



Rabaul & Montevideo Maru

Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society

Memorial News 34

January 2012

70th Anniversary

23 January 1942 – 23 January 2012

4 Jan 1942 - Australian territory bombed for the first time!

The fate of Lark Force was set in a Most Secret and Important Cable sent to Washington on 12 December 1941 by the Prime Minister's Department:

'...it is considered better to maintain Rabaul only as an advanced air operational base, its present small garrison being regarded as hostages to fortune.'

Four years later the first services for those who had died took place in Rabaul.

22 January 2012 - 2.30pm Shrine Memorial Service, Melbourne

2/22nd Battalion 'Lark Force' Association
This year has special significance - 70 years ago, almost to the day, Japanese forces stormed ashore at Rabaul.

Please gather on the steps outside the main entry door where the 2/22nd signboard will be located.



On 23rd January 1946 two memorial services were held to mark the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*, one at Rabaul and the other at Vulcan. Major Charles Bates, MC, ANGAU, and DO in charge of Rabaul District, lays a wreath at the Vulcan Island cairn in memory of the civilians who died as a result of the loss of the *Montevideo Maru*.
Photo courtesy Pat Johnson

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

DEDICATION OF RABOUL AND MONTEVIDEO MARU MEMORIAL, AWM CANBERRA 01 July 2012 SEE DETAILS PAGE 15

Newspaper headlines January 1942

In an earlier statement Mr. Forde said: "Never before have Australians faced such a serious position."
"No words of mine can be too strong to drive this home to every Australian man and woman."

This was the first time Australian territory had been bombed.
There have been six raids on Rabaul since then.

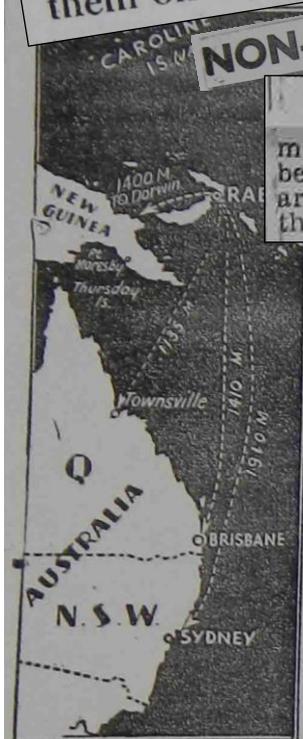
"We shall visit New Guinea on Sunday," Tokio said

Over the air from Tokio came this announcement on Saturday, January 3: "We inform our friends in New Guinea that we are going to visit them on Sunday."

Savage Air Blitz

NON-STOP JAPANESE RAIDS ON RABAUL

...to-night on Japanese raids, the Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin, quoted significantly from Byron: "Nearer, clearer, deadlier than before."
Mr. Curtin added: "Anybody who fails to perceive the immediate menace which this attack constitutes for Australia must be lost to all reality."



MAP showing Rabaul, and approximate distances to Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane, and Sydney.

(Telephone: M2406 SYDNEY, THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 1942 Registered at the G.P.O., Sydney, for transmission by post as a newspaper Price, 2d

JAPS HAMMER NEW GUINEA

Day-Long Raids On Bases; Invasion Attempt Possible

Scores of Japanese aircraft yesterday bombed key defence centres in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago.
The continued day-long attacks, following the mass-attack on Rabaul on Tuesday, have convinced Federal Ministers that an attempt to invade New Guinea is imminent.



MAP shows latest bombings in New Guinea area. Experts consider Japan is certain to exert every effort to establish a strong base in New Guinea. This would not only give her a base for attacks on Australia, but would strengthen the net she is drawing around Singapore.

A successful Japanese landing in New Guinea would enable strong bases to be established for air-raids on Australia.
Air-raids on Australia are considered the logical sequel to a Japanese landing.
An attempted Japanese landing would be strongly resisted. There are considerable Australian land forces in New Guinea, including militia.
Even if the Japanese succeeded in gaining a foothold they would be subject subsequently to prolonged and well-organised attacks from the hills, where Australian troops would probably form guerrilla bands.

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, THURSDAY, JAN. 22.
WIDESPREAD RAID ON NEW GUINEA
JAPANESE USE MANY AIRCRAFT
"MAJOR ATTACK" EXPECTED

Fought Like Heroes

But one thing is certain. Selby and his men behaved like heroes. They fought the Japs to the last, trying desperately to protect Rabaul from air attack. They failed only because they were hopelessly outnumbered.

Military officers in the New Guinea area are still talking about this man Selby and his unit.

Hundreds of bombs were dropped near defence installations and military objectives, he said.

Support letter from Kim Beazley

'The sinking of the Montevideo Maru was a tragic event in Australia's history and one that should not be forgotten. It is fitting that we honour the brave soldiers and civilians lost, and a memorial dedicated to them will provide a measure of comfort and closure for their families. Your continued efforts are appreciated. I support all your hard work towards this worthy endeavour.'

A TRIBUTE TO SOLDIERS

UNKNOWN: *Dedicated to those who died a lonely death and lie in an unknown grave on land and sea.*

JOHN SCHINDLER

Let's pay tribute to those men and boys who died a lonely death on land and sea so far away from their loved ones. There are so many that perished in this way. Most of them would have died feeling so alone and frustrated that they were unable to say goodbye nor comfort their loved ones by saying that they loved them for a last time. Some may never have expressed their love and in their last moments would have regretted that they would now never again get the chance.

When we pay homage to those lost in Rabaul, Kavieng and the Montevideo Maru let's also think about these unknown men and boys.

They may have thought they were dying a lonely death but their spirit will never die because to this day and forever we will remember them. Whoever they may be and wherever they were when they died we will think about them too. We will remember their sacrifice and hope that as we say a prayer and wish them a simple thank you that they will smile and rest in peace.

Dear soldiers unknown, whoever you are and wherever you may lie in some unknown grave please rest in peace because we have not overlooked you and we want you to know that we are grateful for your sacrifice. You will never be forgotten.

Lest we forget.

RUGBY INTERNATIONALS WITH MUCH IN COMMON DON HOOK

"Weary" Dunlop and "Mack" Ramsay had much in common. They were country lads, both Rugby internationals, and both prisoners of the Japanese in World War Two.

As a commanding officer and a surgeon, "Weary" Dunlop was a hero and a legend to thousands of Australian and Allied POWs working on the Burma-Thailand Railway.

His exploits are well documented and he is widely remembered through statues, portraits, diaries and scholarships. The best known statue is in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra; another is in the Victorian rural city of Benalla near where he grew up on his father's farm.

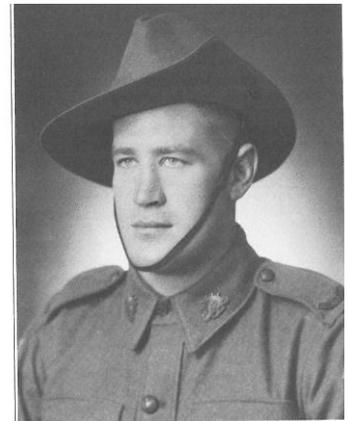
"Weary's" international Rugby career began in 1932 against New Zealand in Sydney. He was well established in the Rugby world when he played for Victoria against New South Wales at North Sydney Oval in June 1935.

