Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society

Memorial News 26

May 2011

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

CANBERRA MEMORIAL EVENTS – JULY 2011

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society is hosting two special events in Canberra on Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd July 2011. These events will commemorate the 69th anniversary of the invasion of the New Guinea islands and the sinking of the Montevideo Maru. Highlights will be a commemorative luncheon and an historic memorial service.

We are delighted with the numbers coming in and look forward to another wonderful event. Similarly to last year we are hearing about relatives who are coming along who have never met each other before, friends who haven't seen each other since before WWII…and we look forward to seeing as many members as possible come along and support these events. We already have a considerable number of acceptances and you are urged to get in touch with us as soon as possible. Please RSVP by 12 June 2011.

Further details on page 7.

The Australian War Memorial received a donation of $200 on 21 April 2011 for the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial but there is no indication of who sent it and no email confirming the deposit went to: tharyjanto@jacksonwells.com.au
Could the owner please come forward so that an appropriate receipt can be provided?

DONATE TO THE MEMORIAL - page 2

www.memorial.org.au

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

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

PHIL AINSWORTH

Rabaul and Montevideo Maru received significant coverage during the recent ANZAC Day activities, particularly the marches in the various capital cities. This was due to the foresight and good work of your Committee. Briefings were sent to the various organizations and the particular commentators in each State beforehand. Many enquiries have been received as a result.

It is encouraging that, so far, about 100 guests have advised they will be attending at each of the July commemorations events in Canberra, the details of which may be found elsewhere in this edition. The former Governor General , Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC and his wife, the Honourable Peter Garrett AM MP, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth and Patron of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, General Peter Cosgrove AC MC and his wife, Major General Adrian Clunies Ross AO MBE and his wife will be in attendance to name a few. The speaker at the Saturday lunch at the National Press Club will be Major General (Prof) John Pearn AM RFD KSt. A former Surgeon General of the Australian Defence Force, he is currently senior paediatrician based at the Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane and a historian of note. He will provide an interesting and always challenging viewpoint on the subject under focus, the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru tragedies. We look forward to seeing as many along to these functions as possible.

On behalf of the Society I extend condolences to the Selby family. Benn was always most supportive of the Society's activities and the need for recognition of events in Rabaul and the New Guinea islands. In June 2010, at the grand age of 96 years, Benn travelled to Canberra to be with other

relatives and friends when the Australian Parliament made its historic resolution formally recognizing the tragedy. Benn passed away on 9 April 2011, aged 97 years.

Recently a few member benefactors of the Society purchased the late Rev. John May's medals with credentials, and these were presented to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) on 13 April 2011. TMAG was pleased to receive these as medals awarded during a person's time as a prisoner of war are particularly unique. Rev John May's MBE was awarded to him in 1947 for his actions as a prisoner of war tending the troops captured in Rabaul and surrounding areas. It is pleasing that the display of these medals will be able to continue telling the history of what happened in Rabaul and the New Guinea islands and about those who served their country so valiantly. The May family generously donated the money received from the sale to our National Memorial Fund – thank you to both the May Family and the anonymous benefactors.

Committee member Marg Curtis, at her own expense, represented the Society in Hobart during the presentation which subsequently received generous support in the Tasmanian media. Thank you Marg.

I wish to acknowledge the recent generous donation from the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia (PNGAA) to our National Memorial Fund. I understand this represents the proceeds of a number of events that Association undertook late last year. Thank you PNGAA.

On to a matter of 'housekeeping'…. We have the July events, nominal roll and index card issues, the fund raising activities as well as the monthly newsletter and side issues such as answering enquiries, all running at once.

DONATIONS ELIGIBLE FOR TAX DEDUCTIBILITY

All donations made to the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial are now eligible for tax deductibility.
Receipts will be issued close to the end of the financial year. For amounts over $10,000 please contact Phil Ainsworth
E: P.Ainsworth@Kingco.com.au
M: 0418 730 348

A special fund has been set up at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and donations over $10,000 should be made payable to them. Direct deposits to the AWM should be identified with:

cc11120/Montevideo Maru Memorial.

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society would need a copy of correspondence so we may acknowledge any sponsorship payment or donation.

Bank Details for the AWM are:
Bank: National Australia Bank
Account Name: Australian War Memorial Fund Account
BSB: 082-902 Account Number: 3501 8614
To commission an artist and achieve the memorial by the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru, donations need to be received urgently.

With committee members in various Australian states the resources are being stretched. All the work of the Society done by committee members is done free, at no cost to the Society. The support given to the Society by both Jackson Wells and King & Co is also greatly appreciated. We have a growing number of members not on email. It is important that every member receives relevant information however we need to consider the cost in time and money imposed on the active Society members where hardcopy and postage is involved. For instance, depending on weight, the postage for each mailed item is between 60c and $1.50 while photocopying is about 15c per colour sheet and 1.5c per black and white sheet, about one tenth the cost. For example, the 20 colour pages for the newsletter plus the mail cost represent about $4.50 an item. Multiply this by 100, the cost per month is $450. For each member to

receive coloured hardcopy it is costing the Society a minimum of $50 per annum, the cost of the annual fee for ordinary membership. **This is why access to an email facility is important and why, in future, mailed copies of material will be in black and white.** Costs to our supporters need to be recognised and given our limited resources and deadlines we seek your indulgence in this respect.

Starting in this edition of the newsletter, all donors will be acknowledged, unless a particular donor elects not to be mentioned. Actual amounts donated will not be advertised.

Donations are being regularly received and in most cases in an orderly way. There is one outstanding donation of $200, received on 21 April, which we do not know who sent. This emphasizes the importance of sending an email or a letter to the Society if the donation is sent to the AWM or with the donation if the donation is forwarded to the Society. This would save a lot of time as well as ensuring the donor receives the appropriate receipt to verify its tax deductibility. Whoever sent this $200 donation, please contact the Society.

We thank you for your letters and emails which are always much appreciated.

The New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles Ex Members Association Inc. will be holding the annual **Montevideo Maru Memorial Service** at the Hall of Memories Cenotaph, ANZAC Square, Brisbane **Wednesday 1 July 2011 at 10.00am. Contact Phil Ainsworth email: p.ainsworth@kingco.com.au or phone 0418 730 348.**

AURORA EXPEDITIONS PNG - 70th commemoration voyage, Rabaul ANZAC Day 2012

- Details are currently being finalized but we can confirm that there will be a special commemorative voyage to the New Guinea islands in April 2012. The voyage will arrive in Rabaul late on 24 April 2012 for a special 70th ANZAC Day service. There may be an option for a Lark Force Trek post the voyage.

Further details in the June *Memorial News* and on our website as they occur.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is now a priority activity for the Society to ensure that funds are received enabling the memorial to be completed by July 2012, the 70th anniversary.

The Society is required to encourage corporate Australia – private-sector companies, organisations, community groups and individuals - to contribute to this memorial. Your committee is working on that but would appreciate as much assistance as possible.

TRIABUNNA MEMORIAL PLAQUE DON HOOK

Tasmanian Ted Domene was in Canberra recently on a brief visit during which he inspected the AWM site for the Society's memorial.

The memorial will honour those who died in the Japanese invasion of the New Guinea Islands and on the Montevideo Maru. His uncle, Cpl Rowland Ernest Domeney, of the Fortress Engineers RAE, was on the Japanese prison ship when it was sunk by an American submarine .

