many years, the files being declassified and new evidence emerging make it time to re-evaluate what actually occurred.

*Rod Miller is the author of 'Lost Women of Rabaul', the inspiration for the recent ABC-TV drama 'Sisters of War'. For those interested in the latest Montevideo Maru research, Rod will give a lecture at the National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour, on Sunday 20 February, 3-5pm.*

## **The *Montevideo Maru*'s first life: Arrival in Brazil, 1926**

BY SUSSUMO TANAKA

My family came to Brazil on the ship *Montevideo Maru*. We landed in Santos on October 20, 1926. I, my father and my brothers had to learn in practice to plant and care for a coffee farm in Mogiana in western Sao Paulo. One day, my older brother saw a newspaper article saying the family Doi, who is the family of my mother, too, was immigrating to Brazil. We find them in Parana and ended up in Cambara, working on a farm to plant 10,000 coffee trees and care for them until the harvest, which only happened after the 4th year. We work during that time without pay, and to survive we planted beans and corn. When we begin to harvest the coffee, came some money, but then discovered that the owner of the farm had no way to pay us! We ended up getting four donkey carts as part payment.

With the money saved, my father bought 10 acres of land in Santa Mariana, Parana. With carts and donkeys, also turned teamsters, leading corn, beans and grains to sell in town. Many trees were being felled in the region, and as my great grandfather was a cabinetmaker in Japan, they decided to build a sawmill where he took advantage of felled trees. We built a beautiful wooden house, which still exists today, and in front of the house opened a grocery store.

With the money from the mill, the beans and the store, we buy up a truck, a luxury then, but soon realized that was not a big deal because the roads were very bad, there were many stumps of wood, we had to stop every hour to take the wood the way, we lost a long time (laughs). We started to buy beans from local producers and have to Sao Paulo railroads and trucks.

My father had a stroke early, and to tradition in Japan, Yoshikazu my older brother took the helm of the family business. My younger brother Iwao ran the sawmill. Then we decided to start a business in Sao Paulo Grain, cereal brothers named Tanaka, and Yoshikazu moved here. He sent the value of the beans in the bag, I bought and sent in Parana to Sao Paulo. There in the stock market, he became known as the "King of Beans".

*Testimony to journalist Leonardo Nishihata to mark the centenary of the arrival of Japanese in Brazil*

## FEEDBACK

### BENN SELBY

Armadale VIC

I suspect I must be one of the first to comment on the January issue. According to my computer it arrived at 2.01 today and, although it is Saturday, a normally low message day, I did happen to look. The first thing I noted was the heading "22 January" and then I realised that was not its date but its number. I always associate the 22 January 1942 as the day Rabaul was invaded although I gather that its fall is considered to be the 23rd.

Of course the next huge surprise was to find my late "big bruvver", Tom, looking down at me together with the excellent review of the book *Dr NX 22* (that number 22 comes up so often - 2/22nd Bn, Tom's serial number and so on).

Please accept my sincere thanks for including it in the Society's newsletter especially as it appears to have scant geographical relationship to the Society's areas of interest. On the other hand, I know there is a relationship and you probably do also. I refer to the fact that Tom's and my eldest brother, David, did command the AA Bty at Rabaul and escaped to write *Hell and High Fever*, the story of that horrendous three months, and later returned to ANGAU in PNG.

I cannot imagine you being criticised for including Tom's book but, if so, I suggest this lets you off the hook! Many thanks again and renewed congratulations on what you and your committee are doing, with especial mention of Andrea Williams.

### LESLEY HOOD

Tamworth NSW

Firstly, thank you for all the amazing stories that continue to come to the surface regarding our Australian servicemen, not only in Rabaul but in Asia and Japan. The list of Allied prisoners found in the Japanese temple - with 48,000 allied servicemen died in camps and elsewhere after being captured by Japanese forces in World War II -leaves me wondering.

If you and your committee had never located these documents, would any of this history have been revealed?

Like many of our members, I agree we should strive to have this history placed in our schools and make our local RSL's and governments more aware of exactly what we are continuing to pursue. I'm looking forward to reading the memoirs of Dr Tom Selby as my mum, Grace Pearce (whose brother Colin James Morrison NX 54424 was killed on the *Montevideo Maru*), knew the Selby family and talked about them with great admiration. Congratulations to all those involved in the wonderful newsletter and the Society.

### GEORGE OAKES

Woodford NSW

Thank you so much for an excellent *PNG Attitude* and *Memorial News*. On page 5 of *Memorial News*, Doreen Wilson of Emerald Beach enquires about her brother. I decided to do some research and the results are attached. He was in the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion not the 2/22. Your reply to her in the newsletter set me going. Perhaps you may like to send these details on to her. It is good to be able to help someone. Keep up your good work.