In the opposing team, making his State debut was 20-year old Kenelm Mackenzie Ramsay from Quirindi - a small town on the NSW north west slopes about 350km from Sydney.

The *Sydney Morning Herald*

described the game as one of 'speed and thrills'. Victoria won 17-14 before a crowd of 7,000.

"Mack" Ramsay went on to play four Tests for Australia between 1936-38 against New Zealand (twice), South Africa, and New Zealand Maori. He also played two Bledisloe Cup games against New Zealand. His Rugby career was cut short by World War 2. (Cont. over)



Like many of his AIF colleagues, “Mack” volunteered to join Australia’s first ‘hush hush’ commando unit being formed in 1941 at Wilson’s Promontory in Victoria.

The troops were trained by a British military mission that included Captain “Freddie” Spencer Chapman - author of *The Jungle is Neutral* - and Captain Mike Calvert in charge of explosions and demolitions. It was said Calvert was a man who was dangerous in the field as well as in the Mess.

Known officially as the 1st Independent Company, the force of 273 men sailed in July 1941 for Kavieng, the administrative headquarters of New Ireland district. Sections were soon dispersed to Manus Island, Namatanai on New Ireland, Buka Island, Tulagi in the Solomon Islands, and Vila in New Hebrides (now Vanuatu).

Corporal “Mack” Ramsay spent time on Manus Island during which he took part in a lengthy government medical patrol before returning to company headquarters at Kavieng.

After the Japanese invasion of New Ireland in January 1942, some 140 members of the 1st Independent Company, including Ramsay, were captured at sea while trying to escape on the lugger *Induna Star*. They were taken to Rabaul aboard a Japanese destroyer where they remained until loaded onto the ill-fated Japanese prison ship *Montevideo Maru*.

On 1 July 1942, the unmarked ship was torpedoed by an American submarine off the Philippines. All 1,053 Australian prisoners died in what remains Australia’s worst maritime disaster.

On Sunday 1 July this year - the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* - a memorial will be dedicated at the AWM honoring those who perished defending the New Guinea islands and those who died as prisoners of war.

The memorial will be located in the AWM’s Eastern Precinct, immediately behind the statue of Ramsay’s fellow Rugby international, Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop.

EVACUATED - JUST IN TIME! DICK DUNBAR-REID

The first time that my parents heard of the impending invasion of New Guinea by Japanese forces was on Boxing Day, 1941. At that time we were at Korandindi Plantation on the Mavulu River in the North Baining.

To the surprise of my parents a Government trawler anchored in the river and a Government official disembarked. He informed us that the invasion of Rabaul by Japanese was imminent and that we were to pack four suitcases with essential items and be ready to leave on the trawler in four hours! What a shock. On arrival in Rabaul, we were taken to Kurakakaul Plantation where we were to live until evacuation could be arranged.

On January 4th or 5th the Japanese began bombing Rabaul from their naval fleet which was standing out in St. Georges Channel. Many people were killed and wounded, including my elder brother Don who sustained a large cut to his leg when he was knocked down by panicking people running to an air raid shelter.

Eventually, evacuation was arranged for my mother and we two children on the *MV Malaita* on January 8th, 1942. My father decided to stay on to help defend Rabaul. When this proved to be impossible, he fled Rabaul via Vunakanau and the North Baining. He finally arrived in Australia four months later.

In the meantime, the *Malaita* duly left Rabaul and sailed south through the Pacific Islands, picking up refugees, mainly missionaries, and arrived in Australia six weeks later. We the passengers on the *Malaita* were very lucky to survive as Japanese dive bombers followed the ship for the first seven days out of Rabaul. The Japanese did not bomb the ship as we had 70 Japanese internees on board and the pilots were aware of them being there.

Now for an almost unbelievable “small world” story.

Some years after the end of the war, my father was attending a function at the

Imperial Services Club in King Street, Sydney. Also present was a veteran of the American Texas Rangers Regiment who had landed on the western tip of New Britain and proceeded up the north coast to strengthen the blockage of the Japanese in Rabaul.

The two men began reminiscing about their wartime experiences. The American stated that they had reached a small river about 100 miles from Rabaul, where they were confronted by a Japanese force who were dug in behind stacked logs on the other side of the river. The American stated that they could have screwed the neck of the person who had cut down the trees which provided such good cover for the Japanese. After some discussion it was realized that the incident had occurred on the banks of the Mavulu River and that my Father had, in fact cut those trees down and had them ready for pick-up when we were evacuated in 1941!!

DISPLAY AT SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE

MELBOURNE VICTORIA

The Shrine of Remembrance is developing an exhibition on Japan's entry into WWII, focusing on the period Dec 1941 - June 1942, including the loss of Australian POW's aboard the *Montevideo Maru*. The display is scheduled to open on 20 January 2012 and will run for approximately four months.

At present the proposed launch has been postponed. It may occur on Feb 15 when the Ex POW and Relatives Association in Victoria has their service.

Discussions have been had with the following groups and members are welcome to attend these services:

-Sydney Cenotaph 15 February 11am organised by the 8th Division

Contact: John Walsh Ph: 02- 9797 7373

-Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne 15 February 10.45am for 11am

Organised by the Ex POW and Relatives Association. Tue/Thur, 10am-3pm: Ph: 03-9629 5365 Email:

expowra@bigpond.net.au

URGENT HELP WANTED PLEASE

We would like to get in touch with descendants of **Bill Cook** or **Bill Collins**. If you can help please contact Andrea Williams urgently. M: 0409 031 889 E: andrea.williams@bigpond.com



DORA DUNN nee WILSON

passed away on 25 December 2011, aged 98 years

Dora was a Methodist Mission nurse in Rabaul when war broke out in January 1942. She was one of 17 Australian

nurses and 1 civilian taken by ship, the *Naruto Maru*, to a prisoner-of-war camp in Japan. The *Naruto Maru* left Rabaul on 5 July 1942, approximately two weeks after the *Montevideo Maru* departed Rabaul. Photo: Rod Miller

ELECTRONIC MEMORIAL

A section on the website is being developed for individual tributes to those who defended the New Guinea Islands. It would be appreciated if you could forward their name and Army number, their date of birth and any photos, letters or documents that support their lives in Rabaul or how they managed to survive the invasion. Written articles are also welcome. You could consider:

1. how this affected your family
2. how you heard about the tragedy of the *Montevideo Maru*
3. if you were evacuated, what happened? If you were assisted, what happened?
4. the short-term and long-term difficulties you faced
5. your feelings both at the time and continuing to this day.
6. Anything else you think might be useful in telling this story

If you would prefer information in the Members Only section of the website please mention this.

Please send information to Andrea Williams at: admin@memorial.org.au or 24 Melaleuca Drive, St Ives NSW 2075.

JAPANESE APOLOGY TO LORNA

'It was wonderful, absolutely wonderful' Lorna said of her recent trip to Japan at the kind invitation of the Japanese Government. Travelling with four other Australian ex-prisoners-of-war, Lorna, now 96 years, enthusiastically described the busy schedule for their 10 day visit where she met Government leaders, received an official apology for her years in captivity during WWII and visited places of special significance.

Lorna had arrived in Rabaul in April 1941 and spent the next nine months treating soldiers suffering from tropical diseases before the Japanese began dropping bombs, the first bombing of an Australian territory. Before long wounded soldiers were brought in, many requiring amputations.



