



**Rabaul & Montevideo Maru**

# Memorial News 30

September 2011

**MINUTES of 1<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL  
GENERAL MEETING**  
held Wednesday 14 September 2011  
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## **BENDIGO REMEMBRANCE GROUP TO DEDICATE PLAQUE LOIS AND ERIC NEWMAN**

On the 11th November 2011 we are going to dedicate a special plaque after the Service of Remembrance at the Bendigo RSL. If anyone would like to join us they will be most welcome.

The Bendigo Remembrance group numbers have swelled to 80 families now and, as a result, our mailing list has grown to 103.

We have attended several functions with the Bendigo RSL and have become members of the Commemorative committee.

The book that we have pieced together to remember our men of the 2/22nd is coming along - we still need a few families to contribute to its content before we get it finished. With the aid of the RSL we hope to get it printed.

## **[www.memorial.org.au](http://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

## **BOB OATLEY TRIBUTE ON BEHALF OF MR COLYER IN MEMORY OF MR SPENSLEY**

BOB OATLEY'S recent donation to the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial is on behalf of the late Mr RA Colyer and in memory of Bill Spensley who lost his life with events following the invasion of Rabaul in 1942.

Gillian Nikakis, in her book *'He's Not Coming Home'* writes about her father Bill Spensley, a civilian living in Rabaul who had joined the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NG 4031):

'He was my son's grandfather. What sort of grandfather would he have been? Were my sons like him? Was John [my brother] like him? The older I became the more I craved knowledge of him...

'In about 1933 Mr Colyer decided to open an office in Rabaul. He believed there was a future in exporting copra, trochus and other produce and decided to send Bill Spensley to Rabaul to set up an import and export firm. Colyer Watson were the managing agents for the Norddeutscher Lloyd Shipping Company, a German company based in Bremen. Two ships called in to pick up the copra and trochus and brought in tinned meats and juice, cars and all kinds of other goods. Although a man of few words, Bill was dynamic, with a strong personality and a wonderful sense of humour. He was popular with both sexes and in business he had a reputation for being tough but fair. He did not suffer fools gladly and had a tendency to make his feelings known.'

Bob Oatley's first job, in the war years, was with Colyer Watson, a trading company with operations in Australia, New Zealand, and New Guinea.

(Cont. P2)

Mr Colyer, a man of tremendous energy and vitality with good business acumen, was to make a lifelong impact on Bob Oatley. PNG had an influence too and in 1958, at the age of 30, Bob became the head of Colyer Watson's New Guinea coffee trading division. The impression was not one-sided though because, in 1963, Mr Colyer offered Bob the opportunity to be a partner in a new company, Angco, to control coffee and cocoa operations in New Guinea. Bob never lived in PNG but travelled frequently and extensively throughout. The enormous regard in which Mr Colyer is held is palpable - and clearly deserved. Mr Colyer lost an outstanding employee and Gillian Nikakis lost a loving father. Because Mr Colyer never forgot Mr Spensley, nor did Mr Oatley.

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial will acknowledge those who, like Bill Spensley, contributed to the early development of New Guinea.

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP OF  
THE SOCIETY DUE  
1 September 2011**

Help commemorate an important part of the history of Australia and Papua New Guinea by continuing your membership of the Society or donating to the memorial. *Memorial News*, the monthly newsletter of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, is available only to financial members. Life members will receive a Certificate recording their special membership of the Society.

**How to join the Society:**

**Electronically:**

Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society  
BSB 082-401 Account No 16-083-2367.  
Please notify the deposit to Richard  
Saunders: Richard@isaunders.com.au

**By mail.** Post a cheque to the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society:  
PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089.

**By credit card** - please complete form at end of newsletter.

**The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society is committed to applying all funds to the establishment of a Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial.**

## **SIXTEEN WENT TO RABAU: ONLY THREE CAME HOME DON HOOK**

The Japanese invasion of Rabaul and the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* in 1942 had a profound effect on the Victorian town of Leongatha and surrounding farming areas.

Of the 16 young men from there who went to Rabaul, only three came home. Six went down on the *Montevideo Maru*, another six were executed when attempting to escape, and four did manage to escape but one of them, Major (later LtColonel) Bill Owen, was killed shortly afterwards in action on the Kokoda Track.

Early this year, our Society sent background material and a story to the editor of the *Star* newspaper in Leongatha.

We quoted from an article written by local author Lyn Skillern in which she mentioned "the wave of sadness" over the town in October 1945 when telegrams arrived confirming the deaths of those on the Japanese prison ship.

Lyn, a member of the Leongatha Historical Society, recently advised the local RSL sub-branch of our appeal to raise funds for the building of a memorial to honour those killed in the Japanese invasion of the New Guinea islands, and the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*.

Last week we received a cheque from the Leongatha RSL sub-branch for \$1,000. Thank you very much. It's hoped that Leongatha will be well represented at the dedication of the memorial to take place at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on 1 July 2012 - the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* with the loss of 1,053 Australians. It remains Australia's worst maritime tragedy.

### **Membership**

One post or email address - \$50  
Gold membership - \$100  
Life membership - \$500

## FIRST 50 CALLERS - AIR NIUGINI SPECIAL FARES

Exclusive discounts are available for Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society members wanting to travel to Papua New Guinea with Air Niugini (only for bona fide members.)

- Limited to first 50 callers only
- Bookings must be made by 30 October 2011 and direct through Air Niugini's Brisbane office only on 07 3221 1544. Brisbane callers can dial 1300 361 380.

*If you dial 1300 361 380 from other states you get Air Niugini's local office. This is a special arrangement with the Brisbane Air Niugini office only.*

- Fare and discount will vary according to availability
- Members must quote their membership when making the booking otherwise normal fares will apply.

Air Niugini reservations staff will quote both the normal fare price plus the discounted fare price.

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## AURORA EXPEDITIONS PNG - 70<sup>th</sup> commemoration voyage

### RABAU ANZAC Day 2012 –

To acknowledge the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Australia's entry into the Pacific War and Papua New Guinea's entry into World War II, *Aurora Expeditions* offers a special commemorative voyage:

***Lost in Paradise - Our Fallen Heroes.*** Aurora's historian shines a light on the courage and tragedy of Australia's unsung heroes - Lark Force - in the Battle of Rabaul, and the ensuing loss of lives, both troops and civilians, on the *Montevideo Maru*.