Ted told us of a memorial to those lost at sea which is erected at Triabunna, a popular fishing town on the east coast of Tasmania. On the memorial is a plaque in memory of the Australians who died on the Montevideo Maru.

Incidentally, Ted attended ASOPA and was a kiap on New Britain for 12 months in the late 1960s. He cut short his PNG career when he returned to Tasmania to take over the running of the family farm.

Ted Domeney will be overseas in June/July this year but he reckons he'll definitely be in Canberra on 1 July next year when, hopefully, our Society's memorial will be unveiled. He plans to contact relatives with the idea of making a family donation to the memorial fund.

***Note** – if anyone knows who erected the MvM plaque at Triabunna - and when – could you please let us know? Thank you – Ed.*

Highlights of the Lark Force Sydney ANZAC Day March 2011 can be viewed at 13:50 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBReDJpRtzA

JOHN MAY'S MEDALS go to the TASMANIAN MUSEUM and ART GALLERY

The Director of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Bill Bleathman, said that the museum was honoured to receive a Tasmanian World War II chaplain's collection of military medals.

John May's Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) and several of his military service medals, which were recently purchased by a group of anonymous benefactors, were presented to TMAG by members of his family on 13 April 2011.

"I am pleased the generosity of these benefactors has enabled TMAG to acquire these medals, whilst also allowing Mary May to raise funds towards a permanent memorial to commemorate the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*," Mr Bleathman said.

John Lovatt May MBE was born in Tasmania and educated in Penguin, Queenstown and Hobart before completing theological studies at the Australasian College of Theology. In 1940, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces as a chaplain and served with the 2/22nd Battalion which was sent to garrison Rabaul in New Guinea in 1941.

When the Japanese invaded Rabaul in January 1942, John May was taken prisoner along with over 1 000 other Australian troops and civilians, many of whom subsequently embarked the *Montevideo Maru* bound for Hainan in south China.

On 1 July 1942, the *Montevideo Maru* was torpedoed and sunk off the Philippines, and over 1 000 Australian troops and civilians perished in what remains as Australia's worst disaster at sea.

Although John May was not aboard the *Montevideo Maru*, he tended the men of the 2/22nd Battalion as soldiers and as prisoners. After the war, he was always concerned that efforts be made to recognise the terrible loss of both troops and civilians on the *Montevideo Maru*.

He was awarded the MBE in 1947 for his actions as a prisoner of war (POW) in maintaining morale of troops and POWs in World War II.

"I am pleased that through this gift, John May's medals will enable TMAG to continue to tell the stories of Tasmanians who have made such important contributions through their service to their country," Mr Bleathman said.

John May's MBE citation

"Chaplain May was a PW in Japanese hands from January 1942 to August 1945. He was one of the first AIF captured after the Japanese landing at Kokopo beach, Rabaul, on 23 January 1942.

"Here, by calm courage, his refusal to be intimidated and by the sheer force of his personality, he dissuaded the very excited Japanese troops from their expressed intention of sacking the Hospital, thereby saving six nursing sisters and 100 patients from probably molestation and massacre.

"Throughout the whole period as a PW Chaplain, May exhibited outstanding courage in his daily contact with the Japanese and during the whole period he was tireless in his efforts to obtain improved conditions for fellow PW.

"His influence was very high in sustaining the morale of all ranks. His courage, unselfish example, constant cheerfulness and devotion to duty were an inspiration to all with whom he came in contact.

THE REAL FORGOTTEN WAR – A TIME TO REMEMBER
Andrea Williams

Anzac Day is Australia's special day. Our nation has been engaged in many wars. And in each of these wars there have been many battles and actions, all with their related tragedies.

Comparisons are invidious, we are told, and comparisons between different battles in different theatres of war are especially so, because tragedy should be beyond comparison.

Our recent Anzac Day had special significance for Korean War veterans because it coincided with the 60th anniversary of the battle of Kapyong; an engagement referred to, in remembering of it, as 'the forgotten battle of the forgotten war'. Thirty-two Australians died repelling the Chinese army's final failed assault on the South Korean capital.

More than 17,000 Australians served in the Korean War, which cost 340 Australian lives. But there is another forgotten battle.

It occurred in Rabaul in January of 1942. Some 1,400 Australian troops and 300 civilians defended the New Guinea islands against a force 20,000 strong Japanese force that controlled the sea and the air.

And, at the final tally, some 1,400 Australians were lost in battle, were massacred in cold blood, or were drowned locked in the bowels of the *Montevideo Maru*. Perhaps 300-400 made it back to Australia. We will never know exactly.

What happened in the New Guinea islands was too easy to ignore. The majority of the men died. Wives and mothers didn't speak about their tragedy – they were isolated and had suffered enough. The rest was an eerie, unremarked silence.

Next January will be the 70th anniversary of the fall of Rabaul and Kavieng. On 1 July 2012 a national memorial will finally be dedicated to honour the men who sacrificed their lives.

This was the real forgotten battle. The one that so few were left to remember.

It is time for all Australians to get behind this.

COMMEMORATING THE ANZAC CENTENARY 1914-1918

Further information is available from: anzaccentenary@dva.gov.au or Phone: 133 254, and for regional callers: 1800 555 254

The Military Historical Society of Australia has announced a new biennial writer's prize for military history.

"MHSA members will be able to test their skills researching and writing military history with this new initiative", new Federal President, Rohan Goyne said today.

The article will be 3,000 to 4,000 words on a topic of Australian military history based in part on primary sources.

$500 will be awarded biennially to the article judged the best by a panel.

The winning entry will be published in *Sabretache*, the association's quarterly journal.

Entries close on **31 May 2011** and the winner will be announced at the Federal Council's August Annual General Meeting. Contact Rohan Goyne for further information: 0418 447 328(m)
Have a look at the website at www.mhsa.org.au

WEBSITE:
www.memorial.org.au

Have you any **old photographs or letters, stories, or historical documents of the service men or civilians who lived in Rabaul and surrounding islands before WWII**?
Photos of Rabaul pre-war would also be welcomed.
This information will help provide insights to the story of Rabaul, the New Guinea Islands and the Montevideo Maru.
We thank those of you who have already sent them in; they will be on the website soon.
Please Email: andrea.williams@bigpond.com

BENN SELBY BY KEITH JACKSON

My last email from Benn Selby, whom I met but once and then briefly and who has died in Melbourne at the grand age of 97, came one morning last January.

"I suspect I must be one of the first to comment on the January issue [of *Memorial News*]," he remarked with characteristic whimsy. "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."

Benn and I communicated frequently by email and, on this occasion, he was thanking me for my review of his compilation of the writings of his brother, Tom, *Dr NX 22*.

Tom had visited PNG as a ship's surgeon and elder brother David commanded the Anti-Aircraft Battery in Rabaul and escaped the Japanese invasion to write *Hell and High Fever*, "the story of that horrendous three months", as Benn put it, and later returned to ANGAU in PNG.

Benn died peacefully last Saturday, a week after his 97th birthday. He had not been well for most of this year, in and out of hospital with breathing problems.

"I do think he had probably achieved everything he had set himself to do over the last few years," said relative Libby Albert, "not the least of which being the two books he had reprinted / published, of his two greatly revered older brothers."

Benn devoted his life to scientific support and scientific excellence and made an outstanding contribution to the promotion and development of science in Australia and beyond.