"It was traumatic, we didn't have time to think, it was all automatic."

The military nurses together with seven civilian nurses and their patients were moved to the Catholic Mission in Vunapope, formerly owned by Germans.

"Japanese soldiers came in with guns and bayonets, flipped the boys out of their beds and pushed us around. While they had their machine guns trained on us the bishop told them the place was actually a German mission. They swallowed it and let us go."

"There was no contact from the outside world ... no newspapers, books or letters. Our families thought we were dead."

Then, in July 1942, they were taken by ship to Japan where they spent the next three years. Again no-one was told where they were.

Travelling to Japan wearing clothes from a tropical climate, the nurses soon felt the cold. They made some clothes from anything they could find - used canvas sails, hessian bags ('the sugar and rice bags were good'), some sheets and a couple of *laplaps* [pieces of fabric] they'd been given from the nuns at Vunapope and any rags or flags. In Japan they were given two bolts of a strong fibrous fabric. With meticulous planning and cutting they made 19 outfits, one each, for winter - similar to what we now know as track suits. Later on they were given wool to knit jumpers for the villagers. They'd be given a big bundle of wool but it was only in half yard [45cm] pieces which had to be rubbed and joined together. A couple of the women also managed to make a couple of pairs of pants.

Imprisoned at the Yokohama Boat Club for 18 months, the nurses were forced to knit silk bags and make envelopes. They were given the sweepings from the rice mills, including any swept up dirt and rat deposits, to make glue for envelopes. The hungry prisoners began to eat more and more of it.

Lorna remembers asking the cook, Fuji San, for more food. He had been selling the nurse's rice rations to his family. "He'd say: 'More? Better you die'."

Two of the soldiers had tuberculosis. "They used to cough all the time. We'd take trays into the room, bow and put them down. When we collected them later, if there was any food left, we'd eat it. Three girls ended up with TB."

She says Fuji San showed a nicer side at one point when he lent the women a small heater.

"But one of the guards came in and saw it and threw it into the sea. Fuji San was furious. Then we were made to stand in a line for two hours while the guard went up and down slapping our faces and waving his sword around."

On occasion the women were hit across the back and punched, but were not raped. "We weren't their type," she says. "They never broke our spirit. We always had hope and knew we'd get out one day."

The nurses were taken to a former TB clinic on a hill at Totsuka to dig stumps and sweep snow. They survived in sub-zero temperatures with no running water and only two futons (duvets) each. "We had them for three years, using them day and night in winter and they never saw a washing machine. We were working in fields with human manure and our duvets could have stood up they were so stiff with dirt."

One Christmas Eve the women were sitting cross-legged, dejectedly wondering how much longer they would survive after Christmas. They had nothing more to barter with and were trying to work out what they could find. The guards then ordered the women to walk down the hill. Because of the bombings in Tokyo and Yokohama, clothes and precious goods were being sent to the spare room in the camp - the women often had to carry them up the hill. On this particular day it was snowing but the women were, as usual, dressed in minimal clothing.

"We thought those bastards want us to lift stuff up the hill. We were in a weakened state. They marched us down, our feet wrapped in rags." The guards had long coats and boots.

When they saw the Red Cross parcels 'it was like a miracle!' Instantly energised they ran and pushed the parcels up the hill. Tea, cocoa, butter and cigarettes were included. One small loaf of bread had to be cut into 19 precious slices. The joy of the next few hours was indescribable. They were careful to make it last. "We added half a spoon of sugar and half a spoon of powdered milk to our bowl of rice. It made such a difference, it was like heaven."

One evening the women had to cart heated water to a bath which was similar to an old copper. Communal baths were usual in Tokyo but this was a special event at Totsuka and turns were taken by the local Japanese village people depending on hierarchy. Life was weary in the camp for the prisoners but this turned in to a good night's entertainment. Unknown to those enjoying the bath, Lorna and the other women then sat inside watching and being entertained by the antics seen through the window. Standing outside the bath each person would throw water over themselves, soap up, wash the soap off with another jug of water, then step into the bath for a soak. After stepping out they would quickly pat themselves and, still naked, go to stand around the hibachi - all 20-25 men and women who had used the bath! Eventually it was the Obasan's turn. Quite merry after enjoying a few sakis she then invited the women to have a bath. It turned out to be the only opportunity in three years. The dirty water, however, was hardly enticing and the women felt there was no choice but to knock the offer back. The Obasan re-joined her naked companions with a torrent of Japanese and laughter about the 'dirty Australians'.

It was occasions such as these that gave the women some laughs and lifted their spirits through their confinement and isolation.

After the war ended the nurses were accidentally found by some American soldiers. They were flown to Manila for a month where they were 'fed, tested and detoxed', before returning to Australia on September 25, 1945. Lorna's mother had died while she was away. Penicillin had been developed. There were huge changes.

"We had lots to learn. We were out of the world for four years and coming back to a strange place...it was very hard."

Last year her story, and that of Sr Berenice Twohill an Australian nun who remained with others at Vunapope and then at Ramale for the war years, was made into a telemovie, *Sisters of War*, based on Rod Miller's transcript, *The Lost Women of Rabaul*. Both Lorna and Sr Berenice made a guest appearance at the end of the film.

Earlier this year Lorna was invited to take part in this Japanese-organised prisoners-of-war programme, one of five POWs invited.

Visiting the office of the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr Koichiro Gemba, the guests were impressed with the sincerity of the official apology given to them. 'They did have a lot to

apologise for. We weren't combatants and we shouldn't have been treated the way we were' Lorna said.

With hopes that the visit would strengthen friendship between the two countries, Mr Gemba spoke of Japan's feelings of deep remorse for the damage and suffering Japan inflicted on many people during the war, including Australian POWs who had suffered tragic experiences. The words were warmly received.



The five POWs were invited to speak to the Senate for three to five minutes and told not to hold anything back. At the end of her speech Lorna said

'When the atomic bombs dropped I'd never been so happy in my life because I knew the war was nearly over.'

Lorna had afternoon tea at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo and

visited the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama where she laid a wreath. Lorna was delighted to meet members of the Australian Japanese POW research group, part of the Friendship Network, who were also very helpful. A formal dinner with the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon Toshiyuki Kato was very much enjoyed before Lorna travelled to Totsuka. Here she was welcomed in to a private home near the site of the Totsuka Camp where a group of residents had gathered. She met children who had lived in the village from 1943-1945, the same time the Australian nurses were in the nearby camp, and was surprised at how much they remembered.

'They kept saying how sorry they were because their mums told them the guards would not let them help us. They knew how cold and hungry we were.' Lorna was amazed at how built up the area had become.



Visiting a school in Kyoto Lorna was impressed at the interesting and intelligent questions the children asked them. The next day they visited the Ryozen Kannon Mortuary Hall in Kyoto which had the names of all Japanese Prisoners of War.

'I've met so many wonderful people who've been so kind and generous' Lorna said after her trip.

LORNA JOHNSTON'S VISIT TO YOKOHAMA BY MAYUMI KOMIYA AND YOSHIKO TAMURA POW Research Network Japan

On Thursday 1 December 2011 Mrs Lorna Johnston visited the former site of her internment in Totsuka in Yokohama City, where she had been held during the war. We two and Ms Taeko Sasamoto accompanied her.