With moving dawn ceremonies at Tol and Rabaul, this cruise will reawaken the true courage and sacrifice of WWII.

*Aurora Cruises* offer two historic voyages to the New Guinea Islands in April 2012 - see box for details.

The PNG brochure is currently online at:  
<http://www.auroraexpeditions.com.au/papuanewguinea2012>

Further information and brochures are also available from: *Aurora Expeditions* +61 2 9252 1033 or 1800 637 688 (free call within Australia)

**Note: Aurora Expeditions support the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial.**

*There is already considerable interest and it is suggested that you consider options as soon as convenient.*

### VOYAGE 1:

**2-14 April 2012**

#### ***Island of Smiles***

Alotau, Dobu/Ferguson Is, Trobriands/Kitava, Lababia, Wannam/Tami group, Madang, Murik Lakes, Mandam, Karkar, Siassi Island (Tuam), Tufi, Weddau/Dogura, Alotau For those wishing to explore the islands and coastline of New Guinea, and to experience the diverse array of customs, snorkel, swim, bird watch, or perhaps go on village walks or join in a football match.

### VOYAGE 2:

**70<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Voyage:**

**14-26 April 2012**

#### ***Lost in Paradise - Our Fallen Heroes***

Alotau, Milne Bay/Samarai, D'Entrecasteaux islands - Dobu & Ferguson Is, Egum Atoll and Gawa Is, Trobriands, Lindenhafen near Gasmata, Palmalmal/Jacquinot Bay, Karlai/Wide Bay, Tol (pre-dawn landing and ceremony), Lambon & Lamassa - New Ireland, Duke of York Is, Rabaul.

This voyage, visiting key historical sites and beautiful beaches and coral atolls, will arrive in Rabaul in time for a special 70<sup>th</sup> ANZAC Day service on 25 April 2012 before disembarking 26 April.

There is also an option to experience the 65km **Lark Force Wilderness Trek from Vunga, near Rabaul, to Tol** - admire the courage of Australian soldiers as you follow their footsteps on the jungle route to escape overwhelming numbers of Japanese in early 1942.

Options for the voyages also include kayaking and scuba diving.

**MINUTES OF THE 1st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE  
RABAU AND MONTEVIDEO MARU SOCIETY INC**

Held at the Jackson Wells Pty Ltd Board Room, Neutral Bay (Sydney)  
on Wednesday 14 September 2011

Meeting opened 11.10 am

**Members Present:** Clive Troy, Elizabeth Thurston, Patrick Bourke, Don Hook, Dennis Doyle, Teddy Haryjanto, Frazer Harry, Marg Curtis, Kerry Sibraa, Phil Ainsworth (chair), Andrea Williams

**Apologies:** Phyllis and Doug Smith, Helen Nottage Moulds, Ted Domenev, Warren Turner, Robert Donald McPhee, Max Hayes, Sandy McNabb, Julia Richardson, Peter Dennis, Colin Henry, Alan and Marg Benson, Lindsay Cox, Philip (Hooky) Street, Keith Jackson, Bob Lawrence, Ally Martell, Rev Neville Threlfall, Christine Watkinson.

**President's Report:** presented by Phil Ainsworth (see below). Great appreciation for the work and support by Jackson Wells - shown by acclamation.

*Moved: P Ainsworth Seconded: P Bourke that the report be accepted. Carried*

**Treasurer's Report:** T Haryjanto presented the financial report (attached separately) for the year ended 30 June 2011 and provided a current update. Funds presently held are: Bank: \$20,697.35 Australian War Memorial: \$62,846.44 Term Deposit (NAB): \$150,000.00 Undeposited cheque just received: \$10,000

*Moved: T Haryjanto Seconded: Don Hook that the report be accepted. Carried*

**Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report:** Circulated. Meeting agreed that the Auditor's Financial Statements and Report be accepted.

**Receipt of AR Form - Annual Statement of Particulars by Association - confirmed**

**Correspondence:** Acknowledgement that this is ongoing and, as such, meeting agreed correspondence be accepted.

**Election of Office Bearers and Committee -**

There were no contested positions. The following people were declared elected:

President: Phil Ainsworth

Vice-President: Hon Kerry Sibraa

Treasurer: Richard Saunders

Secretary: Andrea Williams

Committee: Liz Thurston, Marg Curtis, Lindsay Cox, Frazer Harry

**Election of Honorary Auditor:**

Page Harrison & Co.

*Moved T Haryjanto, Seconded P Bourke. Carried*

**General Discussion -**

Phil Ainsworth advised that a meeting is scheduled with Hon Warren Snowdon on 21 September followed by a meeting with Hon Peter Garrett later that afternoon. Phil has indicated to the Hon Peter Garrett that the Society welcomes his continuation as Patron.

Members discussed the residual amount needed for the memorial to go ahead and voiced concern at the age of the few remaining siblings and children.

Don Hook confirmed the need for final approval of the memorial design by the National Capital Authority.

Phil Ainsworth clarified that the Heritage Impact Assessment required the memorial to have a slight shift in location whilst remaining in the same general area.

Dennis Doyle queried the role of the Society in the long term - it was acknowledged that the members will decide the future.

Liz Thurston thanked Phil Ainsworth for stepping in when Keith Jackson needed to step back and commented on the huge achievement by the Society since the first meeting. Dennis Doyle supported this, stating it was an outstanding performance in the time frame.

Don Hook presented ideas for the dedication in July 2012. A luncheon is proposed for Saturday 30 June 2012 with the dedication on Sunday 1 July 2012, commencing approximately 11.30am. General agreement that the National Press Club was good value in 2011 although numbers will possibly need limiting. Support already confirmed from Salvation Army and Defence Force Clergy. Patrick Bourke suggested that various countries would need representation at the dedication.

Discussion over the Shipwreck Act - Clive Troy commented that it may be possible to enlist support from Philippines President Ramos in regards to assisting Australia ratify any proposed treaty, or to enable the deployment of a vessel to the general area in which the *Montevideo Maru* is thought to have been sunk.

Discussion on the prisoner-of-war cards held in Japan.