He graduated in Science from the University of Sydney in 1935 and from 1936 onwards, apart from a period of absence on military service, during which he was mentioned in despatches for distinguished service and rose to the rank of Major, served H B Selby Australia Ltd as Managing Director and Deputy Chairman until 1982.

His commercial life showed a passion for science and for community service. Among his many contributions he was a member of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute for over 40 years, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and a Trustee and Executive Member of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia.

I will miss his gentle humour and his huge support for the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society. Benn Atherton Selby was a great Australian. And I'll also miss those witty emails.

IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS - Sundays 6:30pm on Channel Nine

In Their Footsteps 'will shine a bright new light on Australia's wartime history, bridging the past to the present for a modern generation of viewers'.

Do you know the story behind the wartime experiences of a member of your family?

'In their Footsteps' will post the best stories each week on their website. Upload a photo and share your story here:
http://channelnine.ninemsn.com.au/feedback.aspx?sectionid=6678896&formid=6670502

CLAIRE VAN DER BOOM WON THE SILVER LOGIE for Most Outstanding Actress in her role in the ABC miniseries *SISTERS OF WAR* on 1 May 2011. Writer John Misto recently won the Queensland Premier's Literary Award for *Sister of War* in the category of Best Television Script.

Sisters of War is inspired by the true story of two extraordinary Australian women, Lorna Johnston (nee Whyte), an army nurse and Sister Berenice Twohill, a Catholic nun from country New South Wales who was stationed at Vunapope. Although very different women, their friendship has survived nearly 70 years after the extraordinary events they found themselves in when the Japanese military made them prisoners-of-war in Rabaul in January 1942. The story of their captivity, their friendship, their will to survive and their extraordinary courage has never before been told. It is a story of strength, survival and forgiveness.

Sisters of War is based on Rod Miller's manuscript The Lost Women of Rabaul.

69th ANNIVERSARY CANBERRA MEMORIAL EVENTS – JULY 2011

SATURDAY 2 July 2011

Luncheon 12nn – 5pm (Drinks will be available from a cash bar)
Venue: National Press Club, 16 National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 www.npc.org.au

Guest speaker: We are delighted that Major General (Prof) John Pearn AO RFD K St, Patron of NGVR/PNGVR Association; Honorary Colonel Queensland University Regiment will be with us for this occasion.

> Professor Pearn is a prominent Australian and a former Surgeon General of the Australian Defence Force. He has published comprehensively in the areas of military medicine and military history and is a noted and inspirational speaker. He is an active member of the Australian Defence Force Human Ethics Research Committee, based in Canberra. He saw active service during Confrontation in the Sepik Region of Papua New Guinea (1966), as the consultant physician in the Vietnam War (1970), and as a "Blue Beret" doctor-soldier in the Rwandan post-genocide emergency of 1994.
>
> In civilian life he is in fulltime clinical work as Senior Paediatrician based at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane, and Preceptor at the School of Medicine, The University of Queensland. A leader in the field of Child Health his research is widely published. He is Patron of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles – Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles Association. His late father-in-law, Captain Athol White, as a Japanese POW, was a survivor of the Burma-Thailand railway.

SUNDAY 3 July 2011

An ecumenical memorial service will be held at St Paul's Chapel, Royal Military College of Australia, Duntroon, from 11.30 am- 12.30pm. The former Governor General, Major General Michael Jeffery, will read one of the lessons. Enter college from Morsehead Drive and follow signage.
Defence Force chaplains will lead the service with music by the Tuggeranong (ACT) Salvation Army Band –highlights will include compositions by Arthur Gullidge.
Canberra Legacy's Southside Laurel Club has kindly offered to provide substantial refreshments immediately after the memorial service.

COST of lunch on Saturday and refreshments on Sunday $55 per person
Payment will confirm booking.

PLEASE RSVP for both these events as soon as possible and prior to 12 June 2011.

Andrea Williams E: andrea.williams@bigpond.com Ph: 02 9449 4129/0409 031 889
PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089

Payment can be made to the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society as follows:
Electronically. Transfer funds to the Society's bank account: Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society BSB 082-401 Account 16-083-2367. Bank NAB. Please include your name and the word 'Canberra' for this deposit. Also, please notify the deposit by email to: tharyjanto@jacksonwells.com.au).
By mail. Cheque to Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society at PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089.
By Visa or Mastercard – details at end of newsletter.

As the end of June in Canberra is likely to be busy we recommend confirming your accommodation as soon as possible.

To confirm, please contact Andrea Williams and provide her with this information:

- The full name of each person who wishes to attend.
- The age of each person who wishes to attend (optional but helpful).

§ The full postal address, phone number (home and mobile) and email of each person who wishes to attend.
§ The relationship, if any, of the person to the events of 1942 (if you did not attend the 2010 Parliamentary event in Canberra).
§ The address and phone number, where each person intends to stay while in Canberra.
§ Any other people you are travelling with.

Even if you do not have all this information at this stage, please tell us what you can. Andrea's contact details are: Ph: 02 9449 4129/0409 031 889 E: andrea.williams@bigpond.com 24 Melaleuca Drive, St Ives, NSW 2075

A wonderful outcome of last year's Parliamentary event in Canberra was the coming together of the relatives of the men of Rabaul and the New Guinea islands who, without ever meeting each other previously, found that their families had shared common experiences and emotions in the wake of the tragedies that had befallen them in wartime. Those who attended will recall the instant connections which generated such extraordinary warmth. We look forward to seeing you in Canberra in July 2011 to share more stories and experiences.

A combined Salvation Army band will play at the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru memorial service at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, on Sunday, 3 July.

The band of up to 30 members will be drawn from ACT branches and the Salvation Army headquarters in Canberra. It will be conducted by Bandmaster Bruce Edwards, of the Tuggeranong and Canberra City bands.

Much of the music to be played at the service was composed by Bandmaster Arthur Gullidge who perished when the Montevideo Maru was sunk on 1 July 1942.

At the time of his enlistement in the AIF in July 1940, Arthur Gullidge was Bandmaster of the Salvation Army's Brunswick Citadel Band. He was also a most prolific composer of brass band music, developing a unique and distinctive style of street march.

By May 1941, 23 Salvation Army bandsmen plus two non Salvationists were garrisoned with the 2/22nd Infantry Battalion Band at Rabaul. Only one member of the band survived the war.

The following article first appeared in The Age 25 April 2011

CHERISHED CIGAR BOX MEMORIES OF A LOST FATHER AND BROTHER

Tony Wright

April 25, 2011

BETTY Muller's memories of a father and brother - at least, the physical manifestation of those memories - reside in an old cigar box. Two letters saying not much, yet everything; a faded official confirmation of an almost unthinkable disaster at sea; two certificates "deeming" that two deaths had occurred.

The documents, brittle with age, are folded lovingly within plastic sleeves.

Here lies all the evidence ever likely to be known about the last days of Cyril Gascoigne, aged 50 in 1942, and his son Ivor, 15. Father and son, plus one of Betty Muller's uncles, plantation owner Harry Adams, died in Australia's worst maritime tragedy. They were among more than 1050 Australians, prisoners of the Japanese, who perished when the prison ship Montevideo Maru was torpedoed in 1942.

And yet this monstrous loss of life - twice as large as all the Australian losses in the Vietnam War - remains hardly more than a footnote in Australian war histories. So little official and public attention has been paid to the disaster that the nation's capital still has no memorial of the event.