Lorna and her daughter Patricia arrived at the locality at 10:00 am. After taking a walk around the area of the camp, presently a residential area, we called at the residence of Ms. Yamamura, where local residents knowledgeable about the war-time period had gathered. One of them was a daughter-in-law of the Obasan (an elderly lady), who used to cook for the nurses, while others were still children in those days but remembered the nurses in the camp.

Going over old photos together, Lorna and the Japanese people shared memories. Stories recollected by both sides matched perfectly, such as the cold and hunger endured, the pains of fetching water from the well, trying to kill a dog when driven by hunger, and exchanging children's shoes for sweet potatoes with a Benjyo Man (a man who used to remove the night soil at the camp's toilet). The accuracy of Lorna's memories astonished us. It was moving to witness the meeting of the hearts of those individuals who lived through the same period in the war.

We believe that to heal the scars left in the hearts of the former prisoners of war or civilian internees requires an opportunity for them to interact with the people who knew the life in those days. Lorna said that she thoroughly enjoyed conversing with local people and taking a stroll with them in the neighbourhood even though, in the past, it was not possible to exchange words with them. She stated, "I had a truly wonderful time with you all. It was totally unexpected that we could confirm and share memories from the past. I am glad that I have come back to Japan." While enjoying the sweet potatoes and persimmons served (Lorna used to eat them during her days in confinement), Patricia, smiling, took photos and videos of her happy mother.

On 2 December Lorna made a speech on her PW experience in the Nakawada Elementary School. Her tone was steady, unlike what was expected from a 96-year-old woman. She spoke of being captured in Rabaul and brought to Japan, of not being allowed to board an exchange ship, and suffering from cold and hunger during her prolonged confinement until being liberated after the war ended. We were concerned whether Lorna's message could be conveyed to the pupils as they had little background information and also because of the interpreting challenge. However, they showed a keen interest in her story and, after she spoke, asked one question after another for a full hour as follows.

Q: I understand that foreigners in Japan were taken aboard an exchange ship. Was it possible to recognize who they were?

A: The exchange ship was a special one with a white cross painted clearly so that it would not be attacked by submarines and others by mistake. I sighted the exchange ships four times but was not taken on board. I was greatly disappointed.

Q: The Japanese people in those days presumably did not understand English. Was there an interpreter? If not, can you tell me how you managed to express yourself to the Japanese?

A: There was no interpreter of course, so there was no way to make ourselves understood in words. But, in order to survive, out of desperation, I used gestures. I also tried to memorize Japanese words and was able to count up to 90 in Japanese.

Q: When captured, how old were you?

A: I was twenty-five years old.

Q: How many times a day were you given meals and what did you eat?

A: It is difficult to answer that question. There was hardly anything like a meal given us. In a bowl like this, there was only rice gruel and a small quantity of vegetables floating. Just before the end of the war, we did knitting for the neighbours' children and they gave us sweet potatoes.

Q: When you were transferred (your camp was moved), were you not informed of your destination?

A: We were not informed of our destination at all. But, when we were taken on board a ship in Rabaul, I was thinking that we might be returned to Australia, I was informed that we were being taken to Japan.

Q: On the ship bound for Japan, what kinds of things did you eat?

A: In addition to the food given to us by the Japanese, which was very small - the Australian soldiers had brought a supply of army ration biscuits with them from their camp in Rabaul - they were hard and tough to eat.

Q: What was the condition inside the ship on the way to Japan?

A: The hold of the ship was not large, so to hold 65 officers and 19 nurses, made it very crowded and we could hardly lie down. Also going through the tropics with the hatch battened down, it was very very hot and airless. A not very pleasant trip

After the Q&A period, the students, as arranged by the host school, sang the song of "Ueomuite Aruko" by the late Kyu Sakamoto (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyu_Sakamoto). Lorna looked pleased.

Translated by Harumi Sakaguchi, POW Research Network Japan

Ms. Komiya adds the following information:

It was back in 1993 that I began to research into the internment of enemy personnel in Japan. On the scant information available, I was able to identify the location of the second Kanagawa internment camp in Izumi District. Later in 1996 I found a roster of the internees, learning for the first time that those interned were a group of Australian nurses captured in Rabaul. Further, in 2006 I came to learn that Lorna was still alive and where she lived. Finally, this time, I met her. It has been a long journey for me. It was like a miracle to see Lorna, with my own eyes, a person who was only "a historical record" before. Lorna is the only survivor, an irreplaceable eye-witness, out of the group of Australian nurses interned in secrecy in Japan during the war. I hope she will remain in good health and continue to speak about her extraordinary experience in future.

THANK YOU TO QLD PREMIER

Carole Worthy recently wrote to the Queensland Premier, Anna Bligh, congratulating her on the donation made to the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial (see Memorial News # 33 December 2011)

Nick Williams, Senior Policy Advisor responded as follows on the Premier's behalf:

'The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society are doing a remarkable job representing the interests of the families and loved ones of soldiers and civilians captured in Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands during World War II.

I genuinely hope that the work of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society in bringing to light the truth and providing an understanding of what happened to the soldiers and civilians who disappeared in 1942, can bring some closure to families and loved ones, including your Mother, after years of heartache.

This Government has sincerely welcomed the opportunity to assist in memorialising the 1400 Australians who died either in the invasion of Rabaul or as prisoners of war on the Montevideo Maru.

**2/22 BATTALION ESCAPEES OWEN, CAMERON AND DAWSON AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT PNG MILITARY SERVICE
PHIL AINSWORTH**

Many of the Australians who escaped from Rabaul and the New Guinea islands after the Japanese occupation never returned to Papua New Guinea due to the privations they experienced during this time. Many did return and served with distinction in other Australian units. Here is a selection of three officers from the 2/22 Battalion who escaped and returned : Lieutenant Colonels William Taylor Owen , Allan Gordon Cameron and Benjamin George Dawson.

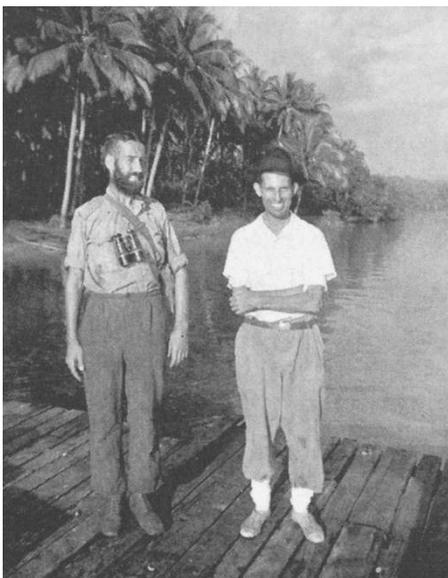
VX45223, Lieutenant Colonel William Taylor Owen, MID

Bill Owen was born at Nagambie, Victoria on 27 May 1905, worked as a bank officer, married and served as a Militia officer prior to the War. Enlisting in the AIF at Caulfield, Victoria on 8 July 1940 he was posted to the 2/22 Infantry Battalion (Bn) which was sent to Rabaul early 1941. He was placed in command of A Company with the rank of Major. A Company was deployed along the harbour shoreline north of Vulcan

and took the brunt of the initial Japanese assault. NGVR was incorporated into A Company on the extreme left. A Company withdrew when it was out flanked by the Japanese. The defence was overrun and after the order “every man for himself ” was received, Lark Force escaped from Rabaul. Major Owen withdrew along the eastern side of the Gazelle Peninsula and arrived at Kalai Mission, about 10 km west of Tol Plantation on Wide Bay, with a large number of troops.