Meeting closed: 12.25pm

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT AT THE INAUGURAL AGM HELD AT JACKSON WELLS OFFICE, SYDNEY, 11 AM WEDNESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2011**

Good morning,

This is the first AGM of the Society and it is being held within 18 months of the Society's formation according to law.

Since forming, the Society has been successful in advancing, if not achieving many of its objectives, the activities of which have been exhaustively covered in the Society's monthly newsletter, speeches and announcements.

The success of the Society is attributed to the work of its hard working executive supported strongly by its members and allied stakeholders. Particular mention must be made of the support given by Jackson Wells and its Directors and employees, without which the Society would not have progressed to where it is today.

Specifically I mention Directors Keith Jackson, John Wells and Kerry Sibraa, the Society's foundation President and Vice President; Treasurer Teddy Haryjanto, Secretary Bob Lawrence with office and web assistance from Kurt Walter and James Cropper.

As you are aware Keith Jackson resigned in February 2011 due to ill health and the Committee elected me as President.

Our foundation Patron the Hon Kim Beasley resigned to take up his position as Australia's Ambassador to the United States late 2009 and we were fortunate to obtain The Hon Peter Garrett as Patron.

I understand that Bob Lawrence and Teddy Haryjanto will stand down today. The Society owes Jackson Wells and those mentioned a huge debt of gratitude for their sterling work and I propose the meeting show by acclaim its appreciation for a job well done and one which they can be justly proud, thank you.

The Society held a very successful luncheon and Memorial Service early July.

In mid August the AWM Council approved the selected artist, his design, budget and timings.

The executive have contacted many governments, organizations, corporations and individuals in its endeavor to raise the capital necessary to complete the memorial for dedication on 1

July 2012. However, due to the economic situation it has to date not succeeded in attaining its goal. Accordingly Kerry Sibraa, Don Hook and I are meeting with the Minister for Veteran Affairs on Wednesday 21 September to seek top up funding so the artist may be commissioned. Meanwhile the fund raising will continue to achieve the Society's fund raising goal.

James Parrett's concept is an honest and contemporary style of memorial which, when installed in its conspicuous position, will attract attention due to the innovativeness in design and difference to any other memorial in AWM's sculptural garden. People will visit the memorial and read the compelling story on the accompanying plaque and wonder the significance of the circles and curves which will mean many things to many people. If the memorial achieves this, which I believe it will do, the success of the concept will be confirmed.

Preliminary arrangements have commenced for the dedication ceremony on 1 July to which the Governor General has been invited.



**Judith Gullidge with Major Kelvin Alley at the 69<sup>th</sup> commemorative luncheon, National Press Club, Canberra, on 02 July 2011**

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**PHYLLIS SMITH (NEE MACADAM)  
BELLINGEN**

A recent experience my sister had could be of interest to others. Diana had let her passport lapse and when she went to renew it she was told that, effectively, she was not an Australian! For those that do not know, if you were born in the Territory of New Guinea (TNG) before 1975 you have to be naturalized! She has only been here since December 1941, when we were evacuated from Rabaul! Both our parents were Australian; she has been working since she was fifteen, paid her taxes, married, had a family, had several passports etc etc and now she is not an Australian!

Diana has had to apply to the Immigration Department for recognition of her citizenship(!) and provide details of her parentage, grandparents etc, as though she had just arrived on the scene!

Her experience is a warning to others that the rules have changed so don't let your passport lapse!

## COUSINS MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CANBERRA, JULY 2011

### ROS DOMAN

I was researching my father's family when I found that he had an older brother, Harry. Lloyd Hobbs, my father, had known that his brother Harry had married and had had two children before being shipped to Rabaul in 1941. When Harry didn't come home, Lloyd didn't speak about him. After several years of researching, I finally found the missing cousins in Sydney! Their family name was Hobb. Del Holder, Harry's daughter, told Ros of the 69<sup>th</sup> commemorative event in Canberra and what a special opportunity it would be for the cousins to meet...which we did for the very first time!

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## AUSTRALIAN OFFICERS IN ZENTSUJI POW CAMP JAPAN



Photo: Bussell family collection. Photo taken of Australian officers in Zentsuji POW camp. Lt John Bussell sent this as a postcard to his wife, his writing can be seen on the back. Photo taken 13 June 1943

Standing L-R: Lt GAC Milne 2/22<sup>nd</sup> AIF, Lt JC Archer, NGVR, Lt DR Haas Ord, Lt RT Hoffman AASC, Lt A Clark Anti-tank, Capt FE Shier 2/22 AIF, Lt JH Bowring 2/22 AIF, Lt JR Badham 2/22 AIF, Lt J Harper RN, S/Lt TF Robbins RANVR, Lts GWP Dixon Indep AIF, Lt W Gay RAN, Major JE Wilson Indep, Lt/Comdr POL Owen RAN, Col JJ Scanlon QNGA, Lt JL Burns Indep, Major NB Watch NGVR, Capt HJA Tozer AAPC, Lt HS Erwin 2/22 AIF, Lt J Bussell 2/22 AIF, Lts AW Page Indep AIF, Lt NJ Lyons HQ, Capt S Nottage RAA, Lt ER Almond 2/22 AIF, Lt WG Grant 2/22 AIF, Capt SE Robertson 2/10 AIF Squatting L-R: Lt C Kilner NGVR, Lt C Marshall 2/22 AIF, Lt HEW Dowse 2/22 AIF, Lt CN Stirling 2/22 AIF, Major Matheson Anti-Tank, Capt RA McDonald, Dental, Lt EW Best 2/22 AIF, Lt GW Braden 2/22 AIF, Capt JT McCallum 2/22 AIF, Padre JL May 2/22 AIF, Capt DC Hutchinson Smith, Lt CV Neilson Ord. Two of the officers in the picture are Americans whose names are unknown.