Mrs Muller is reluctant to revisit the pain of her memories. But she is 90 now, one of the few remaining who have such a close link with the catastrophe. She hopes her knowledge and

experience of loss might lead finally to a monument being unveiled at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on July 1 next year, the 70th anniversary of the sinking.

Such a memorial is likely to cost at least $400,000. But the Australian government has promised only $100,000. A memorial committee - its patron is federal minister Peter Garrett whose grandfather died on the Montevideo Maru - has privately raised another $100,000. Thus, the project remains $200,000 short - a piddling amount in national expenditure - and time is running out.

Mrs Muller - then Miss Betty Gascoigne - was 21 when she last saw her father and brother. It was Boxing Day, 1941. She and her mother and her 12-year-old brother Stanley were being evacuated south to Australia by ship from the wide harbour of Rabaul on New Britain - then an Australian protectorate and now part of Papua New Guinea - where the Gascoignes had lived since 1924.

The Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbour less than three weeks previously. No one quite knew what the Japanese had in mind for Rabaul. It turned out to be worse than anyone imagined.

A month after Betty Gascoigne, her mother and her brother left Rabaul with scores of other women and children - an arduous journey for them by ship to Townsville and a series of slow trains to Melbourne - the Japanese invaded New Britain.

It was the beginning of an almost unbearable silence that would last years. In Melbourne, the little family scraped by, first staying with relatives and eventually finding a small flat in Prahran, living on rumours and short on cash.

It was particularly hard for Betty Gascoigne's mother. Ivor, who had just started his first job as an office boy at the island's branch of Amalgamated Wireless, had begged to stay in Rabaul with his father, an auctioneer, and she had reluctantly agreed.

"It was the most difficult decision my mother ever had to take," Mrs Mullins says.

Not long after the Gascoigne women and Stanley arrived in Melbourne, a Japanese bomber dropped three mysterious satchels over Port Moresby. Only two were ever found. They contained letters from the men who were left behind in Rabaul.

The second satchel bore short notes from Cyril and Ivor, informing their family that they were prisoners of Imperial Japan. Don't worry, both letters implored. Father and son insisted they were being treated well, though Cyril, a big man, hinted that rations were short, scribbling that he expected he would soon "be as slim as a lily".

By the time the little Gascoigne family received this scant correspondence in late September or early October 1942 (it is still preserved in the cigar box), Cyril and Ivor were dead.

It would be another three years before the Gascoignes and the other evacuees would know what had happened to their men, though some details are still unclear.

What is known is that on June 22, 1942, about 845 Australian soldiers of Lark Force, mainly Victorians who had been sent to protect Rabaul, and 208 captured civilians, were loaded aboard the Japanese ship Montevideo Maru bound for the Chinese island of Hainan. Nine days later, on the morning of July 1, an American submarine, the USS Sturgeon - unaware this was a POW transport - torpedoed the Montevideo Maru.

Not a single Australian survived. And now a 90-year-old woman waits for a nation to remember before she, too, is gone, and all that is left is an old cigar box.

For further information or to make a donation, go to memorial.org.au.

RECRUIT PEOPLE AS MEMBERS

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society has over 300 members. Each membership contributes to the memorial and is tax deductible. Please encourage family and friends to join and to receive this monthly newsletter by emailing Andrea Williams andrea.williams@bigpond.com or writing to the Society c/- Jackson Wells Pty Ltd, PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089

The following article first appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald and the Brisbane Times on 25 April 2011

RELATIVES WHO ENDURED AWFUL SILENCE STILL WAIT FOR A MEMORIAL

Malcolm Brown, Tony Wright

THE memorial notice in the *Herald* on November 24, 1945, read: "Presumed lost at sea." Gunner Lloyd Sibraa, last reported on the Japanese prison ship Montevideo Maru, had not made contact with home.

The notice was inserted by Sibraa's mother, Mabel Sibraa, who clung to the hope that Lloyd, who had been in the 1st Independent Company in New Ireland (now part of Papua New Guinea) had somehow made it. She kept the army informed of her address, lest Lloyd should have survived.

The Montevideo Maru was torpedoed by an American submarine on July 1, 1942, and sank with the loss of more than 1000 men.

Mabel Sibraa knew that if anyone could get out of it, Lloyd could. He had worked as a drover around Fords Bridge on the Darling River and had come to Sydney to enlist. But on July 1, 1947, five years after the sinking, another notice appeared in which she acknowledged Lloyd would not be coming home. His mother had written a poem:

At night when the shadows are falling
And I am all alone
There comes that longing Lloydie
If you could just come home.

Further notices in Sibraa's memory appeared in 1951 and 1953. In the 1960s, in the last years of Mabel Sibraa's life, a relative spoke to her about it, but it was too painful to discuss.

Betty Muller - then Betty Gascoigne - endured the same agonising wait. She was 21 when she last saw her father and brother. It was Boxing Day 1941, when she, her mother and brother Stanley, 12, were evacuated to Australia by ship from Rabaul on New Britain, where the Gascoignes had lived since 1924.

A month later, the Japanese invaded New Britain. It was the beginning of an almost unbearable silence that would last years. Ivor, who had just started his first job as an office boy at the island's branch of Amalgamated Wireless, had begged to stay in Rabaul with his father, an auctioneer, and his mother reluctantly agreed. "It was the most difficult decision my mother ever had to take," says Muller, now 91.

Not long after the Gascoignes arrived in Melbourne, a Japanese bomber dropped three satchels over Port Moresby. Only two were found. They contained letters from the men left behind in Rabaul. One bore short notes from Cyril and Ivor, informing their family that they were prisoners of Imperial Japan. Don't worry, both letters implored. Father and son insisted they were being treated well, though Cyril, a big man, hinted that rations were short, scribbling that he would soon "be as slim as a lilly".

By the time the Gascoigne family received the letter in late September or early October 1942, Cyril and Ivor were dead. Mrs Muller keeps it preserved in a cigar box.

It would be three more years before the Gascoignes and the other evacuees knew what had happened to their men. On June 22, 1942, about 845 Australian soldiers who had been sent to protect Rabaul, and 208 captured civilians, were loaded aboard the Montevideo Maru bound for the Chinese island of Hainan. On the morning of July 1 the USS Sturgeon torpedoed the ship, unaware it was a POW transport.

The pain over the sinking remains to this day and fuels a campaign to establish a permanent memorial at the Australian War Memorial. In 2009, a Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society was established, having as its patron the Labor federal minister Peter Garrett, whose uncle, Tom

Garrett, died on the Montevideo Maru. The former senator Kerry Sibraa, a distant relative of Lloyd Sibraa, is vice-president.

The society's spokeswoman, Andrea Williams, lost a grandfather, Philip Coote, and great-uncle, Hugh Scott, both civilians who had been working in Rabaul. She says the greatest maritime tragedy in Australia's history has not been properly commemorated.

The society is dedicated to raising the $400,000 necessary to build the memorial, to commemorate "the valour, fortitude and resilience of the Australian troops and civilians of the Australian-administered New Guinea Islands who died when left to face an overwhelming Japanese invasion in January 1942".

Last June the then minister for veterans' affairs and defence personnel, Alan Griffin, announced a grant of $100, 000 to the society. Federal Parliament passed a resolution expressing "the gratitude of Australia to the service personnel and civilians in Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands for their service in defence of Australia, the regret and sorrow of Australia for the losses they suffered, including the sinking of the Montevideo Maru".