Left to right; Lt Col OA Kessels CO 49 Bn, Brig SHWC Porter CO 30 Inf Brigade, Lt Col NL Fleay CO Kanga Force, Lt Col WT Owen CO 39 Bn and Maj JAE Findlay 2/ic 39 Bn
Photo: AWM 025958



Colonel J Scanlan, the Commander of Lark Force, arrived at Kalai Plantation and returned to Rabaul 10 February to surrender. Major Owen was then the senior officer on the south coast of New Britain. His group reached Jacquinot Bay on 23 February. In the first week of April, Owen was able to muster over 150 men to be rescued. The photograph (left) shows Major Bill Owen with Father Ted Harris at the Palmalmal Plantation wharf just before the departure of MV Laurabada on 9 April. Father Harris chose to stay and was executed by the Japanese. The Laurabada arrived in Port Moresby 12 April 1942.

After recuperating in Australia, Owen was promoted to Lt Col and assumed command of the 39 Bn on 7 July 1942, as the Bn was preparing to deploy to Kokoda. This was the first step of a plan to occupy the north coast of Papua. The PIB of about 300 men was

already in the area. 39 Bn and Papua Infantry Battalion (PIB) was “Maroubra Force”. B Company departed for Kokoda on 8 July. After the Japanese landed at Buna 21 July 1942, Owen flew to Kokoda. The first clash, which included the PIB, was at Awala Plantation, east of the Kumusi River 23 July. This day is now known as PNG’s Remembrance Day. Maroubra Force withdrew towards Kokoda and Captain Sam Templeton was killed 25 July near Oivi attempting to contact Headquarters. The Japanese attacked Kokoda in force on the evening of 28 July. B Company comprised only 80 men with small arms and LMGs. Owen was mortally wounded at 0300 hours 29 July and was left in Kokoda when the defending force was compelled to withdraw. Major William Watson, CO PIB, assumed temporary command. Owen is believed to have died in captivity shortly afterwards. When Kokoda was retaken briefly between 8 and 10 August, Owen’s body was found and buried. His body was later re-interred in Bomana War Cemetery. He posthumously received the US Distinguished Service Cross and was Mentioned in Dispatches

VX44906, Lieutenant Colonel Allan Gordon Cameron, DSO with Bar

Allan Cameron, born 16 May 1909 at Fitzroy, Melbourne, was educated at Scotch College, Hawthorne and joined the Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd. He enlisted in the 46 Bn around 1926 and was



Left to right: Rev. N J Karl and Allan Cameron circa 1942
Photo: AWM 027032

commissioned lieutenant on 14 October 1929. Allan resigned from the Militia in 1931, married in 1934 and rejoined the Militia in 1939. On 1 July 1940 he transferred to the AIF as a captain and was posted to the 2/22 Bn. Cameron was the 2/ic of C Company, which was under the command of Captain Appel. C Company was deployed around Yunakanau airfield at the time of the invasion. He made his escape along the north coast of New Britain. "When Keith McCarthy arrived at Pondo (about 20 February) he dispatched Capt Cameron in the launch Dulcy to set up camps west of the Willaumez Peninsula. He failed to do so preferring to make a run for the NG mainland". Cameron and his group arrived at Salamaua just prior to the Japanese landing there. On the 15 March he was at Kudjera, in the grasslands just east of Wau, and by the 17 March was on his way over the Bulldog Track to the Lakekamu River and Port Moresby.

Cameron was promoted to Major in May and appointed brigade major of the 30th Brigade. After the CO, Bill Owen, was killed 29 July, 39 Bn was reinforced by one company between 31 July and 6 August. Major Allan Cameron, arrived 4 August and took command of Maroubra Force. At this stage it comprised about 43 men of PIB, 464 of 39 Bn, a few from ANGAU and 14 RPC. Cameron decided to retake Kokoda and on 8 August committed A, C and D Companies and recaptured the post. Kokoda was held for 3 days but lack of food and ammunition forced a withdrawal and fall back to Deniki. The enemy again attacked in strength and another withdrawal was affected to defensive positions at Isurava 14 August.

Cameron was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. The new CO, Lt Col Ralph Honner assumed command on 16 August.

Cameron then performed liaison duties. He was promoted temporary Lt Col 28 August 1942 and on 2 September was in charge of 53 Bn. A week later he assumed command of 3 Bn, then occupying a defensive position at Ioribaiwa, the furthest point of the Japanese thrust towards Port Moresby. He led the Battalion in the Australian advance along the Track and in the fighting around Gona in November and December, winning a Bar to his DSO. Cameron was in charge of the composite 3 Bn and 22 Bn in North Queensland from March 1943. On 5 July he assumed command of the 2/2 Bn. Ordered to New Guinea, the unit participated in the nine month Aitape-Wewak campaign which culminated in the surrender of the Japanese Eighteenth Army in August 1945. Cameron was mentioned in dispatches. Lt Col Cameron retired from his command on 14 December 1945 and 2/2 Bn was disbanded February 1946. Between December 1945 and October 1946, he successively commanded the 26 Bn, and 2 NGIB and 3 NGIB (New Guinea Infantry Battalions) on New Britain until they were disbanded.

Transferring to the Retired List on 25 January 1947, Allan managed a plantation on the island for two years. In 1950 he moved to Victoria and worked a grazing property on the Mornington Peninsula. Next year he took up a 179 ha soldier settlement block on Phillip Island where he ran sheep and cattle. Cameron was prominent in the RSL, was a shire councillor from 1958, a justice of the peace, an elder of the Presbyterian Church and a Freemason. He died of a cerebral haemorrhage on 8 June 1960, aged 51, at Cowes and was buried in the local cemetery. His wife, daughter and three sons survived him.

VX 47614, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin George Dawson , MID

Ben Dawson was born in Ballarat, Victoria 16 February 1920 and was a student at Portland when he enlisted in the AIF at Caulfield on 22 July 1940. When the Japanese invaded in February 1942 he was a Lieutenant and a 2/22 Bn Intelligence Officer. He escaped along the east coast of Gazelle Peninsula with Major Owen through Ralabang Plantation, Warangoi River, Put Put and Adler Bay, Tol and Kalai Plantation. He missed the Laurabada but heard about McCarthy's north coast evacuation plan. He and 9 others decided to walk across the island between Wide and Open Bay. His group arrived at Iboki west of Willaumez Peninsula too late for the Lakatoi. However, the party was picked up 14 May by Lt Harris (ANGAU) in the schooner Umboi from Bali Harbour in the Witu Group, reaching Bogadjim near Madang on 16 May. The group was walked to Kainantu in the upper Ramu by Lt RH Boyan (ANGAU) and then to Bena Bena for evacuation. Due to unavailability of aircraft the group had to walk to Wau where they, all except Dawson, were flown to Port Moresby. Dawson remained with the 2/5 Independent Company until September when he walked over the Bulldog Track to Port Moresby, some 8 months after the invasion of Rabaul.