**Sue Bussell has an Index of her father's photos** - Matupit, Vulcan, Pioneer Platoon, Pte Hank Zanker, Pte Whitehead, Pte Broadbent, Pte Pryor, Bonegilla, A Company, 7 Pl, A Coy, John Bussell, Malaguna Road, Chinatown, Corp Bob Gries, Driver, Snow May, Pte Arty Pike. If you are interested in speaking with her about them please contact her at:

[suezb@iprimus.com.au](mailto:suezb@iprimus.com.au)

# EXCERPTS FROM JAMES PARRETT'S ORIGINAL PROPOSAL FOR *PASSAGE*

## Statement of Intent

In order for *Passage* to meet the brief, the following points have been taken into consideration:

- Maintaining existing views. It is vital that the artwork does not sub-divide the area, both visually and as an obstacle for the high volume of foot traffic. The sculpture would be large but have several points in which the viewer can see and walk through, creating breathing space instead of an imposing barrier.
- A horizontal work (as proposed) will help allow for a major landmark to be created but not one which will take over the site or compromise the existing views.
- The site has many viewpoints both from close up and far away so it is important to have a sculpture with a multitude of engaging aspects.
- Achieving the correct scale. Too big and that is all the audience will remember; too small and it won't create a statement. The sculpture will be substantial, yet retain its elegance and accessibility.
- The memorial needs to be timeless yet fresh, a landmark that won't age physically or conceptually. People are going to be looking at this work for the foreseeable future so it needs to continue to be relevant to different generations.
- Lighting and landscape design has to be in harmony with the surrounds.
- Safety and risk of defacement or vandalism played a big part in the creative process. The work would not be easy to climb and the low-lying sections would either be too high or too low for children to hit their heads. Every edge would also be rounded out to negate the possibility of cuts or serious bumps. My proposed material (stainless steel) is very strong and maintains its structural integrity. It is also very hard to vandalise.

## Materials

My desired material for *Passage* is marine-grade stainless steel, being the only material to give structural integrity, aesthetic beauty and the sense of contemplative grandeur that this memorial requires. The only on-going maintenance of the artwork would involve general dusting and washing.

## Lighting:

The most effective way to create a different aesthetic for *Passage* when viewed at night is to install some simple, diffused up-lighting. Stainless steel will further enhance this effect. It is also important to limit the brightness of the lighting due to its location in both a war memorial setting and urban city.

I strive to keep the groundwork around my sculptures as simple as possible and this is no exception. The site already has some beautifully maintained grass and because the concrete pad and fixing method will be under the earth, I would like to leave the grass exactly as it is. *Passage* will then look like it is carefully poised on the existing ground works, not scarring the earth or competing with its surrounds.

## Artist comment:

I consider an abstract sculpture that is symbolic of the event will get people thinking about what happened and also may lead them into further investigation. Due to the relatively timeless aesthetic of the abstract form, such symbolism should remain accessible for future generations.

The sadness will always remain, but through such a commemoration there will be the conveyance that the victims are now at peace and viewers can rest knowing that their memory is protected. I further want the work to pay respect to the many people who lost their lives in the war fighting to ensure our quality of contemporary life.

## CORPORAL WILFRED ERNEST TRIGG (VX40058) 2/22<sup>ND</sup> BATTALION BAND LINDSAY COX

At the time of his enlistment at Geelong on 21 June 1940 Wilfred Trigg was 26 years of age, married with two young sons. He was a qualified architect and one-time winner of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Bronze Medal, and was working as a professional photographer, whilst also being the Bandmaster of the Salvation Army's Geelong Central Band.

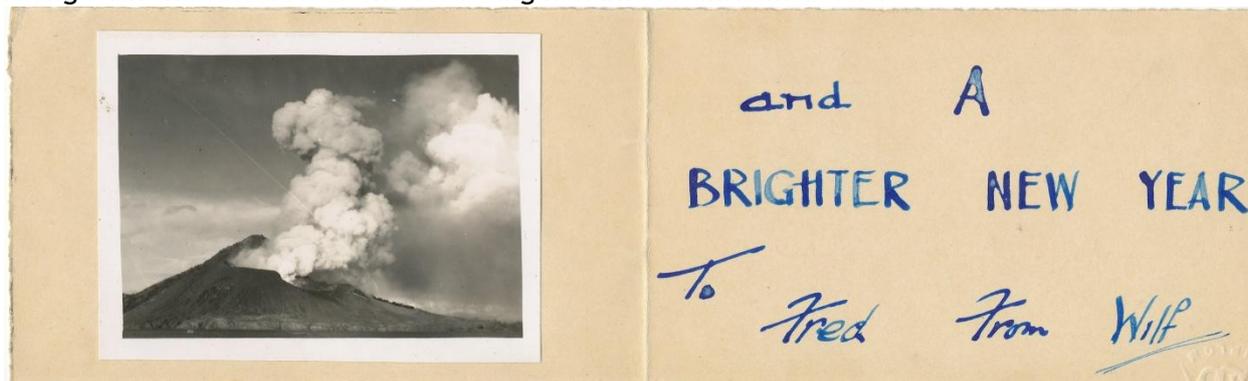
Upon enlistment Wilf was posted to the 2/1<sup>st</sup> Survey Regiment. However, on 6 August 1940 he transferred into the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Band and was appointed Deputy-Bandmaster and duly promoted to Corporal on 23 September 1940.

Wilfred had originally enlisted with his best friend Fred Boyle, a fellow bandsman in the Geelong Central Band. Fred was rejected enlistment because of his employment in the protected textiles industry. Thus Fred survived the war and like his friend Wilf, became Bandmaster of the Geelong Central Band. He died in 1980, aged 68.

Until Wilf was captured during the Japanese invasion of Rabaul on 23 January 1942, and his subsequent death on the Japanese transport ship Montevideo Maru on 1 July 1942, the two friends corresponded frequently.

Major David Woodbury of The Salvation Army in Sydney was given six letters from Wilfred Trigg in Rabaul to Fred Boyle in Geelong. A letter dated 14 November 1941 says poignantly, "*Sometimes I feel there is nothing I would not do or give to be back home with wife and family*".

Along with the letters was the following handmade Christmas card:



### NOTE:

If you received this newsletter by post and you have an email address which could be used, it would be appreciated if you could let us know please. This will save both costs and time. Please email: [admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)

## KEN SATO - THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH BY ROD MILLER

When the Japanese transport ship *Naruto Maru* cast off from Rabaul on the 4th of July 1942, the 18 Australian women and 60 officers of Lark Force, the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and 1 Independent Company knew nothing of their fate in Japan. These men and women endured 10 hard days at sea in the hold of the ship before their arrival in Yokohama.