Of the servicemen, three were brothers - H.P., D.G. and F.J. Turner - who had signed up for service together and had consecutive service numbers. Another striking entry on the list of victims is Private Frederick Edward Hopkins, of Rockdale, born on April 25, 1915.
For more information or to donate, go to memorial.org.au.

RABAUL ANZAC VISIT 2011
MARG CURTIS

Marg Curtis was the winner of the two airline tickets with Air Niugini and accommodation at the Rabaul Hotel raffled at the end of 2010 to raise funds for the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial at the Australian War Memorial.

We arrived home today safely after a wonderful trip to Rabaul. It is such a very special place with special people and it's an amazing feeling just being there. I think it was one of the best Anzac Day Ceremonies I have ever attended and I know it was particularly special for Mum.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to go there once again with each visit being so different each time. The first time with Mum in 1992 pre volcano devastation, again in 2009 doing the Lark Force Trek after the eruption and now to attend such a moving Dawn Service and also the Service at Bita Paka on Anzac Day. Each time seeing such a different Rabaul.

Susie and her staff went out of their way to ensure our stay was enjoyable and I very much appreciated her generous donation of the accommodation for the raffle. The flights with Air Nuigini also went extremely well and once again, their donation of the prize for the flights was also very much appreciated.

I have attached a photo (above) taken of Susie, Mum, Annie (staff member at Rabaul Hotel) and myself – wearing Lark Force Trek T-Shirt. It was taken outside the Rabaul Hotel.

Left: Marg Curtis, Ron Hayes, Ailsa Nisbet and Pete McGuiness (whose father was in 2/22nd and escaped down the south coast, coming back on the Laurabada).

JAPANESE BROADCASTS TO AUSTRALIA and the CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE

ROD MILLER

Part One

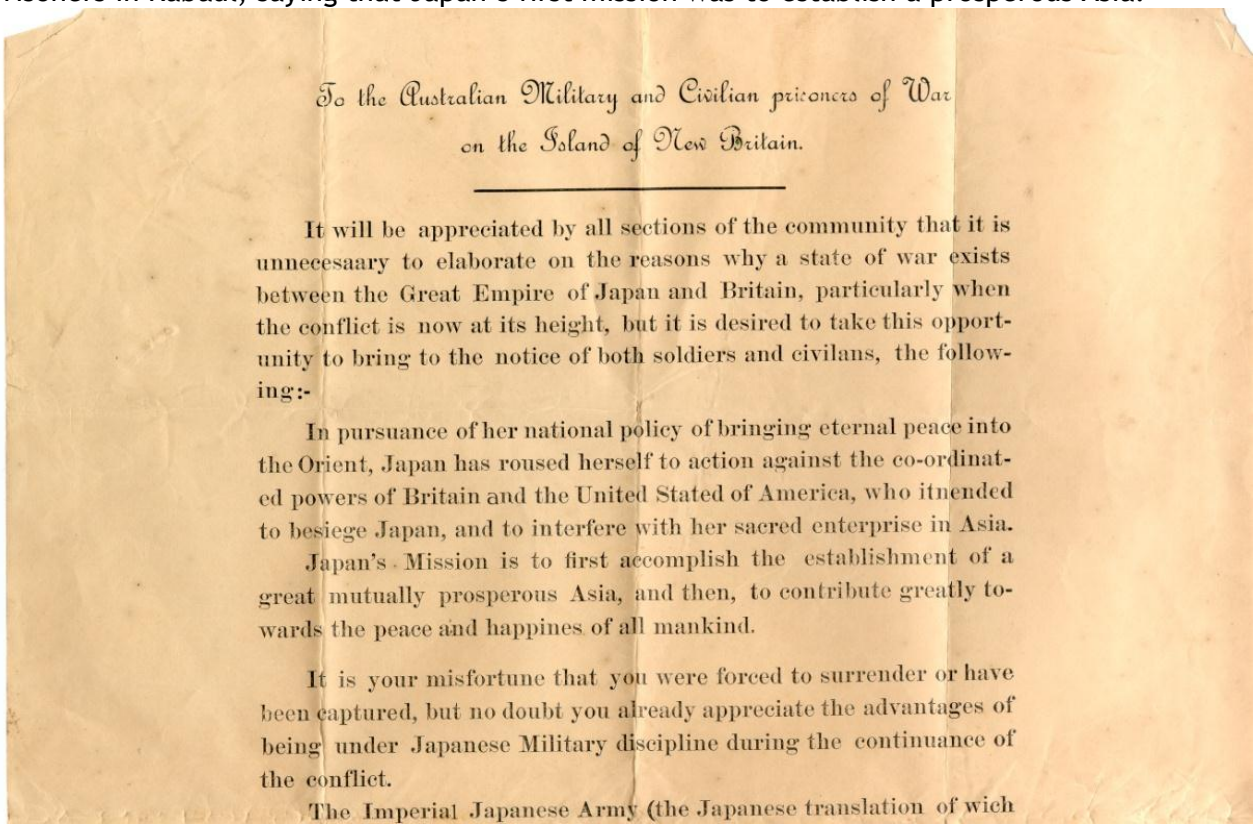
One week after the Japanese invasion of Rabaul in January 1942, during the Japanese drive on Singapore, an interesting broadcast from Radio Tokyo was received by listening posts in Australia. The commentator Ken Goto stated:

> *"All that Japan asks is that Australia sever its ties with Britain and ... [cease] resistance against Japan, and that Australia co-operate with Japan in the construction of the sphere of common prosperity"*

In a further broadcast he stated:

> *"The whole Australian strategy depends on the fact that it must be surrounded by friendly powers. These surroundings are now in Japanese hands, all very close to it... Thus the isolation of Australia becomes more of a reality every day. The Bismarck Archipelago brings the war very near, and it has just begun! Home defence is the order of the day, and with 12,000 miles of coastline, Australians have every reason to fear".*

On February 11th a printed proclamation by the Japanese commander was given to the prisoners in Rabaul, saying that Japan's first mission was to establish a prosperous Asia.



To the Australian Military and Civilian prisoners of War on the Island of New Britain.

It will be appreciated by all sections of the community that it is unnecesaary to elaborate on the reasons why a state of war exists between the Great Empire of Japan and Britain, particularly when the conflict is now at its height, but it is desired to take this opportunity to bring to the notice of both soldiers and civilans, the following:-

In pursuance of her national policy of bringing eternal peace into the Orient, Japan has roused herself to action against the co-ordinated powers of Britain and the United Stated of America, who itnended to besiege Japan, and to interfere with her sacred enterprise in Asia.

Japan's Mission is to first accomplish the establishment of a great mutually prosperous Asia, and then, to contribute greatly towards the peace and happines of all mankind.

It is your misfortune that you were forced to surrender or have been captured, but no doubt you already appreciate the advantages of being under Japanese Military discipline during the continuance of the conflict.

The Imperial Japanese Army (the Japanese translation of wich

This was followed on the 16th of February by Prime Minister Tojo's Diet speech, in which he said that Australia and New Zealand should "*avoid a useless war*" and seek happiness through trying to "*understand Japan's real intentions and take a fair attitude*."