Upon his return to Papua New Guinea he was promoted Captain with a Commando unit. Captain Dawson then joined 1 NGIB (New Guinea Infantry Battalion) and was appointed adjutant. When the unit moved to Camp Diddy near Nadzab, he was promoted Major as 2/ic of 1 NGIB. On 1 November 1944, Major Dawson accompanied B Company into its first operational area near Pomio in New Britain and returned to Camp Diddy on 27 November. In November 1944, Major B G Dawson was promoted to Lt Col and took command of 1 NGIB, the youngest, at 24 years, Lt Col in the AIF. The previous Commanding Officer, Lt Col WM Edwards, CMG, MBE (formerly the Commanding Officer of NGVR), was promoted

Colonel and took command of the newly formed Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR). 1 NGIB's battle areas included New Britain, Bougainville and the area from Madang to just east of the Wewak. When discharged 29 November 1945, his posting is listed as Australian Intelligence Corps FAA and his Next of Kin being a Nellie Dawson. Unfortunately, no post service details could be obtained .

Sources:

"NGVR 1939-1943, A History " by Ian Downs, 1999, ISBN 1 875150 03 X

" Green Shadows, A War History of the PIB, 1,2,&3 NGIB", by G M Byrnes, 1989.

" To Find a Path, The Life and Times of the Royal Pacific Islands Regiment ", Volume 1- Yesterday's Heroes 1885- 1950,

By James Sinclair, 1990, ISBN 0 7316 9120 2

" Hostages to Freedom, The Fall of Rabaul" by Peter Stone,1995, ISBN 0 646 24124 9

AJ Sweeting for personal details of Allan Cameron

Wikipedia for personal details about Bill Owen .

Note: Service records of the above have been requested and, if the information is substantially different or more expansive, you will be advised.

A brief background on the start up of NGVR, PIB, 1 NGIB, 2 NGIB, 3 NGIB , PIR and PNGVR

The Territory of New Guinea was Mandated to Australia in 1920 from the League of Nations and Australia could not raise military units or fortifications in the Territory. However, Papua was legally a part of Australia and could.

When Australia followed Britain and declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, the separate administrations of New Guinea and Papua made preparations for possible hostilities in the region. The Mandated Territory raised a European based Militia known as the 'New Guinea Volunteer Rifles' in 1939. It had sub-units in Rabaul, Wau, Bulolo, Salamaua and Madang, initially with it's headquarters in Rabaul. NGVR's HQ was transferred to Lae at the time the Administration was late 1941. Eighty men of the Rabaul Company of NGVR , as part of Lark Force, defended Rabaul on 23 January 1942 of whom 34 lost their lives when the Montevideo Maru was sunk.

In June 1940 the Papuan Infantry Battalion was formed with European officers and non-commissioned officers and recruits enlisted from the Royal Papuan Constabulary. It's original camp was in Konedobu and it's objective was to be a reconnaissance, fighting and guerilla unit. Subsequently other battalions were formed: 1 New Guinea Infantry Battalion in March 1944, followed by the 2 NGIB in November 1944 and the 3 NGIB in August 1945. As the 3 battalions had specific and increasing recruiting, training and supply needs and were active over a number of widely spread operational areas, the requirement for a regimental headquarters became a matter of urgency and the Pacific Islands Regiment was formed in November 1944.

Throughout the existence of these units , 500 Australians and 3,850 Papua New Guineans served as members. Apart from six weeks in April to May 1943, sections of the battalions were in action against the Japanese in every Papua New Guinea campaign, including New Britain and Bougainville, but excluding Milne Bay, from July 1942 to the end of hostilities in August 1945 .

The PIR battle statistics are impressive and indicate the effectiveness of these battalions. 22 Australians and 134 Papuan and New Guinean soldiers gave their lives while another 22 Australians and 59 PNGs were wounded. The Japanese lost 2,311 killed and 118 wounded with 196 taken as prisoners of war.

PNGVR, the successor unit to NGVR was an Australian CMF unit which was formed in 1950. PIR was reformed in 1951.

DEDICATION OF RABAU AND MONTEVIDEO MARU MEMORIAL AND 70th ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL LUNCHEON - 30 JUNE/1JULY 2012

CANBERRA

The dedication of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial will be held on 1 July 2012.

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society will also be hosting a luncheon at the National Press Club in Canberra on Saturday 30 June 2012. Seating at the National Press Club will be limited and therefore the first confirmed replies, with payment, will be those accepted.

SATURDAY 30 June 2012

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: To be advised

COST of lunch on Saturday \$60 per person

Payment will confirm booking.

PLEASE RSVP as soon as possible and prior to 8 June 2012.

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).
- § Any mobility issue
- § 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 a previous event in Canberra in 2010/2011).
- § 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

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 words 'Memorial 70' for this deposit. Also, please notify the deposit by email to: richard@isaunders.com.au.

By mail. Cheque to Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089.

By Visa or Mastercard - details at end of newsletter.

SUNDAY 1 July 2012

Dedication of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial

Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT - Details to be advised

To obtain a special rate and provide the opportunity of gathering together for the remainder of the weekend, a 'preferred accommodation' arrangement has been made for members and friends of the Society attending the event at:

Rydgges Lakeside and Rydgges Capital Hill in Canberra

*A preferred rate \$ 169.00 is extended exclusively to members and friends of the Society attending the event on the dates of Friday 29th June to Sunday 01st July 2012 inclusive. This rate will be for a deluxe queen bedded double and will include double / twin accommodation, full buffet breakfasts for 2 people and car parking.

Other room types (suites for instance) rates and availability will be advised at the time of the enquiry.

A limited number of rooms will be made available at each property. Rydgges have also advised that guests be made aware that this is the snow ski season and their parent company, Amalgamated Holdings Limited (AHL) is the owner/operator of Kosciusko Thredbo Resort. Therefore they actively promote overnight stays in Canberra at this time and demand may be high.

Rydgges have developed a special 'landing page' on their website where members can access this special rate online and make bookings. The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society has also created a link from our website to the online page at Rydgges.

<http://www.rydgges.com/cwp/rmms>

To have access to the rate just enter in the qualifying dates, your contact details and a credit card as a guarantee for the booking.

**** Please Note: This rate and facility will expire after March 31st, 2012** .Enquiries after that date would be subject to available rates at the time of enquiry.

The booking code for the event is **R - 2906RMMS**

RYDGES LAKESIDE CANBERRA

1 London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 1800 026 169 Please quote: **R - 2906RMMS**

RYDGES CAPITAL HILL HOTEL, CANBERRA

Cnr Canberra Avenue and National Circuit, Forrest ACT 2603

Ph: 1800 020 011 Please quote: **R - 2906RMMS**

* * *

BREAKFREE CAPITAL TOWER CANBERRA, specialising in 2 and 3 Bedroom Apartments (fully self-contained) have also offered the following rates for apartment accommodation - these will be available until end February 2012.

Facilities include - squash and tennis courts, spa, gym, sauna, outdoor pool and BBQ entertainment area.