Although nothing is noted in official files, an unusual event took place upon their disembarking. The women were taken to the dockside Customs office, where their meagre belongings underwent a formal Customs inspection. They were then taken to a modest tourist hotel, where a Japanese woman dressed in a kimono behind the reception desk (speaking English) asked if they would prefer single or double rooms!

The male officers were taken to the clubhouse of the pre-war American Rowing and Yacht Club, on the foreshore of Yokohama harbour. Here they were first questioned by Japanese intelligence officers and newspaper reporters. A few days later, all but eight were transferred to Zentsuji POW camp. The eight that remained included Colonel Scanlon, Major John Mollard (a Melbourne businessman), Lieutenants Ted Best (an Empire Games runner), John Bateman (a businessman) and John Gibson (who prior to the war had been an ABC radio announcer). Also included was Pilot Officer Geoff Lempriere, from a well-known family of Victorian wool-buyers, who had done business with Japanese firms for many years prior to the war. Although official archives provide little information on what subsequently happened to these officers, some of them made statements to journalists after their release in Japan in 1945 and others noted events in their diaries and memoirs, allowing us to build up a picture of events.

The officers retained at the clubhouse were questioned by two faultlessly-dressed Japanese, Tomokazu Hori and Baron Masamitsu Takasaki. (Interestingly, Takasaki had been in Singapore in April 1942 trying to persuade Charles Cousens to accompany him to Tokyo to broadcast. In her book *Australia's Forgotten Prisoners*, Professor Christina Twomey states that in July 1942 Takasaki also interviewed Australian journalist Dorothy Jenner in Hong Kong, suggesting that she could work for the Japanese news agency *Domai* and that the Japanese wanted her to urge Australian troops to lay down their arms and join the Co-Prosperity Sphere.)

Hori was head of the Third Department of the Japanese Foreign Office and concerned with the distribution of diplomatic information. After this meeting, all but one officer (John Gibson, who remained in Yokohama) boarded a train and after a journey lasting half an hour, three of the officers (Mollard, Best and Lempriere) were taken off and transferred to the infamous Ofuna Interrogation Camp. (In 1943 Squadron Leader Noel Quinn joined those officers at Ofuna, having been sent to Japan after being shot down over Rabaul.)

In August 1945, shortly after his release in Japan, Lempriere told journalist Geoffrey Tebbutt:

We were surprised at how much they knew about individuals and businesses in Australia. They even knew the names of the lift-drivers in some large Melbourne and Sydney businesses, and asked many questions about which business leaders were Jews. They picked me because of my wool business connections and at first they were friendly, even exuberant when I first arrived

at Yokohama. One Japanese I knew in Melbourne said, "Hello Geoff old boy, I'm pleased to see you." After that came threats of coalmine work, hard labour, and even execution, when they saw we wouldn't fall for their schemes of using us to make Japanese propaganda... They even put up a scheme that they should fly me to Australia, and parachute me... to carry a proposal to the Australian Government.

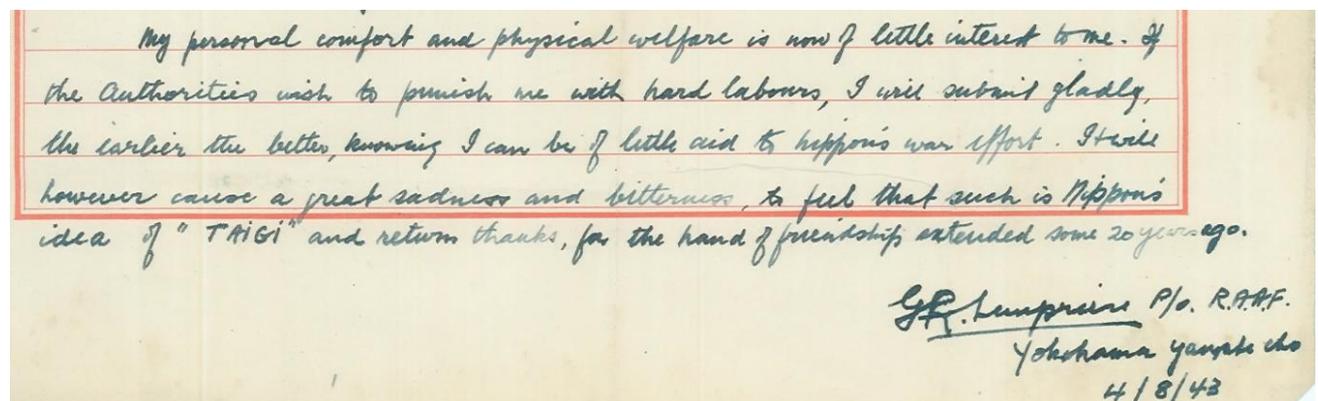
On their arrival at Ofuna, Lempriere and Mollard were interviewed by Commander Uzawa of Imperial Naval Headquarters and asked if they "loved their country". He suggested that they could best serve Australia by telling it "the truth" in broadcasts. Lempriere states:

Mollard and I both told him what our definition of traitor was and that we preferred execution to broadcasting on behalf of Japan.

It was after this exchange that Ken Sato arrived at Ofuna. He boasted to Lempriere that he was the "big noise" of the propaganda department.

On May 15, 1943, in an attempt to persuade him to broadcast, Lempriere was moved to solitary confinement in the lower level of the Yokohama Rowing/Yacht Club. By this time the Rabaul women were being housed on the upper level. Their diaries note his arrival, departure, and their attempts to communicate with him by singing messages and dropping small notes concealed in pieces of soap. In Tebbutt's article, Lempriere stated that Sato had visited him at the clubhouse and that he had behaved like a raving maniac and threatened him with execution due to his lack of cooperation. Lempriere asked for 24 hours to make his peace with the world. A couple of hours later, Sato returned and told Lempriere that he would be returning him to Ofuna.

In August 1943, after twenty months' confinement, Lempriere, using a cleverly-worded letter to his captors, got himself transferred from Ofuna.