Ken Goto was again heard broadcasting on the 19th of February:

> *Tragic is the word that best describes Australia's plight. No help from the very country for which she has given all. All the islands around her under Japanese control... Australia's fate is isolation and to this fate she is rushing with terrible speed. Then isolated Australia, with the limited manpower, limited resources, limited war industries will, if she continues to wage war on Japan, inevitably collapse.*

After the battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942, Tojo became a little sterner and warned Australia to "*reconsider her attitude to and participate in Greater East Asia*" - or else.
One Japanese soldier who was guarding POWs in Rabaul confided to his diary:

> *What did we learn and what impressions did we get from the Australian prisoners of war whom we used each day? Did we not consider it as something new, the knowledge which they considered as only a common everyday experience?*
> *There is definitely a lot for us to learn, even though we may have a false pride in ourselves. To utilise the knowledge gained from them, and to lead them as comrades of the New and Greater East Asia would require a greater amount of effort. When we show a lacking in this effort, then the fruits of all this work will be difficult to obtain.*

A captured officer of the 2/22nd Battalion, Captain David Hutchinson-Smith, wrote in his memoirs:

> *When the Japanese had become really settled in Rabaul they established a civil administration and a new sight was the government clerical officer with his thick glasses, panama hat turned up all round, despatch case, "long" shorts and the usual suspenders. The typists also arrived in large numbers, generally young girls with twin pigtails, dressed in a semi-naval uniform. The occasion of the establishment of Imperial Government in the southern outpost was made one of joyous celebrations and a reception was held in the Rabaul Picture Theatre.*

This evidence, coupled with the numerous propaganda broadcasts by Ken Goto, suggests that the Australian mandated territory of New Britain was one of the first implementations of the Japanese Co-prosperity Sphere near Australia.
In her book, *Japans Radio War on Australia,* Mrs L. D. Meo noted of Ken Goto:

> *It would be of interest to know what happened to this rather capable commentator after the middle of 1942.*

Who was Ken Goto? How did he have such a diverse knowledge of Australia and why didn't he broadcast after June 1942?
In part two (in the next newsletter) I will answer these questions…

$27 MILLION TO EX POWS

The Prime Minister has announced that the budget will include a $500 fortnightly payment to ex-POWs, starting in September. The Government has allocated $27 million to the scheme in next week's budget.

Tom Uren a former Whitlam and Hawke government minister was 20 when he was captured by the Japanese in 1942. He spent four years as a prisoner-of-war, partly on the Thai Burma Railway. He has spent the last 23 years fighting for justice and compassion

Tom Uren says: 'To tell you the truth I wasn't after money; I was after justice - justice and compassion. And [Julia Gillard has] given us both justice and compassion.'

http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2011/s3208546.htm

DVD: THE FALL OF RABAUL & KAVIENG

4 hours over a 2 disc set, High Definition format. Cost: A$43 incl p&p within Australia

This 2-disc edition of "The Fall of Rabaul & Kavieng" features over 10 in-depth interviews with those who survived Rabaul in 1942 - plus extensive coverage of the events at Parliament House, 21st of June 2010.

Schindler Communications has pledged $3 per unit donation for every copy sold to the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society towards the building of the memorial.

To purchase this DVD visit: www.thefallofrabaul.com or phone: 0418 740182

LETTERS FROM RABAUL
Lindsay Cox

The Salvation Army Heritage Centre in Melbourne has received from Norm Furness (President 2/22nd Lark Force Association) a box of some 50 letters written by a soldier of the 2/22nd Battalion, mostly from Rabaul in 1941. The letters are from Bill Edwards to his wife in Alexandra and had been passed onto Norm for safe keeping some years ago.

VX23953, Private William Eyton Edwards enlisted at the South Melbourne Drill Hall on 7 June 1940. He was inducted at the Caulfield Camp and then went to Balcombe Camp before being posted to the 2/22nd Battalion at Trawool on 15 July 1940. Bill was a 24-year-old joinery machinist from Alexandra, Victoria.

I was amazed upon my serendipitous realisation that the writer of these letters had a close connection with The Salvation Army through Bandmaster Arthur Gullidge and the 2/22nd Band. For Bill Edwards had been posted as the Band's permanent side-drummer (as opposed to being a drummer in the 2/22nd Battalion Drum Corps). The Band of the 2/22nd Battalion was comprised of 25 Bandsmen, of whom all but two were Salvation Army Bandsmen. Bill Edwards (Church of England) was one of the two "non-Salvos" – Jim Thurst, a Methodist was the other.

Captured by the Japanese during their invasion of Rabaul in January 1942, Bill Edwards later perished on board the *Montevideo Maru* on 1 July 1942. These letters are a poignant reminder of the terrible waste of the lives of our young men.

ANZAC CAVALCADE

The Preston Corps of The Salvation Army held its annual ANZAC Cavalcade on Saturday night, 16th April, featuring the Preston Citadel Band and guest performers in concert.
A feature was the provision by the Re-enactment Society of Victoria of a replication of a WW2 Red Shield coffee point serving coffee and Anzac biscuits – both of a somewhat better quality than that dished out on the Kokoda Trail.
The Salvation Army Heritage Centre mounted a photographic and ephemera display on the story of the Band of the 2/22nd Battalion in Rabaul and their tragic end along with most of the Battalion when the *Montevideo Maru* went down.
Some 150 people viewed the exhibit and also had Montevideo & Rabaul Society brochures and information available to them; particularly advertising the forthcoming Memorial Church Parade at Duntroon Military College.
The permanent Rabaul - 2/22nd Battalion Band exhibition is nearing completion for the opening of our new Heritage Centre. Here is a preview:

Sister M. Colomba, then an Irish missionary with the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in Rabaul, sends a letter home to friends with a moving account of life under the Japanese 1942-45.This will be in two issues, slightly edited for space reasons.

With thanks to Gillian Nikakis **and** ***Cecily Smith***

SISTER M COLOMBA

RAMALEI CAMP 13 November, 1945
My dear Mother, Brothers, Sisters and Friends,

Other more eloquent accounts will appear in print but I know that nothing, however eloquent, would appeal to your own good Mother, Brothers, Sisters and friends as a composition of my own. I will do my best to satisfy your legitimate curiosity.

You will wonder why we did not go to Australia. We certainly would have done so had we had the slightest idea of what was ahead of us. We really hoped the Japs would never land; besides help from South was expected. But alas: on the 23rd January 1942 the view which met our gaze on rising that morning was not pleasant - 40 Japanese war boats in Rabaul Harbour. How blue and helpless we felt. But an aged Sister on seeing them exclaimed: "Thank God, help has come in time:" No, it was not help and we had to wait three long, weary years and more; years of suspense and anxiety, before we saw a free white man again.

For a week previous to the invasion Rabaul was heavily bombed and the wounded and sick were brought out to our mission hospital in Vunapope. The evening of the 22nd Jan, I shall never forget. It poured and poured as lorry after lorry of sick and wounded drove in. Some of the men had been buried by bombs and dug out, Many of their mates and friends were missing. How sad, sick and broken those men were. Many other soldiers retreated to the jungle still expecting help. As no help came many had to come in again and surrender: a great many died of sickness and misery in the bush, whilst others more lucky managed to get to the South Coast and were taken away by submarines to Australia.

On this same evening six military, six civilian and four Methodist Missionary nurses came to us. They too, were low spirited and tho' we made the evening meal as appetising as possible they could not eat it.