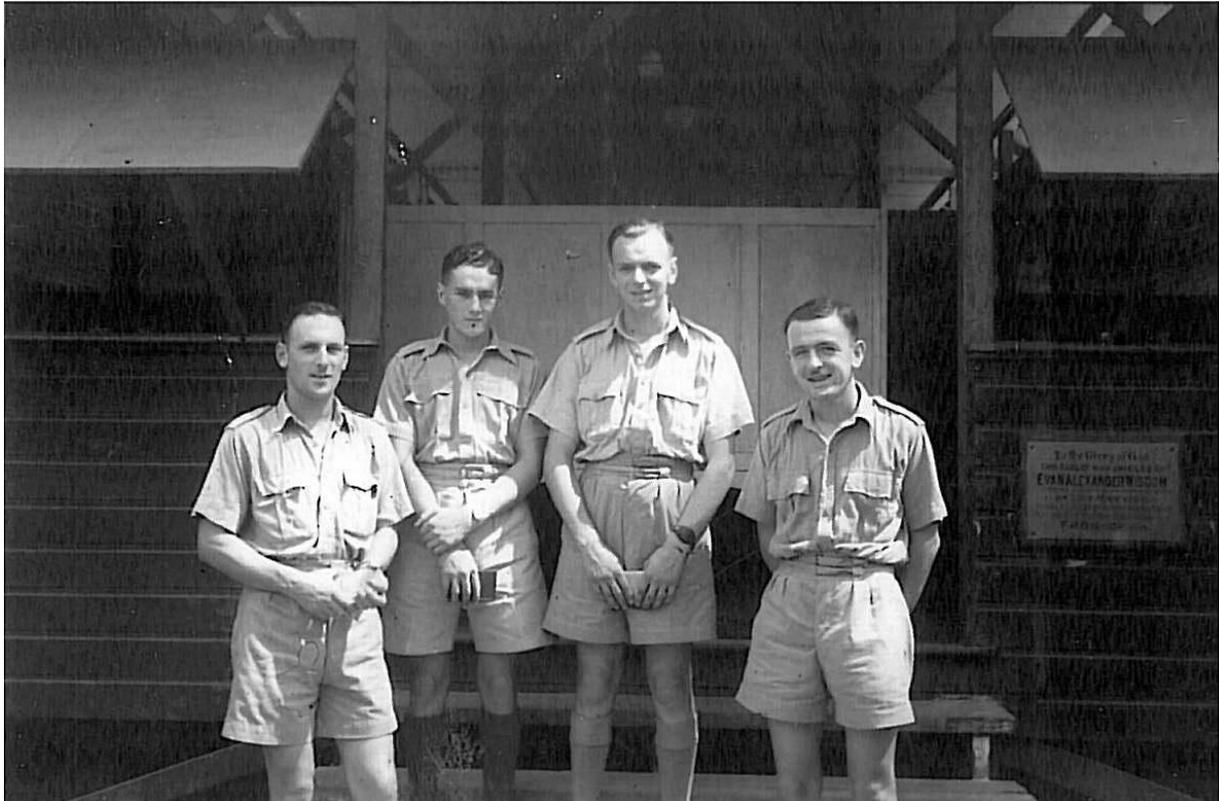
### GRACE LOVELL

Mt Pleasant WA

Congratulations again on the newest revelation concerning lists of names. My brother Frank's name appears on the list as A Vale, Sapper. His first initial was A for August Francis. I feel that the door is now closed for me.

The enclosed photo shows my brother Frank at left and, I think Ralph James, second from right. Perhaps a reader may be able to identify the two unknown boys. I think the photo was taken after a church service but I am unsure of that.

I am very amazed at the contents of the magazine - it has new facts each month. Kind regards to you and all your helpers.



**Keith Jackson comments:** I notice the boys are standing adjacent to a plaque ('To the Glory of God') unveiled by Evan Alexander Wisdom in 1926 (I can just discern some of the words). The building is almost certainly a church and the church is almost certainly in Rabaul.

I can deduce this from Wisdom's career history. Brigadier General Evan Wisdom CB, CMG, DSO (1869-1945) was a senior Australian Army officer who served in World War I and who became mayor of Cottesloe (1908-11) before serving as the Liberal member for Claremont (1911-17).

Of greater interest to us, Wisdom was Administrator of the Territory of New Guinea from 1921-33, which covers the period when the stone in the photo was laid. Wisdom applied for the post of administrator of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea in Rabaul. Unfortunately, during his appointment, his wife took ill and they travelled to Sydney where she died in November 1931. After leaving New Guinea in 1933 he resumed his business interests in Western Australia, but lived in Melbourne where he died in late 1945.

I wonder whether the boys posed deliberately to show the wording of the plaque?

### **ROD MILLER**

**Putney NSW**

I thought I would just let you know that the last member of the 2/22nd Battalion in NSW has died. His son sent me this email: "Dad passed away on 2 January after a short illness. He wanted a family-only cremation service and this was held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup>. We had his RSL sub branch do a traditional send off, the Last Post was played, the celebrant was excellent, my elder brother did the eulogy and the wake was happy and convivial."

## MEMORIAL NOTICEBOARD

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

Enrol now for a major event in Canberra 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. Contact Andrea Williams on 0409 031 889 or 02 9449 4129 or at [andrea.williams@bigpond.com](mailto:andrea.williams@bigpond.com).

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### REGISTER YOUR MEMORABILIA

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

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### SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

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

#### HOW TO REMIT FUNDS TO THE SOCIETY

BY INTERNET: Transfer funds to the Society's bank account BSB 082-401 Account No 16-083-2367. Notify your deposit in an email to [tharyjanto@jacksonwells.com.au](mailto: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 on back of credit card
Amount to be charged: \$ _____	
Complete mailing address:	
_____	
_____	
City: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____	
Name on card: _____	
Signature: _____	
Description of what is being paid for:	

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Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089, Australia