My personal comfort and physical welfare is now of little interest to me. If the Authorities wish to punish me with hard labours, I will submit gladly, the earlier the better, knowing I can be of little aid to Nippon's war effort. It will however cause a great sadness and bitterness, to feel that such is Nippon's idea of "TAIGI" and return thanks, for the hand of friendship extended some 20 years ago.

G.F. Lempriere P/O. R.A.A.F.  
Yokohama Yards sho  
4/8/43

**This is but a small extract from Lempriere's letter to the Japanese Navy  
[AWM 27 423-23]**

From the information he had received, journalist Geoffrey Tebbutt obviously thought that Ken Sato qualified as a war criminal. In a follow-up article he posed the question:

Why is Ken Sato, who was to have been Japanese Administrator of Australia, at large and not under arrest as a war criminal? ...Sato, formerly editor of the Osaka Mainichi, introduced himself to prisoners in 1942 as "chief public relations officer of the Co-Prosperity Sphere".

In yet another 1946 article, Noel Quinn, talking of Sato, stated:

I don't know whether this little yellow ----- was responsible for putting me into Ofuna. But Lempriere and Major Mick Mollard, Lt. Best and Lt. John Gibson, who were put in there, were his particular prisoners. Sato himself was at Ofuna and knew just what went on there.

I think he was primarily responsible for having the Australian nurses from Rabaul badly treated and locked at the Yokohama Yacht Club. If he was not responsible he knew what was happening and did not use his high authority to stop it.

There is no doubt in the minds of any of us who passed through his hands that he qualifies as a war criminal.

In July 1943 John Mollard was sent from Ofuna to Zentsuji, where he related the details of life at Ofuna to his fellow officers. He told of subtle advances that had been made to him to form and lead an organisation to bring about Australia's separation from Great Britain. The Japanese had also suggested to both Charles Cousens and Geoff Lempriere that they could be flown to Australia to parachute in with a proposal for the Australian Government.

So why is it that Kennosuke Sato, a man who prior to the war had spent five months collecting invaluable information for the Japanese war effort about Australia, and who had been deeply involved with POWs, internees and propaganda, was never charged with any war crimes?

Within the Australian Archives there are two specific files on Ken Sato. In December 1945, after reading an article by Dennis Warner in the Melbourne Herald, Australian Prime Minister Ben Chifley made a request to General Douglas MacArthur for Sato to be interviewed. During this interview, the American intelligence officer questioned him about the Australia First movement and his friends in Australia that had suggested collaboration with Japan. The Australian officer who had accompanied the American interviewer must have been somewhat surprised when Sato gave the names on many prominent Australians as being his friends. They included:

**Sir John Latham**, Justice of the Supreme Court and Australia's Diplomatic Minister to Japan before the outbreak of the Pacific War.

**Sir Earl Page**, acting Prime Minister of the Commonwealth in 1934. ("I dined with him at Consul General Murai's home. He gave me much help for the publication of the Japan-Australia-New Zealand book. In fact I went to Australia to collect material for this book.")

**Professor Copeland**, of Melbourne University. Organised contributions for the book.

**Sydney Ure Smith**, very distinguished Art Editor, Sydney Morning Herald.

**Ambassador Eggleston**, Melbourne, who later became Ambassador to China.

**Premier Dunstan**, Melbourne. "He gave me help in collecting Australian cultural information."

**Mr Dyson**, head of Australian Institute for Far East Research.

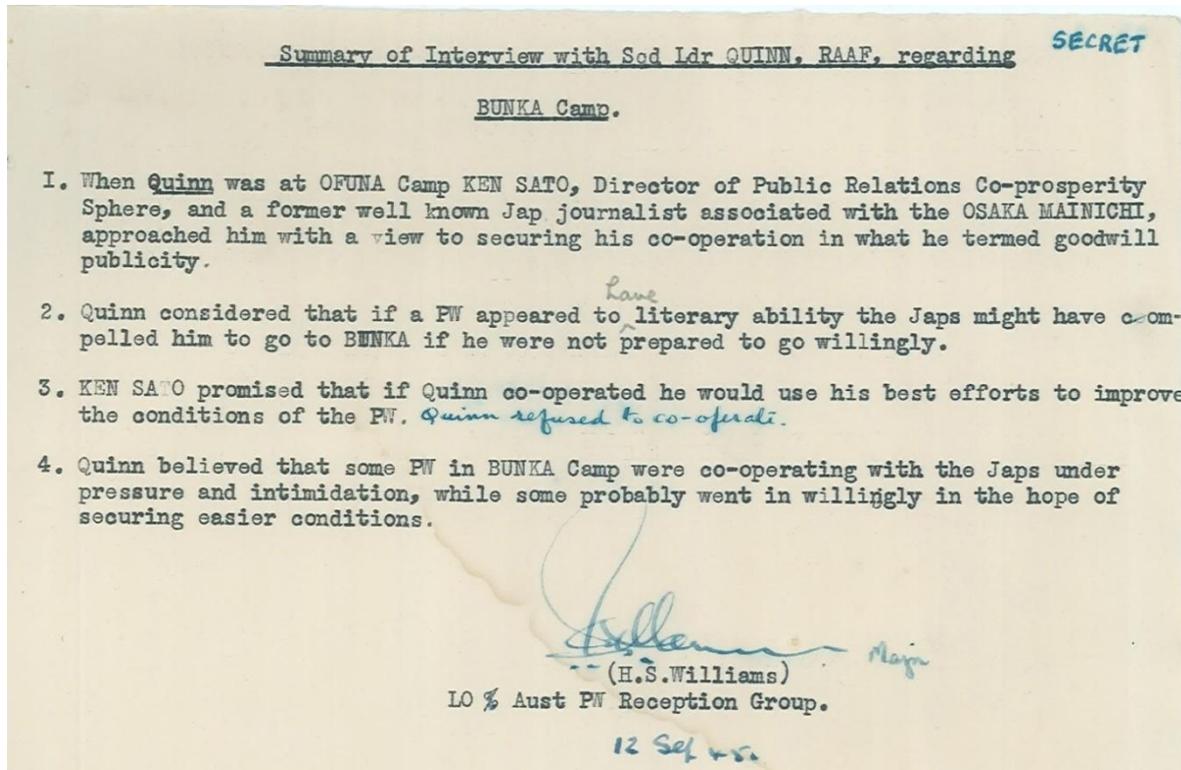
**Miss Duncan**, who was general secretary to Mr Dyson's Institute.