Next morning, knowing that the Japs would take everything they came across, a Sister suggested getting foodstuffs from Carpenters and Burns Philps stores for the hospital. Three of us Sisters, with the aid of Mr Edwards and some native boys, carted goods for two hours when word was sent to come home, that it was dangerous to remain out any longer. We came home. Mother Martha said she thought that it would be all right for the two lrish Sisters to go back, that lreland was neutral, so there would be no danger. Off we went, Sr Fidelma who comes from Dublin, and myself. Just as our lorry was packed we heard a shout, "Hands up!" and we saw hundreds of ferocious-looking Japs unfolding flags from their bayonets as they rushed madly towards us. I trembled in every limb, my heart bounced as if it would burst through my side, They halted in front of us, two thrusting their bayonets right on our chests and shrieking at us: "You English!". We told them that we were lrish Missionaries. They shook their heads, it meant nothing to them that we were. They shouted: "Where are the Australian soldiers?" We gave the same reply trying at the same time to look as if we had never seen Australian soldiers nor knew what they meant. After some more questions to which they got no satisfactory answers, the two suddenly pulled out their revolvers. I almost collapsed. Thrusting them at our chests they viciously commanded, "Tell us where the Australian soldiers are!" lt was useless, we only reiterated our first reply and in desperation they left it at that and went off. We got home thanking God that those Jap bayonets were not stained with lrish blood.

Next day at 5 pm about 500 soldiers surrounded our convent. We were lined up on either side of the veranda, a Jap with a rifle and bayonet and another with a machine-gun at each end. Some officers went up and down between the lines asking questions as to our nationality etc.

Every now and again they would roar out some order or other, which of course we imagined to be orders to shoot us. Two solid hours they kept us lined on the veranda, whilst the mob downstairs ransacked the place. I would have given anything to have our Bishop or one of the Fathers with us. But they, too, were lined up in the monastery.

As night approached our fear became intense, convinced that they would either shoot or molest us. After what seemed an eternity an officer came up with a body guard. He, after investigating, announced that we could stay where we were but that we must not act as spies. Some hours later, Rabaul was bombed by the Aussies, and they (the Japs) flew for their lives to the beach. We breathed freely once more. But at 3 am we were awakened by the tramping of soldiers. They were all back! My bones rattled, my knees hit together. Never before had I realised what real fear was. But to our relief they were satisfied with the veranda downstairs for sleeping. From this day on we had them as armed guards day and night.

On Sunday 25th Jan the Fathers and Brothers were marched out of their three-storey house, told to take only a change of clothing and their mattresses with them, as they would be back in two days. They were interned in the convent of the German Sisters (we have two religious orders here, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who have their mother house in Germany and the Sisters of our Lady of the Sacred Heart, ourselves. There they were kept in the upper storey for six weeks, and not allowed to come downstairs, not even during air-raids. The Fathers and Brothers were never allowed to return to their house, which was occupied by the Japs, who also destroyed all their belongings; clothing, books, furniture etc. At the end of six weeks the missionaries were removed to the Girls' school nearby and the Sisters had the convent to themselves once more. We were interned in our convent and not able to continue our ordinary duties. We spent our time studying languages and other subjects.

One Sunday in June 1942 we were awakened at 4 am by troops who ordered us from below to come down quickly. There we found ourselves surrounded by Japs with rifles and bayonets, machine-guns, picks and ropes. We thought that they were going to make us dig our graves and then shoot us, as a few days earlier they had made some soldiers at the hospital dig their graves then the Japs lined them up and then informed them that they would be shot and buried there if they did not answer certain questions satisfactorily. It looked pretty black for us. It took the Nips quite a time to line us up to their satisfaction, the only thing we could understand was, "Speak no, speak no". The whisper went from one to another, "they are going to shoot us." Finally an officer said; "Anyone who moves or speaks will be shot." They searched the house, rooms, presses, books, papers, everything they could find. They even pulled down the pictures and mosquito nets and turned up our beds in the vain endeavour to find the wireless that we didn't have. The search lasted seven hours, four of which we spent standing out in the boiling sun. lt was almost midday before even the very old Sisters were able to have a drink. Mother had asked if a Sister could light a fire to make a cup of tea for the latter, but it was refused, and not a cup of water even did they get.

It was 5th July when the military, civilian and missionary nurses were taken to Rabaul, and from there we now know to Japan together with the officers of the 2/22nd Battalion. Since peace we have learned that they have all been rescued and are now back in Australia. But the ordinary soldiers, about 800 of them, and the civilians from this territory, were not so fortunate; they were taken on a troopship which was bombed by the Americans and all on board were lost. Our only Australian priest and Brother, Rev. Fr. McCullagh and Brother Brennan, were taken with the civilians and of course shared their sad fate.

By special request of our Bishop, I was allowed to come to Vunapope from Tapo (under guard of course) on the 2 November 1942 to see Father Barrow, who was dying of dysentery. On the way in we passed ninety British and Australian prisoners brought here from Singapore. Tho' surrounded by armed guards I could not bear to pass by our own men without waving to them. They answered with a beautiful salute. The Japs could not salute like that - not for a fortune. Going back that same evening we met again those same men, tired and hungry after working

unloading ships all the day. Some of them were supporting mates who seemed too exhausted to walk.

Father Barrow, who was Parish Priest in Rabaul for two years previous to the invasion, had remained in the vicinity when the attack started, hoping to help dying and wounded. He was captured with hundreds of Australian soldiers on the 24 Jan 1942, and during five weeks he got a rough time. Had to unload ships, chop wood and other menial work. Whilst in the camp he got dysentery, and like all the others got no medical treatment. At the end of five weeks Father was brought to Vunapope. He was bright and apparently his old self, the sunshine of the camp, always full of wit and humour. But tho' he never spoke of it he was suffering all the time and early in November he got a serious relapse. When I saw him on the 2nd November he was dying and even then witty and cheerful. He died next day. Father was loved and admired by all, white, yellow and black. He was a great missionary and is still talked of and mourned.. His funeral was very simple. He was carried to our little cemetery followed by all who were at the Mission. The Sisters told me there was not a dry eye, I was not at the funeral, as you know, I had seen him for the last time the day before, but I was able to visit and pray at his grave later on when I had been brought in to the camp. The seminarists whom he had been teaching for some months previous to his death simply idolised him and took great pains to keep his grave in order.

Back in Tapo we went on fairly well except that we were pestered by the Japs imposing on us and in spite of all my protestations that I had many sick, etc. I had to make shirts, trousers and even whole uniforms for them. One day too, a Jap threatened to cut my head off. I had refused to give him an injection, told him they had their own doctors. Some days later, the man was shot - a bullet from a New Zealand plane - and died almost immediately. He had been supervising about a hundred native men who were working in a garden for the Japs, and though the bullets were many and fast he was the only one struck. This incident increased the estimation of the natives for the pilots about 100%.

We were always being told that we were to be taken into the compound but it was not until 12 Oct 43, that they actually put us behind barbed wire. That day about 500 planes came over Rabaul. Planes flew over us in Tapo, machine gunning fiercely, bullets went through the church, convent, hospital and school, but the Lord takes care of his own, no one was hurt tho' we were all caught unawares. The bombing and machine gunning continued every day, so at long last the Japs came and ordered us to Vunapope. lt was the 28 October, we went off with a heavy hearts leaving weeping natives behind us.

ln Vunapope everybody was bright and cheerful (even behind the barbed wire) and in spite of the fact that the food was most unpalatable. But we had sufficient food at the time, it was sent in by the three Brothers who had been allowed to remain at the farm to look after the natives. From this time on we had two or three raids every day; they were terrifying although only a few bombs actually fell close to our camp. Most of the Sisters were terribly scared and would fly to the trenches, about two hundred yards from our house, as soon as a plane was heard.