2 Bedroom City Side - 1 queen, 2 x single or double, 1 bathroom, kitchen, laundry and some with balconies. \$259pn

2 Bedroom Lake Side - 1 queen, 2 x single or double, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, laundry and all with balconies. \$289pn

3 Bedroom Apartment - 1 queen, 3 x single, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, laundry and all with balconies. \$339pn

Guests would need to advise they are part of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society and confirm how many bedrooms, and which rate, to book direct.

For bookings please contact **Thomas Lamond**: Phone: 02 6276 3483

Email: thomas.lamond@breakfree.com.au

BREAKFREE CAPITAL TOWER CANBERRA

2 Marcus Clarke Street Canberra ACT 2601

PNG MILITARY CHRONOLOGY FOR 1941/2/3/4/5

1941

- 7.10 John Curtin becomes Prime Minister
- 7.12 **Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbour**
- 8.12 Japanese attack Malay Peninsula
- 10.12 *HMS Repulse* and *Prince of Wales* sunk
- 12.12 **Australian Government decides fate of Rabaul**
- 22.12 Japanese invasion of Philippines
- 25.12 Hong Kong surrenders

1942

- 03.01 US Forces under siege at Corregidor
- 04.01 **First Japanese air raid on Rabaul**
- 05.01 British led Forces withdraw from Malaya
- 08.01 *MV Malaita* departs Rabaul without civilians
- 20.01 Japanese task force reported off New Ireland
- 22/23.01 Air raids on Rabaul and Kavieng followed by landings by invasion forces and capture
- 25.01 **First Japanese air raids on Lae, Salamaua and Bulolo**
- 03.02 **First Japanese air raid on Port Moresby**
- 04.02 **Japanese massacre over 170 Australians at Tol and Waitavalo Plantations**
- 13.02 NGVR troops assemble in Lae to mount seaborne attempt to rescue survivors from New Britain
- 15.02 Fall of Singapore
- 15.02 **ANGAU formed in New Guinea**
- 19.02 **First Japanese air raid on Darwin**
- 23.2 Japanese occupy Timor
- 27.02 Battle of the Java Sea
- 02.03 Conscriptio introduced in Australia
- 7/8.03 **Japanese Forces invade Lae and Salamaua**
- 20.03 NGVR in *MVs Lakatoi* and *Gnair* depart Vitu Islands, New Britain, with 214 Rabaul survivors
- 28.03 *MV Lakatoi* arrives Cairns, Australia
- 09.04 *MV Laurabada* picks up 153 (137 soldiers, remainder civilians) Rabaul survivors from Jacquinet Bay, New Britain
- 12.04 *MV Laurabada* arrives Port Moresby

30.04 17 Australians (9 civilians & 8 soldiers) escaped on *MV Quang Wha* from Boang Island, New Ireland

1/8.05 Battle of the Coral Sea, Japanese naval ships and troopships abort invasion of Port Moresby

05.05 *MV Quang Wha* arrives Buna from New Ireland with 17 Australians

4/6.06 Battle of Midway

22.06 Lark Force POWs and civilian internees board the *Montevideo Maru* in Rabaul Harbour bound for Hainan Island, China

28.06 NGVR & 2/5 Independent Company raid Salamaua

30.06 NGVR & 2/5 & 2/1 Independent Companies raid Heath's Plantation near Lae

01.07 *Montevideo Maru* sunk by *USS Sturgeon*, off Philippines with loss of 1,053 POWs and civilian internees

06.07 Officer POWs and military and civilian nurses boarded *Naruto Maru* in Rabaul bound for Japan

15.07 *Naruto Maru* arrives in Yokohama Japan

21.07 Japanese Forces land at Buna, north - east Papua

07.08 American Forces occupy Guadalcanal, Solomon islands

25/26.08 Japanese Forces land at Milne Bay, Papua

30.08 Japanese troops occupy Mubo, Kanga Force

17.09 Japanese drive over Kokoda Trail halted at Imita

01.10 Kanga Force raids Mubo

1943

23.01 Organized Japanese resistance ends in Papua

30.01 The Battle of Wau ends in Japanese defeat

10.02 and withdrawal back to New Guinea coast

02/04.03 Battle of the Bismarck Sea

18.03 70 massacred on Japanese naval destroyer *Akikaze* in Bismarck Sea west of New Ireland

23.04 Headquarters, 3rd Australian Division established at Bulolo

1944

29.02 Retaking of Los Negros in the Admiralty Islands

04.03 Group by US Forces (Brewer Force included elements of NGVR & ANGAU

20.03 Kavieng massacre of 30 civilians by Japanese

1945

16.08 ? Japanese Surrender at Wewak - end of the War

07.09 *HMAS Vandetta* arrives in Rabaul and liberates 26 Allied POWs, only 5 of which are Australian

26.09 First newspaper reports of the fate of Lark Force and sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* - Melbourne Herald 'Rabaul Men Lost at Sea'

03.10 Commencement of official notifications to NOK of the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* and their loss

Source: "The New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR), 1939-1943, A History" by Ian Downs, 1999, ISBN 1 875150 03 X

Telegraph 23
January 1942

JAP FLEET OFF NEW GUINEA

Rabaul's Last Radio Message Says Landing Imminent

Eleven Japanese ships, including naval units, were sighted off New Guinea at 3.30 p.m. yesterday.

At 4 p.m. all Australian communication with Rabaul ceased.

It is assumed that the radio station has been demolished by defending Australian forces.

SYDNEY EDITION Price 4^d

To The Nation's Leaders: RABAU ROUT MUST NOT HAPPEN IN AUSTRALIA

Smith's Weekly

The Public Guardian

We Recommend SEPPELT'S VINEGAR

Vol. XXIV, No. 10 (Copyright) Saturday, May 9, 1942

More Evidence Of—

SERIOUS BUNGLING IN RABAU DEBACLE

Smith's Weekly

The Public Guardian

fortuna cloth SUPERSEDES LINEN

Vol. XXIV, No. 11 (Copyright) Saturday, May 16, 1942

PRIME MINISTER SHOULD ORDER FULL INQUIRY

INVESTIGATION OF NEW GUINEA AFFAIR DEMANDED

Thirteen Australian Nurses Abandoned

IN order that what happened when the Japs came to Rabaul may not be repeated if and when they come to Australia, "Smith's" demands that the Federal Government make a full investigation into the whole circumstances of the capitulation.

Saturday May 9, 1942

Saturday May 16, 1942

"We are on the Macdhui and are having a great trip, cabins and marvellous tucker. For dinner tonight I had soup, fish, lamb brains (under some fancy name), roast leg of lamb and all vegetables. Plum pudding and brandy sauce, coffee and finished off with a good apple. Can you imagine what that sort of food is like to us - and are the boys going it, cripes."

From a letter to his parents by Cpl Mick Morell, of the 1st Independent Company, after escaping from New Britain on the *Laurabada* in April 1942 to Port Moresby. Mick, 91, is a retired cane farmer and lives at Bundaberg, Queensland.

WEBSITE www.memorial.org.au

MEMBERS LOG-IN ON WEBSITE

A Members-only area on the website has recently been developed. It currently holds additional photos and recently archived newsletters.

This section of the website will continually be updated and improved. If you do not have an access number please let us know.

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 the New Guinea islands 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*. Please Email: andrea.williams@bigpond.com

RECRUIT PEOPLE AS MEMBERS

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society has over 450 members. Each membership contributes to the memorial. 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

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 of THE TRAGEDY OF THE MONTEVIDEO MARU and THE STORY OF THE KRAIT until the 30TH June 2012 to the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society. To purchase this DVD visit: www.thefallofrabaul.com or phone: 0418 740182

THE RESTORING COMMUNITY WAR MEMORIALS GRANTS PROGRAM in Victoria provides funding of up to \$10,000 to assist ex-service organisations, local councils, schools and community groups to preserve, restore and enhance local war memorials and honour rolls.

The 2012 grants program closes on Monday 30th January 2012 and can be obtained from www.dpcd.vic.gov.au

FEEDBACK

JIM CLARK

BENALLA

Re: 2012 - 70th Anniversaries. *How to create maximum impact at these anniversaries.*

My uncle WK Mason, VX 26748, was lost on the *Montevideo Maru* with 1050 others. I have communicated with you and many others before about the tragedy. I helped initiate the 70th Anniversary recognition of the Trawool-Bonegilla march in Benalla last year.

Some of my ideas may be over the top. You can judge for yourself but I'll put the flea in your ear anyway.

Most Australians could not and cannot envisage the reality of 1050 drowning people. They have to see a strikingly symbolic image of this. I have a dream that 1050 relatives/friends will march or stand *clad in replicas of lifejackets* which should have been supplied to the lucky officers and crew of the ill-fated *Montevideo Maru* on that fateful day.

I would buy such a replica if it could be made cheaply and en masse. It would have to have my uncle's VX number and name on it. I would join in a march wearing it with hopefully hundreds of others. Maybe then someone would see the enormity of the disaster. What do you think?

**BURNIE GOUGH
CAIRNS**

I am a former member of the PNGVR and my Father George Gough was a former member of ANGAU. My brother Fr. David Gough resides in Vunapope and I visit Rabaul and Kokopo twice a year. I wish to join the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society and enclose my membership fee.

Note: *SISTERS OF WAR* has been nominated in the AFI awards under two categories -See: <http://castleco-op.com/?p=4511>

HOW YOU CAN HELP

2012 - 70th ANNIVERSARIES - You can help!

There are at least two occasions between now and dedication of the memorial that offer the opportunity to further publicise the story of what happened in Rabaul, the islands of New Guinea and on the *Montevideo Maru*.

- **January 23** - the 70th anniversary of the Japanese invasion of the New Guinea Islands, and

- **Anzac Day - 25 April**

Can members - especially those outside the capital cities - contact their local newspaper(s), as well as their ABC and commercial radio/TV stations on or just before January 23, to talk about the tragic and little known events of 1942? These could for instance include the invasion itself, the POWs and civilian internees, the nurses, Tol massacre, the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*, the long wait by relatives for news of their loved ones and the affect this had on their lives.

Please also alert your:

- State Minister for Veterans Affairs
- local councils
- RSLs
- Historical Societies

By telling your story, this will help acknowledge what occurred and ensure the story becomes a lasting part of Australian history.

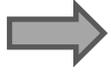
ANZAC DAY SCHOOLS AWARD 2012

The Anzac Day Schools' Awards is a competition that encourages students to learn about Anzac Day. By researching Australia's wartime history students learn why veterans are commemorated on this special day. The competition is open to primary and secondary schools Australia wide and can be entered as an individual, class or a whole school and there are various categories. Prize money for State/Territory primary and secondary winners ranges up to \$2000. Further information on entry criteria can be found at 'Commemorations' at www.dva.gov.au or phone a Commemorations Officer on 133 254.

Could members of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society with children or grandchildren at school mention the significance of the 70th anniversary in 2012 for Lark Force, the 2/22nd Battalion and 1 Independent Company to their children's teachers and encourage the school to submit a project for these national awards?

Members could also contact the schools in the areas where the men were camped prior to going to the New Guinea Islands eg Bendigo, Trawool please? If you could also copy the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society in any correspondence, this would be appreciated.

Thank you to Patrick Bourke for this initiative



Help commemorate an important part of the history of Australia and Papua New Guinea by donating to the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial.

Memorial News, the monthly newsletter of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, is available to all members.

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.

Donations over \$2 will be tax deductible. They are forwarded, in bulk amounts, to the AWM for processing to the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial Fund. This may result in a slight delay in receipts being returned.

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

Membership/Donations

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

NOTE:

Do you have an email address we could use? This will save both costs and time. Please email: admin@memorial.org.au

AURORA EXPEDITIONS PNG -

70th commemoration voyage

RABAUL ANZAC Day 2012 -



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.

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

Sydney information evening:

Wed 1st February from 6pm-7.30pm
Lvl 3, 13-15 Bridge St, Sydney.

Brochures 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.

**70th Commemoration Voyage:
14-26 April 2012**

Lost in Paradise - Our Fallen Heroes

Alotau, Milne Bay/Samarai, D'Entrecasteaux islands - Dobu & Fergusson Is, Egum Atoll and Gawa Is, Trobriands, Lindenhafen near Gasmata, Palmalmal/Jacquinet 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 **70th ANZAC Day** service on 25 April 2012 before disembarking 26 April.

Option: 65km **Lark Force Wilderness Trek** from Vunga, near Rabaul, to Tol -

Options for the voyages also include kayaking and scuba diving.

ANZAC DAY RABAUL 25 APRIL 2012

Susie McGrade has put together the following itinerary for those interested in travelling to Rabaul for ANZAC DAY 2012.

MONDAY 23rd APRIL 4.40 pm PNGVR Group and Matt Foley arrive Tokua Airport, Rabaul - Welcome by Dignitaries at Tokua Airport.
6.00 pm Rabaul Hotel: **WELCOME RECEPTION** by Gerry (PNGVR) & Joyce McGrade & family, Rabaul Hotel.

TUESDAY 24th APRIL RABAUL LAND TOUR

TUESDAY 24th APRIL
6- 8:00 pm **RABAUL HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
Welcome Reception at the New Guinea Club

ANZAC DAY

WEDNESDAY 25th APRIL 5:00 am
DAWN SERVICE at the Rabaul RSL Cenotaph, Rabaul, conducted by the Rabaul Historical Society
Commemoration Service of the 70th Anniversary of the tragedy of the Montevideo Maru - Montevideo Maru Memorial Rabaul Town waterfront (Walk or Shuttle bus)
Rabaul Yacht Club for Gunfire Breakfast (Walk or Shuttle bus to venue).
11:00 am **Service at Bitapaka**
Conducted by Australian High Commission.
BUFFET LUNCH at the RALUM CLUB, home of Queen Emma.
4.30 pm Boarding Ship in Rabaul Town, for sundown **laying of wreaths in Simpson Harbour, in honour of all those who tragically lost their lives aboard the *Montevideo Maru*** (sponsored by Agmark Shipping)
7.00 pm **COMMEMORATION DINNER** - details to be confirmed

THURSDAY 26th APRIL

FREE DAY

FRIDAY 27th APRIL

PNGVR GROUP ETC, DEPARTS

RABAUL HOTEL: <http://www.rabaulhotel.com.pg/>



Photo: Drew family

MEMORIAL NOTICEBOARD

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.

MEMBERSHIP/DONATION

Life - \$500 Gold - \$100 Ordinary - \$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: Richard@isaunders.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: _____		
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Name on card: _____		
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