**Mr Fink**, owner of Melbourne Herald.

**Colonel Longfield-Loyd**, a government official in 1934

**Charles Kingsford-Smith**, who negotiated a goodwill flight from Australia to Japan.

It is interesting to note that Major Harold Williams (in Manila prior to travelling to Japan to discover the *Montevideo Maru* nominal roll) also filed a summary of an interview with WgCdr Noel Quinn, in which Sato's name is specifically mentioned. It would appear from this summary that Williams deemed it important enough to classify SECRET, implying Sato was well-known within intelligence circles and that his activities were of interest to the authorities.



As such, it is difficult to understand why no mention of Sato appears in any of the available post-war interviews given by Geoff Lempriere, while other evidence clearly shows he was one of Sato's main prisoners.

In Rabaul in May 1942, with the invasion of the New Guinea mainland imminent, the Japanese Army handed responsibility for POWs and internees to the Japanese Navy. A large roll-call (which is believed to have been the basis of the nominal roll of those lost on the *Montevideo Maru*) was conducted in Rabaul at that time. Considering Ken Sato's involvement with Earl Page in 1934 and his position as head of the Japanese Navy's Australian Intelligence Section, Sato must have known that Earl Page's brother Harold was a prisoner.

The other archival file on Sato is a 1949 report by H. C. Menzies, counselor in Japan for the Australian Department of Commerce and Agriculture. After his retirement from the *Osaka Mainichi* newspaper, Sato had been employed as the liaison representative for a number of Japanese companies that had formed the "Pacific Trading Association", which it was hoped would promote trade between Japan and Australia.

Menzies noted in his report:

Forwarded herewith is a copy of notes on an interview that I had today with Mr Ken Sato who, you will remember, was in Australia in 1934 and met Messrs. Tonkin and Lynch and the writer when he was preparing information

for a book published by him and later distributed in Australia by the Department.

But Sato's story doesn't end there; in 1946, Charles Cousens was tried for treason for broadcasting from Japan. An American, George H. [Buck] Henshaw, who had been with Cousens at Radio Tokyo, was brought to Australia to assist with his defence. A copy of Henshaw's wartime diary, kept during his time at Radio Tokyo, is available in the National Archives of Australia<sup>1</sup>. He notes that Cousens was interviewed by Sato on 31 December 1943 and that Cousens stated that he could only broadcast "names and messages" of POWs and appeal for Red Cross supplies, nothing more. Henshaw's entries for the following five days note the involvement of a Japanese named Kazumaro "Buddy" Uno, and intriguingly, his entry for January 5th 1944 notes, "*A long list of prisoners interned at Rabaul has arrived*" [at radio Tokyo]. Unfortunately he doesn't elaborate but from his description we can assume that the list was written in English. If this was the case, how did it get to Japan and why was it at Radio Tokyo?

Sato was never charged with any war crimes; nor, it would seem, ever re-interviewed about his "special prisoners" at Ofuna, or the reason why the Rabaul women were taken to Japan. I suspect that he was one man in Japan who simply knew too much.

**In the next newsletter:**

Kazumaro "Buddy" Uno. - Who was he and what was his connection with Rabaul?

Note 1. NAA: SP185/1, 42044 PART 21

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## WEBSITE

With a vast array of information on it the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru website is well worth a browse. Have you checked it lately? Kurt Walter of Jackson Wells, has been a cooperative and willing designer...with nothing too much trouble and everything done with lightning speed. Both his commitment, and that of Jackson Wells, in ensuring that the site works efficiently has been outstanding. There's always something new being added so take a look and give us your feedback. Your contributions to the website are always welcome.

**[www.memorial.org.au](http://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](mailto:andrea.williams@bigpond.com)

## RECRUIT PEOPLE AS MEMBERS

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society has over 330 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](mailto:andrea.williams@bigpond.com) or writing to the Society c/- Jackson Wells Pty Ltd, PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089

## DVD: THE FALL OF RABAU & 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](http://www.thefallofrabaul.com) or phone: 0418 740182

## FEEDBACK

**KEITH JACKSON**  
**SYDNEY**

Congratulations to you and the committee on this stunning outcome. I am sure the relatives and friends of those who perished on the Montevideo Maru and in the NG Islands conflict feel a great sense of gratitude.

**SUE PASCOE**  
**BLACKBURN VIC**

Congratulations to the Committee and James Parrett for that arresting sculpture! It encapsulates all that is required with great simplicity and excellent design. I see in it the same powerful force which drives the waves to plunge deeply, bringing destruction and tragedy, also causing them to surge upwards again to offer new life and hope. Hopefully, each viewer will find a different interpretation, which is a mark of a great work of art.

**LEAH HALL**  
**GLADSTONE QLD**

I applaud the excellent work the Board has achieved in its fundraising to date. The design of the memorial is excellent and comprises all the elements to ensure a fitting tribute to those who lost their lives in the service of their country.

**VALDA BALDWIN**

I do like the design for the memorial monument it will be just lovely.

**DEL HOLDER**  
**WINMALEE NSW**

If anyone would like a copy of Don Wall's book, *Heroes at Sea*, contact Don Wall at 98 Darley Street West, Mona Vale, NSW, 2103 or Email: [ctc@donwall.com.au](mailto:ctc@donwall.com.au) ([www.donwall.com.au](http://www.donwall.com.au)). There are only about 20 copies left from the author. This book provides a compelling account of the Australian servicemen who died at sea whilst Prisoners of War of the Japanese during World War 2. The book has an Honour Roll for those on the *Montevideo Maru*.

**JENNIFER HARRISON**

The enclosed cheque is a small contribution to the fund-raising for the memorial proposed for the grounds of the Australian War Memorial to honour the memory of those who lost their lives in the sinking of the Montevideo Maru. It comes from my father, Lew Harrison, who lost his mate, Dave Smith, from Benalla, Victoria, in this tragedy.

**ALISTAIR McCOLL**  
**BURLEIGH WATERS QLD**

My Uncle, Syd Nixon, 2/22 Battalion, was one of the many lost in the tragic sinking, I well remember the anguish my Grandmother and the rest of the family went through, not knowing what had happened. We did get sketchy information from those fortunate enough to have escaped following the Japanese landing, but it really left us more confused until the war ended and we received formal information as to Syd's fate. I had just entered my teens when Uncle Syd left Australia so I remember him well. He was a Light Horseman in the Militia when war broke out and he immediately transferred to the AIF.

As for myself, I served 18 years in the RAN and my first overseas tour of duty was with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan. Obviously many questions came to my mind during that period.

**JUDITH O'HARA nee MOORE**  
**CUMBERLAND PARK SA**

My father Richard Kingsmill Pennyfather Moore, 19-1-1886 to 1-7-1942, went to New Britain in 1919 after serving in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. In 1939 he joined the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles. He owned Tatavana Plantation between Rabaul and Kokopo. I am the youngest of his three children. I believe he was on the *Montevideo Maru*, as we received news of his death in 1945. My mother was evacuated to Australia early 1942 and sent to Moree. When Mum moved to Sydney she joined the New Guinea Club. I am pleased there will be a memorial in recognition of their sacrifice. I learnt about the Memorial from today's Advertiser. I am also interested in attending the unveiling of the memorial next July.

**MARY REDWAY**  
**HACKNEY SA**

This donation is in memory of my relative Keith Morris Gray. Keith was a nurse at the hospital in Kokopo, New Britain, and presumed drowned in the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*. I hope the appeal is a success. Too little is known of this appalling loss of life.

**FRASER HILL STEVENS - LORNA ROSE STEVENS**  
**BURLEIGH HEADS**

We are enclosing a small donation towards the memorial to be built in Canberra in honour of those killed on the *Montevideo Maru*. Our father/father-in-law/grandfather, Robert Hill Stevens, was amongst those who lost their lives. He was an employee of the Commonwealth Government working in Rabaul and kept a telephone link open to Canberra at the time of the invasion. This was recorded in the newspaper at that time (Smith's Weekly).

**MRS NG SUTTER**  
**WOODVILLE SA**

I was interested to read an article in our local paper recently about the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*. Someone very dear to me was stationed at Rabaul at this time and like so many others I waited in vain for news. His name was Donald D Findlay and he was one of a group of SA Militia under Capt Harry Medlen who I believe is still alive. Also in our local paper (10-3-11) a small article reported that the Japanese had decided to hand over records of PPOWs and relatives may learn the truth of what happened to all those boys who were captured. I would appreciate it if you could tell me if those POW records have ever been released?

**HELEN FORSYTH**  
**ST ALBANS PARK**

Please find enclosed a donation towards the Memorial which I would like to be recorded in the names of Miss Marjorie McGregor, Mrs Margaret Ruxton and Mrs Helen Forsyth in memory of their father Pte Sydney McGregor who went down on the *Montevideo Maru*.

**DEAN HUGHES**  
**BEAUMONT SA**

Congratulations on your efforts to build a memorial to such a worthy cause. It has concerned me that this tragic event has received so little official acknowledgement.

**VALMA MARTIN**  
**MITCHELTON QLD**

On Friday 1 July there was an article 'Worst Sea Disaster Marked' by Ian McPhedran in the Brisbane Courier-Mail which was of great interest to me. My father Cecil Fulton Cannon, a Marine Engineer, was taken prisoner of war by the Japanese at Rabaul New Guinea, and eventually lost his life while being transported on the

Montevideo Maru in 1942 when it was sunk. I was not aware of the existence of your society and was interested to hear of your fundraising for a Memorial.

**ELIZABETH FRASER**  
**MALVERN VIC**

I enclose a cheque in memory of my two uncles Robert and John Russell, both brothers were in the 2/22 Lark Force. Robert was on the ship but John had been killed at the very onset of fighting at Rabaul. My family and I attended the luncheon and church service at Canberra. It was very helpful to know that others have such strong feelings and a need to mourn somewhere. That was something my mother always said - having lost her only two brothers, that she wished she had somewhere to go to acknowledge them. Now she has died we are determined to let their spirits live on. Such a huge waste of lives. Thank you and your fellow office bearers for all you are doing.

**MRS JE JESSEN**  
**WISHART QLD**

I am the 90 year old sister of the late Sgt AA Samuels QX 64911 AIF AOC Rabaul, presumed to have been on the *Montevideo Maru* on 1-7-42.

His parents, brothers and sisters have all passed away, so I am his next of kin. The family were all very disappointed that these men received no recognition in their lifetime. Sgt Samuels would have been 92 years on 16<sup>th</sup> September. If there is a service in Canberra on 1-7-2012, I would like my son to represent the family there then, and for him to be notified.

**LYNDALL BOARD**  
**MacGREGOR**

After seeing an article in the Brisbane Courier Mail dated 1-7-2011 featuring the disaster of *Montevideo Maru*, I would like to contribute towards a permanent memorial at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. It is in loving memory of my cousin Alan Deighton Board who was lost on the *Montevideo Maru* with too many other courageous Australians.

**HELEN WILLIAMS**  
**HAWTHORN EAST**

Donation received 'In memory of my Uncles Jack and Bob Russell killed in action and taken prisoner? On *Montevideo Maru* (no known graves) - thanks to the Society'.

**SANDRA THWAITES**  
**CAMBERWELL**

This donation is in memory of the uncle I never met, William Australia Paterson, who died when the ship sank. I was born in 1946 and the family was still grieving the loss of a dearly loved son and brother. I did not understand that till recent years and the effect that it had on my early years. A friend loaned me a book about the sinking a few years ago and many missionaries also perished on the ship.

**CAROLINE MAHAR**  
**MINLATON**

Please find enclosed a donation towards the memorial for the *Montevideo Maru*. I was very touched by the story in July 1<sup>st</sup> Advertiser and I hope you realise your goal.

**JOY LARKIN**  
**MORNINGTON VIC**

Regarding the snapshot August Memorial News p14 of four soldiers with Padre John May, three - Cpl Bernaldo and Sappers Chenhall and Vale are listed as having been on the *Montevideo Maru*. The fourth, Ralph James escaped from New Britain and arrived safely in Australia. My late husband, Lt WH (Bill) Larkin was their officer.