Then the tragic and never-to-be-forgotten day dawned. T’was Feb 11, 1944. At about 9.30 am the siren went. Those ever on the alert went straight to the big trench. After about thirty minutes on came the bombers. We, standing near a very small trench near the house, were as usual admiring them when suddenly Mother Martha shouted "Sisters get in, they are diving!" Immediately they opened fire, riddling the place with machine gunning. A few minutes later the bombs were falling all around us. The little trench, which had only a covering of about a foot of earth, could not stand it and it caved in, nearly burying us.

We were terribly frightened, but it was only when we emerged that we realised how serious things were. ln the missing buildings alone, three hundred Japs were killed. All our buildings which the Japs occupied got a direct hit. Ninety were killed in this trench. When we came out there were human bodies, pieces of flesh, hands, arms, etc., all over the place. lt was gruesome. The Japs came around gathering up the remains of their comrades, but they didn't get the half of it, our children were gathering up pieces for weeks after. You can imagine the

stench was indescribable. We Missionaries had few casualties. An American Brother was killed outright and ten Fathers, Brothers and two Sisters were wounded. The two Sisters recovered, but the others all died later. Of course we got no treatment or medicines for them from the Japs. Our laundry, kitchen, hospital and pharmacy were completely destroyed. The side of the chapel was blown away, bullets and pieces of shrapnel penetrated all our camp houses destroying almost everything that was in them. Very few though, ever slept in the house again. That first night nobody dared to remain in the house, we went early to our battered chapel, said our prayers and each taking a blanket and pillow went to the trench. lt was like leaving home, we wondered if we would ever again see our house. There was not nearly enough sleeping space in the trench, so some of us slept on logs, others in tool sheds close by. We took up our duties once more but of course under very altered conditions. Each day we had to rush several times to the trenches. There were several big raids daily, besides single planes dashing out of the blue at all times of the day. On the 18th we had a particularly terrifying experience. Two planes shot over us, machine-gunning fiercely as they went. We made a wild rush to get to the trench, but only about three yards from the house we had to throw ourselves to the ground., The bullets fell all around us. That same night Vunapope was shelled from the warships. lt was a continuous blasting for about three hours -- the noise was ear-splitting. We sat praying in our trenches, trusting our good angels to keep the shells away from the entrance. Sunday night a second shelling was just as terrifying, if not more so.

To be continued next issue…

MAX HENDERSON
MALENY

Andrea, presumably you are aware that Peter Garrett is a nephew of Tom and Ann Garrett, who owned Varzin plantation on the Toma Road.

Tom was a hail-fellow-well-met sort of bloke who didn't mind a drink from time to time. I well remember driving past the Kokopo Sports Club just after 6am in November 1970 after an early visit to Vunapope Hospital on the morning my first daughter was born, and being puzzled by three cars parked at the Club. Intrigued I also parked – inside was the manager, Archie Page, propping up the hatch on the bar from behind the counter, and Tom and a couple of other hard-working planters holding their own on the other side. Quite naturally we thought it was appropriate to wet the baby's head. Only later did I work out that this was a morning ritual for the quartet.

BRIAN WRIGLEY
GEELONG

I am a member and past president of Geelong Legacy Club and am currently the Victorian Representative Member on Legacy Australia Council.

The story of the invasion at Kavieng and the aftermath of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru hangs on the wall at "Murray House" or club rooms in Geelong, as a memorial to Norman Joseph Murray.

Norman was a member of No 1 Independent Company and the premises were donated to Legacy by his aunt Florence Craig.

I conducted extensive research into this subject in 2007 resulting in the honour board to Norman.

During the research I discovered that we have some amazing connections to the MM in the Geelong district.

Mrs Eveline Stirk who is one of my widows rang me last night to advise me of the July functions which she will be attending with her son and daughter inlaw. Her son never met his father.

We also have another lady aged 95 yrs who knew Norman before the war and a lady in Torquay who's brother was a member of the 2/22 Btn.

WARWICK RISBY
HOBART
I understand that a photo of my uncle Keith Trigg, who enlisted as Eric Kenneth Triggs NX53269 and was lost on the Montevideo Maru, was featured on the ABC News and Channel Seven 'Today Tonight' on Anzac night news.
I understand school children may have carried his photo.
Because I did not see this news item I wish to find out if a video copy of the *story* broadcast on TV is available and whether Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society or perhaps the War Memorial in Canberra were involved in presenting this News item.

I would be grateful if you or any other member may be able to assist in obtaining this information for which I am happy to make payment.

LES DREW
CANBERRA
Whilst watching the parade on Monday I wondered whether it would be a good idea to have a Lark Force/Montevideo group in next year's march – just before the unveiling of our memorial. Just a thought.

SUZANNE PASCOE
BLACKBURN VIC

You must have been hard at work on publicity as friends from both Melbourne and Sydney sent me newspaper articles! Although I didn't actually see anyone, the *Montevideo Maru* was given a mention on the ABC TV coverage of the Melbourne Anzac Day march, and Rabaul referred to several times.
Yesterday I attended an Anzac Service and Luncheon at my father's old School, Carey Grammar. I talked about the Montevideo Maru whenever I could and was encouraged that so many had heard about it recently for the first time.
Although I know you are not canvassing ideas for the memorial structure, an image came to my mind which is probably daft. I could visualise a beautiful, graceful, curving wave with part of the crest just starting to curl over. To my simple mind, this suggests the bond with the sea between both islands and ship.
By the way, am I allowed to enquire after Keith's health?
Best wishes and thanks for all you are doing.

MARG CURTIS
MT MARTHA
I was recently asked to collate the names of all those who lost their lives on the Montevideo Maru. Whilst I was aware of the number of people who lost their lives, a section I had to go through was the Civilians who lost their lives in New Britain, including the Montevideo Maru and I found this quite confronting with not only going through the names but also the description of the deaths. One person who I found particularly upsetting was an 11 year old boy, Richard Manson, who was executed by firing squad at Matupit on May 31, 1942. He was the youngest person to be executed in New Britain. Sometimes we forget what happened in Rabaul during the Japanese invasion – hopefully by us talking about it, we make sure we don't forget and we make others aware.
See lists at: http://www.australian-pow-ww2.com/montevideo_maru_11.html
http://www.army.gov.au/ahu/Montevideo_Maru_Roll.asp

DONATIONS

Recent donations towards the memorial have been gratefully received from:

John Schindler, Mittagong RSL, Dorothy Trigg, Murray Seiffert, Les Drew, John Pearn, Cecily Smith, Sen Anne McEwen, Pat Johnson, Dorothy Collings, Harry West, John Snewin, Elizabeth Albert/Selby family, Warwick Fisher, Michael Hoye, Michael Waterhouse, Papua New Guinea Association of Australia

MEMORIAL NOTICEBOARD

A NATIONAL TIME OF REMEMBRANCE - 69th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

Enrol now for a major event in Canberra to mark the 69th 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. Cost for both $55. Payment methods are under 'Society membership' below. Contact Andrea Williams on 0409 031 889 or 02 9449 4129 or at andrea.williams@bigpond.com.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO *MEMORIAL NEWS* ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

E: andrea.williams@bigpond.com Or P O Box 1743 Neutral Bay NSW 2089

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 or write to PO Box 18137, Collins Street East, *Melbourne* VIC 8000.

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

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: