



Rabaul & Montevideo Maru

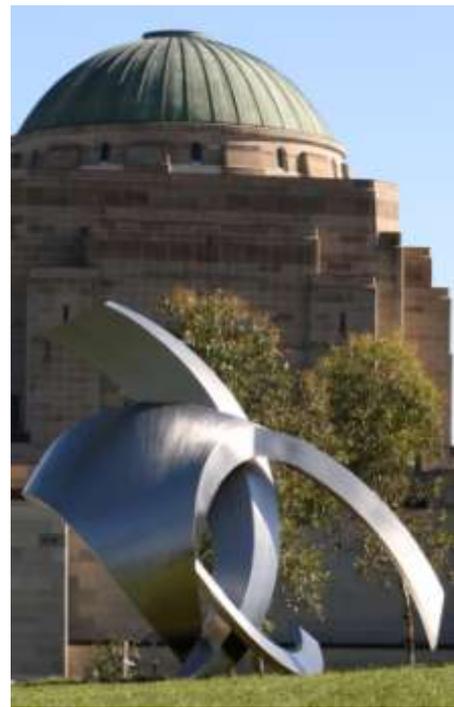
Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society

# Memorial News 40

## July 2012

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

### RABAU AND MONTEVIDEO MARU MEMORIAL EASTERN PRECINCT, AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL, CANBERRA ACT



#### DEDICATION 1 JULY 2012

The dedication service on 1 July was a signal event with over 1200 people attending, the culmination of many activities of the Society which began just three and half years ago.

It was an unqualified success with many complimentary emails received from members and friends. The key message is that those who attended left Canberra with a sense of peace and healing, confident that the sacrifices and memories of their men have been duly recognised and honoured by the nation. This issue of the newsletter contains many of these heartfelt messages and photographs.

See: [www.rtphotos.biz](http://www.rtphotos.biz) for photos of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend in Canberra

Congratulations to sculptor, James Parrett!

Our official photographer, Norm Plant has completed his assignment and submitted two CDs of his many and brilliant photographs. This historical collection will be utilised by the Society over the years. Other official photographers were from the AWM and the Office of the Governor General. A commercial

#### [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

photographer, RT Photos of Canberra ([www.rtpotos.biz](http://www.rtpotos.biz)) was present to take group and individual shots for members. The arrangements to select and purchase these are detailed elsewhere in this issue.

While many unkind remarks were made about the weather before the dedication service, only glowing reports have been received since. The sun came out just as the fly past of the three WWII aircraft - the Hudson Bomber, the Wirraway and the black Catalina - droned overhead; the Memorial was blessed with a rainbow after the event and rain held off until the guests departed. Additionally, the wind was merely a breeze and the temperature was practically Queensland ordered - perhaps the last comment is slightly exaggerated!

The refreshments sponsored by the Salvation Army after the service, particularly the soup, were delicious and hit just the right spot!

There were so many highlights, the flypast, the speeches, the performance of the Ramale Anthem by Rebecca Raymond and the Salvation Army Band's music, the intensity of the crowd. Margaret Henderson, speaking on behalf of the families, said it was as if the dedication was a funeral service for the uninterred lost men and the Memorial a place mark for the men.

Another mentioned that the number in attendance was similar to the number lost on the *Montevideo Maru* - imagine the instant loss of so many people and the repercussions it would bring to the community if it happened today.

The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative luncheon on Saturday 30 June at Rydges Lakeside Hotel in Canberra saw 630 in attendance. Of these, 17 had a brother involved and 65 had a father. There was much chatter as people found they had amazing connections with many others around ...perhaps seeing someone they had gone to primary school in Rabaul with pre WWII!

The Chief of Army, Lt Gen David Morrison, gave a heartfelt speech to those who had gathered. The Society was privileged to have several with Rabaul WWII connections in the gathering: **Lorna Johnston** who had been a Prisoner of War in Japan, **Norm Furness** - President of the 2/22<sup>nd</sup>/Lark Force Battalion who had escaped Rabaul on the Lakatoi, **Len Wolfe** of Fortress Signallers who escaped Rabaul with the RAAF, **Lionel Veale** of the 1 Independent Coy, **Mr Hugh Ward** of Fortress Engineers who missed the ship taking the men to Rabaul due to illness -unfortunately **Lawrence Sawford**, ex Lark Force, of Tasmania had to cancel about a week before the event and **Matt Foley** was not able to make it from Queensland on the day. Other special guests included Dr Rowley Richards, ex 8 Div Malaya and Singapore, and Life President of the 2/15th Field Regiment Association, who spent time in Prisoner of War camps in Changi, Burma and Japan and 'Ossie' Osborne who was with the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Independent Commando Co. It was a privilege to have these people attending.

The Society's work continues: Mr Harumi Sakaguchi has devoted many hours to, amongst other research, identifying and chronologically arranging Harold Williams' work of translating from the Katakana Roll in Tokyo in 1945; thank you letters have been received and sent; bills are being paid and the accounts reconciled, photographic records are being collected and a DVD of the 30<sup>th</sup> June Luncheon and the 1<sup>st</sup> July Dedication readied for sale by the end of July, see elsewhere in this issue for ordering details. Preliminary plans are being made for a seminar to continue research with the list of names recently received from Japan. The Committee is cognizant of the need to proceed rapidly while the recent success of the 1 July dedication remains foremost in the minds of the politicians and bureaucracy. However, research must be thorough and the Society's work must be creditable.

**Please note: Speeches from these events are attached at end of newsletter**

The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society thanks all supporters of the memorial however the following deserve special recognition:

- The Australian Government
- The Papua New Guinea Government
- Rio Tinto Pty Ltd
- The Salvation Army
- The Queensland Government
- The 2/22<sup>nd</sup>/Lark Force Association
- The NGVR/PNGVR Ex Members Association
- The Papua New Guinea Association of Australia
- Jackson Wells
- King & Co Property Consultants
- Irish & Saunders Pty Ltd
- Historical Aviation Restoration Society
- Temora Aviation Museum.



Below: The Governor General discusses the memorial with sculptor James Parrett



Above: Phil Ainsworth and Rear Admiral Ken Doolan, Chairman of Council AWM and President of the RSL, lay their wreaths  
Photos: Norman Plant



## HISTORIC FLYPAST PART OF MONTEVIDEO MARU DEDICATION SERVICE

### DON HOOK

Three types of aircraft, at the frontline in the early days of the Japanese war, took part in a flypast at the start of the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru dedication service in Canberra on July 1, 2012.

The service, attended by more than 1,000 people, marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Japanese prison ship with the loss of 1,053 Australian soldiers and civilian internees,

The flypast was lead by a Hudson bomber followed by a Wirraway armed trainer, and a Catalina flying boat.

The Hudson and the Catalina aircraft had several roles in the defence of the New Guinea islands including reconnaissance, laying of mines, and attacking Japanese shipping. They also were used in the evacuation of civilians and military personnel.

The Wirraway trainers were obsolete for the purpose they were used. However, the performance of their crews was inspiring, and their loss sadly predictable. The flypast was seen as a fitting final salute to those young airmen.

On January 20, 1942, Wing Commander John Lerew's Number 24 (Wirraway) Squadron had only eight airplanes to defend Rabaul against a raid by more than 100 Japanese Zero fighters and bombers from four aircraft carriers.

The Wirraways were hopelessly outclassed by the Zeros in speed, maneuverability, and firepower. Of their eight two-man crews, six airmen were killed and five badly wounded in an action that lasted less than 10 minutes. Three Wirraways were lost and two seriously damaged in combat, and another was wrecked on takeoff.

Corporal Mick Morell, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Independent Company, watched the aerial battle and later wrote: "The airmen all deserved VCs. They sure had more guts than the planes they flew."



Wing Commander (later Group Captain) John Lerew will always be remembered for his final message from Rabaul, the Gladiator's Salute sent in Latin: *We who are about to die salute you.*

The Temora Aviation Museum provided the Wirraway and the Hudson for the flypast while the Catalina came from the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society.

The Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Society bore the cost of the flypast with generous assistance from the two aviation organisations as their contribution to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru.

## Photos:

Trish and Richard (Ph: 0402 487 706) of RT Photos Canberra were the two photographers taking the candid shots at the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events

Go to [www.rtpphotos.biz](http://www.rtpphotos.biz) and click on the "Montevideo Maru" tab. On that page there is a link to the gallery. Send an email to [trish@rtpphotos.biz](mailto:trish@rtpphotos.biz) with the image(s) number that you wish. Please also make sure you let them know if you want just digital images or if you want prints.

Prices are \$10 for one digital image, \$18 for two, for each image after two a charge of \$5 per image. For prints the prices are \$20 for an A4 print (21cm x 29cm) or \$10 per 10cm x 15cm print. Prints will be mailed out - so there will be a charge for postage depending on whether it is being mailed within Australia or not.

Once an email is sent and invoice will be emailed back with banking details.

You will also be able to view photos taken on the day at:

<http://www.gg.gov.au/event.php/view/id/1658/title/rabaul-and-montevideo-maru-memorial-dedication-service>

[http://www.pngaa.net/Photo\\_Gallery/MvM-Dedication/index.html](http://www.pngaa.net/Photo_Gallery/MvM-Dedication/index.html)

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/australianwarmemorial/sets/72157630365818536/>

For those on facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/RabaulAndMontevideoMaruSociety>

Keep an eye on our website for a photo display soon! Our web coordinator is no longer working at Jackson PR and we have been looking for assistance.



Photo: Ron Reeson

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

### List of prisoners of war and internees

The National Archives of Australia is the repository of the gift, earlier this year, from the Japanese Government to Australia of Japanese held records on prisoners of war. Included was a list of those on the *Montevideo Maru*. This list, displayed in a showcase, was unveiled by the Hon Warren Snowdon and the Hon Peter Garrett at a special event at the National Archives on Tuesday 26 June 2012.

The list is in two parts - [Japanese](#) and [English](#). The Japanese part has the names of all prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian internees on board - the English part lists the POWs.

There is also a dedicated website where you can search for a surname:

<http://montevideomaru.naa.gov.au/>

The National Archives of Australia have produced a Fact Sheet on the *Montevideo Maru*:

<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs266.aspx>



L-R:

The Hon Warren Snowdon

Phil Ainsworth,  
President Rabaul and  
Montevideo Maru  
Society

The Hon Peter Garrett

David Fricker, Director-  
General National,  
Archives of Australia

Photos: Norman Plant

L-R: Dr Les Drew, Andrea Williams, Phil Ainsworth, Don Hook and Betty Muller. Les and Betty were given copies of their family records by NAA

**In the lead up to the launch at National Archives of Australia the following article by Simon Mann appeared in the Melbourne Age 24 June 2012:**

**Japanese list could unlock fate of our lost POWs**

Read more:

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/japanese-list-could-unlock-fate-of-our-lost-pows-20120623-20vfd.html#ixzz20Xwg5GXl>





Left: His Excellency Charles Lepani High Commission for PNG  
Above: Dr Rowley Richards, David Ross, President of 8 Div and Norm Furness, President of Lark Force  
Left Bottom: Dr Les Drew and Marg Curtis  
Right Bottom: Colonel Wayne Maxwell, Chief Secretary Eastern Territory Salvation Army, and Colonel Peter Walker, Chief Secretary Southern Territory, Salvation Army  
Photos: Norman Plant





Carole Worthy and Sue Lawson



Above: Governor General Ms Quentin Bryce with Margaret Henderson  
Below right: Rebecca Raymond with Pat Johnson  
Above right: Edna Oakes and ?



Above: Norm Furness  
Right: David Worthy with Sue and Harold Read





Lorna Johnston nee Whyte ex prisoner of war in Japan  
Photo: Norm Plant

World War II Veterans  
Photo: Norm Plant

630 attended the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Luncheon at Rydges Lakeside Hotel, Canberra  
Photo: Norm Plant



Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader of the Opposition on the Centenary of ANZAC Liberal Senator for Victoria issued the following Media Release on Saturday 30 June 2012:

### Remembering the *Montevideo Maru*

The lives of 1,053 men will be honoured tomorrow at the Australian War Memorial when a sculpture commemorating the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* is unveiled.

Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, paid tribute today to the men who died on the *Montevideo Maru* and those who defended Rabaul and New Guinea during World War Two.

"The sculpture being unveiled at the Australian War Memorial tomorrow will remember all those who perished with the *Montevideo Maru* when she was sunk on 1 July 1942", Senator Ronaldson said.

"On the morning of 1 July 1942, the *Montevideo Maru* was steaming from New Guinea to Japan carrying 1,053 men, 845 who were Australian prisoners of war and a further 208 civilian internees."

"The men had been captured by the Japanese following the fall of Rabaul to Japanese forces in early 1942. After leaving Rabaul, the ship was believed to be heading for Japan.

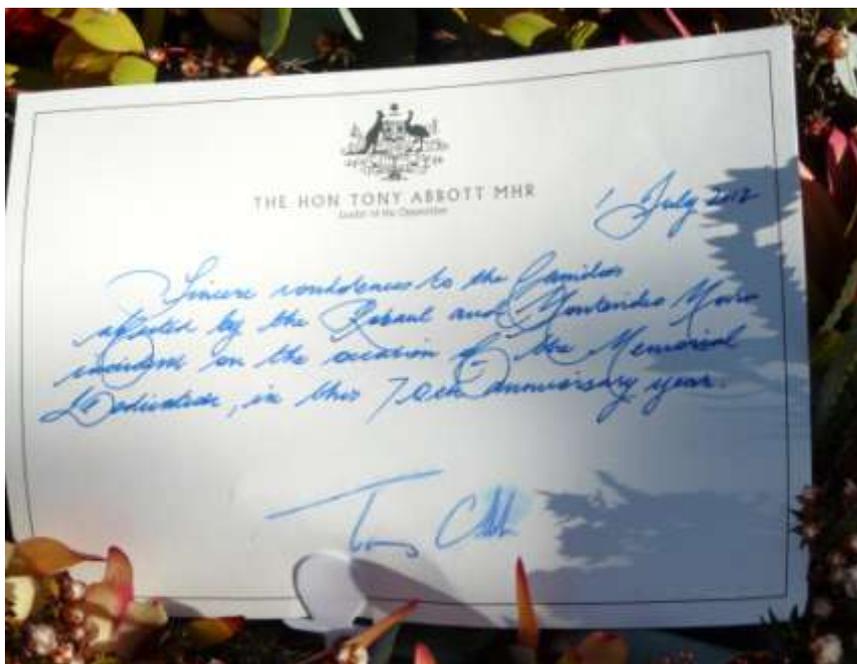
"On the journey, she was spotted by the USS *Sturgeon* who, mistaking her for a troop-carrying vessel, fired a torpedo at the ship. She is now believed to lie at the bottom of the ocean off the coast of the Philippines."

"Only 18 Japanese crew survived the sinking. This event is the worst maritime disaster in Australia's history."

Senator Ronaldson said the sculpture in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial is an appropriate and fitting tribute to these men who made the supreme sacrifice.

"I pay tribute to all of those who have fought for such a long time to officially commemorate this event in our nation's history."

"It is indeed fitting that on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this tragic event, family and friends of those who perished on the *Montevideo Maru* can come together in the grounds of our nation's war memorial to honour their service and sacrifice."



## **UNITING CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA (then the Methodist Church)**

The following letter was received from the Uniting Church of Australia, National Assembly  
20 June 2012

On the solemn occasion of the commissioning in Canberra of the memorial to the loss of life from the sinking of the Montevideo Maru 70 years ago, the Uniting Church and its mission agency wish to join its prayers and remembering to that offered by those who gather.

We remember and give thanks to God for:

The Rev'd Laurence McArthur, Chairman of District, Rabaul

The Rev'd Laurence Linggood, Raluana

The Rev'd Dan Oakes, New Ireland

The Rev'd Howard Pearson, Vunairima

The Rev'd John Poole, Baining Mountains

The Rev'd Herbert Shelton, Duke of York Islands

The Rev'd Thomas Simpson, New Hanover

The Rev'd Jack Trevitt, Principal of George Brown College, Vunairima

Mr Sydney Beazley, carpenter and teacher

Mr Wilfred Pearce, accountant

Mr Ron Wayne, former mission staff, Rabaul

Mr Ken Allsop, former mission staff, Rabaul

The Rev'd Don Alley, New Zealand Methodist missionary, Bougainville

This tragedy represents the most significant loss of life of mission personnel the then Methodist Church and now Uniting Church in Australia have experienced. The memorial reminds us that the devastation of war affects all who get in its way and heightens our sense of shared vulnerability and responsibility for each other.

As those bequeathed the purpose for which these people worked and the organisation that succeeded theirs, we share a deep sense of loss together with a deeper hope for the peace and justice they believed in and a trust in the enduring love of God that reaches towards every person.

We greet those who gather and express our gratitude to all who have enabled this memorial to be erected and commemoration to be held.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

**Rev'd Alistair Macrae**

**President**

(signed)

**Rev'd Dr Kerry Enright**

**National Director**

**Uniting World**

**A DVD titled “70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS”** is now available. This presentation is a coverage of the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Tragedy 30<sup>th</sup> June luncheon and dedication of the Memorial on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2012.

Duration is approximately 2 and a half hours and features all the significant aspects of these 2 historic commemorative events. The entire presentation has been filmed in high definition format by a professional crew.

It is now available for \$40 including postage to anywhere in Australia and orders with money order or cheque should be directed to Schindler Communications at PO Box 303, Northgate Q 4013 or by direct deposit. If you wish to pay by direct deposit please ask for account details by emailing [john@schindler.com.au](mailto:john@schindler.com.au). PAYPAL payments will be accepted at the same email address.

Another documentary currently in production is **SOME CAME HOME**. This film will approach the subject of the fate of the many POW's whose prison ships were not sunk, some of the amazing survival stories of those who managed to escape and first hand accounts from those imprisoned in Japan and how it felt to be released and come home in 1945. **SOME CAME HOME** will include further accounts from those who escaped from Rabaul including Fred Kollmorgan and Norm Furness. Len Wolf talks about the escape by his group from New Britain in a Sunderland Flying Boat.

Watch out in the August newsletter for further information!

### **DREAMING OF SPONGE CAKE IN YOKOHAMA**

Patrick Bourke has alerted us to the article posted by Emma Campbell on 19 January 2012 on the AWM website. It concerns the Australian army nurses captured on New Britain during WWII. It also includes a photo of four members of the AANS on their return to Australia on 13 September 1945. Google the article *Dreaming of sponge cake in Yokohama* or visit:

<http://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2012/01/19/dreaming-of-sponge-cake-in-yokohama/>

Don't forget to leave a comment too!

### **SUPPORT MATERIAL FOR THE NEW K-10 HISTORY CURRICULUM**

#### **PATRICK BOURKE**

I wrote a detailed submission through my local State member of Parliament, Mr Mark Speakman, to the NSW Minister of Education, the Hon. Adrian Piccoli MP, to have the Rabaul and New Guinea Islands Second World War history included in the new year 10 history curriculum for NSW. The aim of the submission was to provide support material for history teachers so that they would be encouraged to teach their students this part of Australian history. The Education Minister saw merit in my submission, stating that my suggested reference material will be used in the new history curriculum. He also referred me to Dr Jennifer Lawless, Inspector, History, at the NSW Board of Studies for further discussion. I spoke to Dr Lawless who was very knowledgeable and understanding of this part of Australian history. She will follow through with the Minister's statement that the support material in my submission will be available for history teachers in the new history curriculum. I emailed her the updated version of my submission which included the new National Archives of Australia's website on the Montevideo Maru.

If you would like a copy of this support material to write to your State Education Minister, please contact: [admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)

**Rabaul-Tol Plantation 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary South Coast Trek**  
**Rabaul, ENB, Papua New Guinea**  
**April 2012**  
**Reg Yates**

Peter Ramm and Reg Yates walked from Riet village through the Baining Mountains to Tol Plantation via the 'South Coast' of East New Britain during 13-20 April 2012. This was a special journey for Peter who lost two uncles, VX 44521 David Franklin Smith and VX38091 Donald Stewart Smith (no relation to other Smith's in Lark Force) on the "Montevideo Maru", a Japanese ship carrying 845 Australian POW's from New Ireland and Rabaul and 208 civilians from Rabaul including officials of the New Guinea administration and missionaries.

These POW's and civilians were to be used as slave labour on Hainan Island; the Montevideo Maru was torpedoed as an enemy vessel by an American submarine off Luzon in the Philippines on 1 July 1942. Imprisoned in the hold, all POW's and captives drowned, few Japanese survived and Australian relatives were not informed until after the war ended. It was Australia's greatest loss of its countrymen held in captivity by any country, in any war, in a single incident.

Peter is a retired Surveyor; Reg is a retired paramedic; both had extensive service as Army Reservists; both have walked the Kokoda Track. Reg Yates walked 'solo' (with guides) through the Bainings to Adler Bay in 2011 and 'solo' to Tol Plantation in 1987. This time we had 7 guides and porters; 2 with Tolai parentage and 5 Baining men. Reg had walked with 5 of them in 2011; 3 were sons of 2 of Reg's guides in 1987 from Rigel!

Peter and Reg arrived in Rabaul on 8 April, hired an AVIS 4WD and stayed at Rabaul Hotel. Over the next few days rations were purchased at Tropicana Tradestore, Kokopo; we drove around Burma Road, Malabunga and Toma to get the lie of the land; visited the Imperial Japanese Army underground hospital just past Gununur Plantation on the opposite side; we were dropped off at the Vulcanological Observatory and walked up onto North Daughter and back down the ridge to Namanula for pick-up; visited the New Guinea Club (now a museum) and former IJA bunker nearby; visited Matupit village and got a canoe across to the base of the 'active' Matupit volcano for a guided walk up to the rim - seeing a steaming volcano with sulphur clearly visible is unforgettable.

Our trek started at Dadul, near Riet and went via Arabam (with a school and DPI station) to overnight at Maranagi (where cult-leaders had been arrested in recent years after complaints by local villagers); then via Rigel and long-abandoned Lamingi (where the grave of Fr Alphons Meierhofer, who helped escaping Lark force soldiers in 1942 can still be seen); then three nights in the Bainings, two high in the mountains with spring water for drinking and cooking. We reached the 'South coast' at Karong and stayed with our guides 'wantoks' (relatives).

Walking to Marunga next day Peter slipped on old coral grazing his leg and arm; bandaged with Betadine, we stopped for lunch and, sheer luck, a banana-boat pulled in, heading south; the owner, Dominic recognised Reg from his 1987 trek and happily gave Peter and a porter a lift to Marunga while we continued on foot for another overnight stop with wantoks. Next day we visited Fr Bart Advent whom Reg had met at Tol Plantation in 1987; he was able to arrange the Hospital banana-boat to transport us to Tol, where we learned that the Local Member for Pomio,

Paul Tienstin, MP, LLB is arranging construction of a jetty and other agricultural development.

It is possible that the Tol Memorial cairn, erected in 1987 by Australian 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade soldiers and former Lark Force Pte Bill Harry who accompanied them, may have to be moved; Reg Yates will make suitable enquiries. Tol Plantation now has an overgrown post-war airstrip, a large manager's house, a large warehouse, store and coffee shop, and soon the jetty.

In 1942 some 160 Australian Lark force soldiers surrendered at Tol Plantation after ill-fated High Command decisions to defend Rabaul against overwhelming Japanese attack left them stranded without withdrawal plans, guides or rations. IJA soldiers tied their hands, marched them into the scrub in groups and bayoneted or shot them, leaving their remains unburied until Australian forces re-occupied Tol and Rabaul after the Japanese surrender in 1945.

After visiting Tol Plantation we farewelled the 5 Rigel porters and went by banana-boat to Adler Bay with the 2 Tolai men; then by PMV to Merai and along the coast road to Kokopo. We hired another AVIS 4WD and returned to the Rabaul Hotel.

In remaining days we visited Deputy Governor (& Acting Governor) Boniface Setavo, brother of Fr Bart Advent and gave him a copy of "Hostages to Freedom" by Peter Stone; met various members of the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Society and former Coastwatchers' Matt Foley and Jim Burrowes; drinks at the New Guinea Club; and on ANZAC Day attended the Dawn Service, Gunfire Breakfast, 'Montevideo Maru' Memorial Service and Bita Paka War Cemetery Service, then lunch (and Two Up) at the Ralum Club, then dinner at the Rabaul Hotel. Our hosts, Susie McGrade and parents Gerry and Joyce McGrade along with the local committee made everyone thoroughly welcome.

Next year, Reg Yates and "Kokoda Historical" have arranged for the same guides and porters to avoid old logging on the 2011 trek and mark a new track from Riet, Arabam, Rigel and Lamingi, then cross the mid-section of the Merai River, walk up Mt Uragi (aka Masalai Mountain) and descend into Adler Bay. This is virtually the route which Lt Peter Figgis, Lark Force Intelligence Officer and Pte Bill Harry, Intelligence Section soldier took during their escape from Rabaul in 1942. From Adler Bay the route follows the 'South coast' to Karong, Marunga and Tol Plantation; then back by banana-boat and PMV, as above. This will require some 3 days in the bush and 3 days along the coast, plus a day to return to Kokopo and Rabaul. Extra time to walk over North Daughter and visit Matupit volcano (if still steaming safely) are recommended.

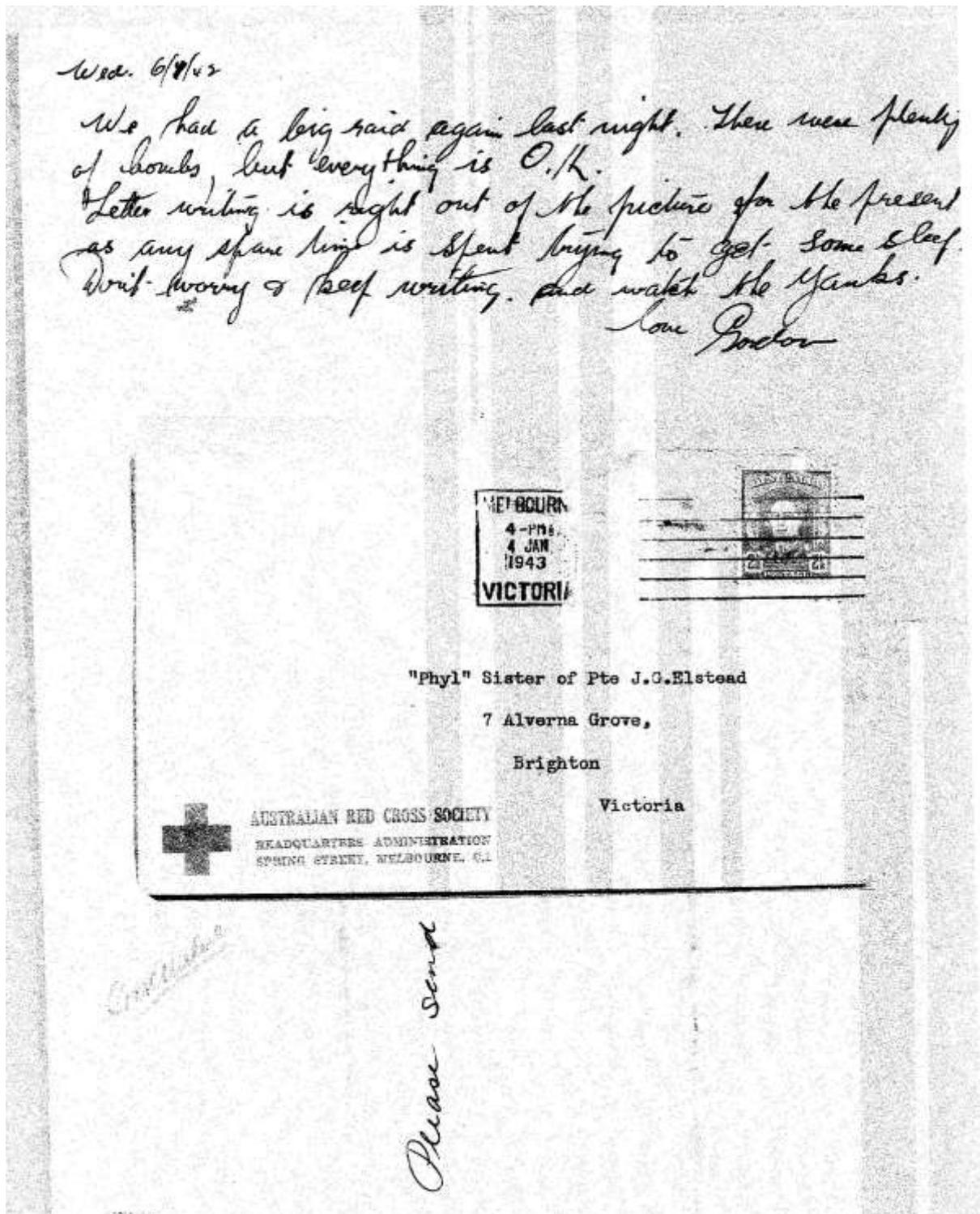
There is also a 'North coast' Lark Force trek organised by either Kori Chan or Alan Manning, or Peter Gosling. This starts from Malabunga and heads towards Pondo, turning south and following the Mevelo River to finish at Tol. Apparently there is some logging en route. Michael Chan Senior operates small coastal boats along both North and South coasts of East New Britain.

Australian soldiers escaped by either North coast or South coast routes in 1942; of 1400 soldiers sent to Rabaul about 400 survived; the rest were murdered at Tol Plantation or lost on the Montevideo Maru.

The Australian High Command sent a force with no artillery, token air cover and no naval support to an isolated, far away port (as happened to Gull Force at Ambon and Sparrow Force at Koepang, West Timor); ordered "No surrender" and "No withdrawal" and treated many who did escape as 'deserters'. The force was 'too

small to fight and too big to hide'; its soldiers should have been trained for a fighting withdrawal with small 'stay behind' groups equipped with powerful radios left to observe from the hills and call in airstrikes when allied airpower became available.

Letter sent from Gordon Elstead in Rabaul 6 January 1942:



**Thank you to all members who contacted their local papers in the lead up to the dedication ceremony - many articles were printed and a selection of links appear below.**

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/new-memorial-a-headstone-for-lost-mates-20120701-21bd7.html>

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/vintage-aircraft-in-historic-flypast-20120628-2159h.html>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-07-01/montevideo-maru-monument-unveiled/4103560>

<http://www.thenational.com.pg/?q=node/35324>

<http://www.yarrawongchronicle.com.au/news/34-local-news/2340-memorial-for-maritime-disaster.html>

<http://www.tenterfieldstar.com.au/news/local/news/general/upclose-lost-at-sea/2612131.aspx?storypage=0>

<http://www.naroomanewsonline.com.au/news/local/news/general/australias-worst-maritime-disaster/2605150.aspx?src=email>

[http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/defence/remembering-our-worst-sea-disaster/story-e6frg8yo-1226413846528?sv=2035075b025f3a1c33f0fde793c71acd#.T\\_FZR4ipYTY.email](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/defence/remembering-our-worst-sea-disaster/story-e6frg8yo-1226413846528?sv=2035075b025f3a1c33f0fde793c71acd#.T_FZR4ipYTY.email)

[http://express-advocate-gosford.whereilive.com.au/news/story/rabaul-and-montevideo-maru-memorial-to-be-unveiled/#.T\\_Ffe1NFsV8.email](http://express-advocate-gosford.whereilive.com.au/news/story/rabaul-and-montevideo-maru-memorial-to-be-unveiled/#.T_Ffe1NFsV8.email)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/war-memorial-marks-montevideo-maru-tragedy/story-e6frf7kf-1226413179582>

<http://www.araratadvertiser.com.au/news/local/news/general/sacrificed-freedom-to-help-close-friend/2607795.aspx?src=email>

<http://www.baysidebulletin.com.au/news/local/news/general/montevideo-maru-disaster-recalled/2604801.aspx?src=email>

[http://www.themercury.com.au/article/2012/07/02/342281\\_tasmania-news.html](http://www.themercury.com.au/article/2012/07/02/342281_tasmania-news.html)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/2252056942/>

[http://rlsa.org.au/news/index.cfm?fuseaction=display\\_main&NewsID=25961&OrgID=1113](http://rlsa.org.au/news/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_main&NewsID=25961&OrgID=1113)



John Moller travelled from Norway to attend the dedication of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial in Canberra. The week before he went to Canberra, he visited the NGVR/PNGVR Military Museum at Wacol and then went on to Rabaul. His father was the first mate on the Norwegian vessel, "*Herstein*" and there was only one survivor from this vessel. Photo: John Schindler.

### **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 (if applicable), 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](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au) or 24 Melaleuca Drive, St Ives NSW 2075.

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

**MEMBERS LOG-IN ON WEBSITE** - Access archived issues of Memorial News

All previous issues are available in the Members Only section of the website. If you do not have a password please email [admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)

The Members-only area also has additional photos.

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](mailto:andrea.williams@bigpond.com)

## FEEDBACK

**MALCOLM MCARTHUR  
EDEN HILLS SA**

I had been initially reluctant to attend the week-end commemoration and am now very glad we made the trip. The rainbow was the piece de resistance. Eldrene March has sent me a copy of a photo Ron reeson took too. I carreid over some of Jenny Charlesworth's very good memoirs, all but two were taken at a Wesley get-together. I attach photos of the very moving Memorial Dedication , conducted by the Governor General on Sunday . I am very glad that it is "The Rabaul and Montevideo ' Memorial. That title is inclusive.

Remarkably, as Quentin Bryce reminded us, twice as many servicemen died there as in the ten years of the Vietnam war. Similarly, the Methodist Church lost ten mission staff and two former mission staff at that time and the Salvation Army lost all-but one of its volunteer bandsmen in the 2/22nd battalion. Nor can we forget the local people and Chinese who died.

A Wirraway fighter trainer and Hudson bomber, like those destroyed in the first twenty minutes of the Japanese invasion of Rabaul, overflew the thousand or so people gathered at the war memorial. I found that poignant. We sang "Eternal father strong to save" and 'Abide with me' led with power by Melbourne's Salvation Army Band. Peter Garrett spoke of the loss of his grandfather and Adelaide's Margaret Henderson, spoke for all relatives gathered, of the loss of her own father, Rev. Tom Simpson. As the service finished a rainbow settled over that memorial, with its waves, threatening yet enfolding. The Rainbow was a special gift.

Earlier, historian Neville Threlfall, in morning worship at Wesley Church Canberra had quoted my father's words from his November 1941 pre-synod address which brought moisture down my cheeks: ' *Christian missions must go on, not withstanding the war. By the faithful carrying on of our work, whatever the difficulties may be which confront us, we are making a contribution to the solution of the world's problems.*' That was seventy years back. I felt, at last, I'd attended my father's funeral.

**ELDRENE MARCH  
BELMONT NORTH**

Just a note to say 'thank you' for all the amazing organization that made the weekend in Canberra so meaningful and special. It was a priviledge to be there and be a part of it all.

**JAN STEINFURTH  
HURSTVILLE**

Congratulations to the team for the magnificent organisation of this event. (Cont...)

Like our visit to Rabaul and Mandres in April this event had some magnificent experiences for us.

On Saturday, at the luncheon we met quite a number of people from previous gatherings but we also met a lot of new ones, including all the people on our table.

Janice was sitting next to Elaine Campbell (nee Hay) and after introducing each other they talked about their connections in New Britain. As it turned out Elaine and her parents also lived on Mandres Plantation/Sawmill. It appears that they left there in 1940 whereas Janice's father, Jack Beaumont, stayed there until his capture by the Japanese. It also turned out that a friend of Jack's, Pat Barrie, was also a friend of the Hay family.

And if you think that was coincidence enough read this. When the children of those who were killed were asked to come out to have their photo taken, Janice was chatting to a lady whose name was Marie Thompson and her name tag showed that she was a relation to "Naulty". Janice asked her if that person was a policeman in Rabaul. Marie's answer was yes. That person was Patrick George Naulty and he was the person who gave Janice's mother away at the wedding of Jack and Clare. It also turns out that 2 of Marie's sons, live near Keith in South Australia whilst Jack's sister Margaret Killmier, nee Beaumont, lives in the adjoining town of Bordertown.

AS you can see another very special event for our family.

Thanks again.

**SIMON ROWELL  
HAMPTON EAST VIC**

Everyone I spoke with found it to be amazing experience and found great comfort in the events. The dedication service on Sunday was especially good and our family was grateful for the opportunity to attend. My Mother, who lost her father on the Montevideo Maru when she was an infant, was particularly moved as this was a significant defining event in her life.

Achieving two very successful events over one weekend does not happen by accident and I know that there has been an enormous amount of effort put in behind the scenes by yourself and the committee over a long period of time. I am personally grateful to you and your team for this.

Thank you again,

**GILLIAN AND DAVID MONTGOMERY**

What a great weekend. Appreciated the opportunity to be part of the memories and celebrations with Allen Osborne. Congratulations to all on their efforts to bring it together.

**PAM TRIGG  
NORTH CROYDON**

You must be very pleased with last weekend and the unveiling of the memorial. I thought the service was excellent. It contained everything and whoever put it all together should be congratulated.

My daughter and granddaughter leaned so much more about their grandfather and great grandfather. My granddaughter submitted a project about her weekend to the class. I intend to get the book about the event so she can keep that forever in her mementos. She was also able to go inside the AWM and put a poppy in the wall. We could not get her up to Wilfred Trigg's name but a kind man helped her and she was so happy. Thanks once again for your contribution to the weekend.

**DON and HEATHER MCPHEE  
YARRAWONGA**

Congratulations on a wonderful weekend. Your committee ... did a "great job" and for everything to run like clockwork as it did!

We thought the Speech by Lieutenant General David Morrison at the Luncheon was excellent and very much to the heart strings of everyone in the room and finally the acknowledgement from the the Australian Army top brass what a "stuff up" it all was

and there were such blatant lack of support for these servicemen and citizens (who were there) that went to New Britain on an impossible mission. I am certain if my mother "who suffered so badly over the many years" was still alive she would have been "extremely pleased" to see at last, acknowledgement of the those soldiers and citizens with a monument to remember them by. For all the surviving family members who lost love ones there can now be a "type of peace in there minds" knowing that finally there sacrifice is being broadly acknowledged by the Australian people. (we hope it continues!)

**SHELLEY LANNAN CLARK**  
**BIGGERA WATERS**

Thanks for a lovely weekend and wonderful ceremonies, talks etc!

**TED DOMENEY**  
**FLOWER POT TASMANIA**

I want to congratulate you and your helpers for the excellent organisation, and the standard of speakers (from the highest level) who contributed to and made the ceremony what it was.

Words as to what I feel, fail me!

Thank you also for seating me with Karyn and Brian Hammerstein at Saturday's lunch. Not knowing anyone of the 650 (only Don Hooke whom I met briefly last year), it was a most thoughtful touch, and we soon established mutual friends and other connections, as Tasmanians do.

Going through some family documents last night, items that have not been seen for some time, I found some letters from Government Ministers and Defence Force people to my grandmother, some dated round the end of the war, others about 1953. They are "circulars" in other words, many families would have received them, not just my grandmother. Given that, are they of interest, or do you have multiple copies already?

I will be speaking on Sunday morning radio this weekend with a very popular presenter who does many Tasmanian - family- war history stories. (ABC local radio).

Finally, one must be very impressed (understatement) with the raising of \$400,000 over just 4 years.

**NANCIE FLEGG**  
**MENTONE**

What a wonderful day we had at the War Memorial yesterday. ... Everyone involved in both the planning and placing of the Memorial, as well as yesterday's service, are to be congratulated. All the speakers were excellent. It was a most informative and moving occasion. One of my daughters accompanied me and she now knows a lot more of what her Grandpa's war service entailed.

**DR LES DREW**  
**CANBERRA**

On behalf of all of my family I wish to thank, and congratulate, you for all of the work you have put in leading up to last weekend. The memorial is both great, and a triumph over all the resistance that has been encountered in having it so prominently located at the AWM. The weekend was almost overwhelming. Just fantastic. And thank you for your generosity towards me. Josie really appreciated being able to attend, and have such wonderful seating.

Of course, it was particularly pleasing for us to have the Salvation Army Staff Band feature so prominently - particularly as my bother Ken was a member of the band. At their concert on Saturday night, and again on Sunday afternoon at Tuggeranong to which we were able to go, they featured a composition of a grandson of one of the bandsmen, showing photos of all the band members. It was a marvellous experience.

Of course my remaining brother - Albert - couldn't attend because of disability, but he was featured in an article in the Hobart Mercury on 2nd July, and his son (Mark) was there. I won't go on. Thanks.

### **JENNY HASKINS**

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank 'team Andrea' and everyone involved, on behalf of the Gray family - me Jenny, Sue, my sister, Simon, my son, and Ron, my dad who is now 99, older brother of Keith Morris Gray (who went down with the Montevideo Maru aged 21) for all the tenacity, hard work and dedication it has taken, over so many years, to finally bring about the recognition of the heroes of Rabaul, who were sacrificed in the name of war. The whole week-end was a credit to everyone involved. The things I will remember most was the apology from the head of the Australian Army, an Army Lt General, (after 70 years) for what happened to the 'sacrificial lambs' in Rabaul and how that tragedy was put into perspective by the Governor General when comparing the death toll in Rabaul (over 1,400) to 500 in the 10-year war in Vietnam.

We went to the archives and found Keith's name and I have already uploaded his picture and some comments - he will now never be forgotten.

At the War Memorial on Sunday, we caught up with Simon's (now 35) kindergarten teacher, Anthea Hughes (he was page boy for her son - who we had not seen in nigh on 28 years). Anthea's dad was an Adventist Missionary - Trevor Collett whose name is on the manifest of the *Montevideo Maru*.

Again our sincere thanks and gratitude for your untiring work to bring this memorial and permanent recognition to those POW's in Rabaul, who made the ultimate sacrifice, so we could be free.

### **JOHN MILLS NAMBUCCA HEADS**

Time didn't allow for a chat last weekend but I must congratulate you on the organisation of the event, the programme itself which ran so smoothly (if there were any hiccups they were certainly unnoticeable) and the great rapport amongst all who attended. Everyone to whom I spoke (and there were many) were full of praise of the significance of the occasion and how much it meant to many of them after 70 years. I'm sure that during many of those heartfelt speeches quite a few tears were shed such was the impact of the event. It was wonderful to catch up on so many old friends whom I for one hadn't seen for years and hear all that has happened in their lives over the intervening period. Unfortunately we are all growing older and I guess occasions such as last weekend become very important to all of us.

Trust you unwound from the weekend in the appropriate fashion...you certainly deserved an extra glass of two of whether it be red, white or sparkling...always great for the soul!! Congrats to all of the committee on a memorable weekend.

### **ROD MILLER**

A hearty congratulations for your organisation of such a wonderful event.

At the memorial dedication, Sandy and I were sitting next to a gent from Bendigo who, in his own quiet way, told us about his 2nd cousin, whom he had met as a child, just prior to his departure for Rabaul. He explained that he hadn't brought a wreath to the memorial but instead showed us a small laminated B&W photograph of his cousin in uniform to which he had attached a sprig of rosemary and a tiny Aussie flag, which he was going to leave as a memento. During the Governor General's speech all three of us sat staring at the photograph that he held in his hand. As we had nobody aboard the ship, it was quite moving to share this man's sorrow which showed every time I glanced at his face. One can only imagine the sorrow some of the families present were feeling...

**JEANNE BANBURY  
CHANCELLOR PARK**

Words can't express how grateful I am for all the work you've put into getting this memorial finally up, and what an impressive memorial it is too. No one who visits the AWM will be able to resist going up there to have a look and read the plaque.

I want to thank you especially for including siblings in your photos. As you know I lost my brother the same year and I have never in all those years heard any mention of siblings. Dick flew with RAF in Bomber Command and that memorial was unveiled by the Queen a few days earlier and I happened to catch it on TV.

I was also pleased to find the memorial to those who flew with the RAF in Canberra. After we'd finished at the War Memorial we decided to walk home. We hadn't gone far when I realised I was stepping lightly. That's the only way I can describe the feeling. I hadn't realised that the two losses had been weighing so heavily on me. The next day we went to the Archives to see the list and as I was writing in the visitors book I realised that what the weekend had given me was healing. I have never liked the word 'closure'. You would have to have no feeling to get closure, I think. Thank you and all the team so much for that healing.

**MAX HENDERSON  
MALENY**

Please accept my total congratulations for a brilliantly organised weekend. The Saturday luncheon set the tone; 600+ diners in a wonderful atmosphere of common interest and history. Old friends and new friends, old stories and new stories, stirring and humbling speeches.

Of particular note were the collections of photos, letters and articles that many members had with them and I'd suggest that every effort be made for these to be copied and archived in the Society's database. Their availability will also stimulate further research - I hadn't known for example that there was an earlier memorial on the Rabaul waterfront.

Sunday was an even greater testament to the depth of connection to the events of 1942 and beyond. More than 1000 people braving a typical Canberra drizzly and cold morning until just before the introduction of the Governor General, the clouds parted, the sun came out and the distant throbbing engines heralded the fly past. The genius who organised that needs a special mention.

Congratulations again, not just for the weekend but for all the efforts that resulted in the almost meteoric progress from concept to result.

**DIANNE RYAN  
NAVIGATORS**

Just wanted to say thank you for a wonderful weekend and huge congratulations to you and your team. What you have achieved in the past four years is just amazing and you have helped so many people. We found the events on Saturday and Sunday moving, memorable and inspiring. Everything was so well organised and looking around the huge crowd you could see that it was so deeply meaningful to all, as it was to us.

**GARY De VERE  
KANGAROO POINT**

Just a note to say how much I was moved by the opening of the Memorial last Sunday and thanks for all the work that you and the committee have done to achieve the objective.

It occurred to me only too late that I should meet Margaret, the daughter of the minister who was lost on MM. When she arrived in Australia, Margaret's mother wrote to my aunt to let her know what was happening and they each wrote a number of letters to one another. My aunt still has one of the letters and I thought that Margaret would like to know that my aunt still remembers her mother's kindness. I am sure that she would also like to see the letter that my aunt still has which, incidentally, refers to the birth, by then, of her two children.

I should also mention the chance encounter at dinner on the Saturday with Dennis Doyle which lead to several long chats and the realisation that his uncle and my great-uncle were thrown together in their last adventure in paradise. The only consolation is that we now know that they were with friends during the difficult days that followed capture.

**SUE PASCOE  
BLACKBURN**

It was a wonderful Service last Sunday. The intensity of focused, shared emotion was something I've never experienced before. Margaret Henderson encapsulated our feelings when she said, 'Today is their funeral; and their head stone is this Memorial'. I didn't realise how much it would mean to me to lay a personal tribute to my father in the right place at the right time. I wanted that moment to last forever, yet it was its very ephemeral nature which made it all the more sacred. It will always remain a vivid memory. The rainbow later on seemed like a benediction and a promise!

**LOIS AND ERIC NEWMAN  
BENDIGO**

Congratulations on a fantastic job. Did you also have a hand in the weather? I don't think we could have asked for better, it really fitted the mood of the day. We had about 85 people that we have contact with through our group so that was very rewarding from this end. I have had a lot of feedback and they all thought it was fantastic, and quite a few have said that they now feel more at peace, knowing that their loved ones have finally had the honour they truly deserve. They also said to please pass on their congratulations and thanks to you and the committee. All in all it was a wonderful emotional weekend and again from all in the Bendigo group a huge thank you.

**MAXINE AND ROSS TUCKER  
PALMWOODS**

We arrived home yesterday from a wonderful experience in Canberra. We would like to thank you and congratulate you and your team for a job well done. It was truly magnificent and memorable weekend. The speakers were of the highest quality and spoke from the heart. We appreciate the mammoth task you faced in the early stages which you carried out to the smallest detail even down to the hot soup on Sunday. The Salvation Army involvement with the refreshments which were top class, their Band playing at both functions and in The War Memorial was superb and they warrant everyone's Thanks and Commendation. Every one we spoke to were full of praise for all of the proceedings. It certainly was a 10 out of 10 occasion and a fitting tribute to all those who lost their lives on the Montevideo Maru and in Rabaul during World War 2. Once again Congratulations and Thank You for making it so special.

**MEREDITH HILL**

Thank you to all involved in putting this together, and for spreading the word. One of the greatest injustices to these fine people was how it was all kept so "Secret" and it was not KNOWN and ACKNOWLEDGED for the huge tragedy it was. My beloved Nan went to her grave mourning her brother who never returned. Her little brother had the honor of travelling to Rabaul many years ago where he was able to pay his respects. My Great Uncle was in the 2/22 and one of the Salvation Army Bandsmen. My pledge to him, and all those lost is that they will NEVER be forgotten. My Children at 11 years of age have more information and know more about this that I was able to at the same age. They have photos of the exhibit in the War Memorial and when we travel to Canberra next we will be visiting the new memorial and paying our respect. RIP RJ Watkins and all those aboard. Lest We Forget

**HÅKAN GUSTAFSSON - SWEDEN**

Hi, I would like to have been involved in the dedication of the memorial in Canberra, [but] unfortunately I cannot take part. We thank you for your great work you do. We will go down later to visit the monument.

Thanks again, the family of Göte Gustafsson MS/HERSTEIN.



*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.

**Membership/Donations**

One post or email address - \$50

Gold membership - \$100

Life membership - \$500

**NOTE:**

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**REGISTER YOUR MEMORABILIA**

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

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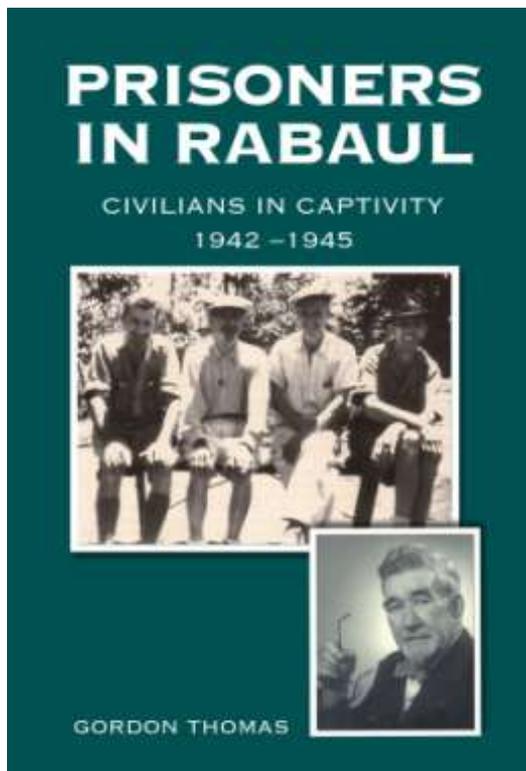
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# PRISONERS IN RABAUL

*CIVILIANS SURVIVING JAPANESE CAPTIVITY: 1942-1945 BY GORDON THOMAS*



Hours after the Japanese invasion of Rabaul, Gordon Thomas and other civilians were prisoners.

Thomas and several others were made to work for the enemy, operating Rabaul's commercial freezer and ice plant. Most of the other civilian and army men imprisoned in the town were doomed when they were put aboard the Japanese ship, *Montevideo Maru*, to be sent to Japan. On 1 July the ship was torpedoed by a US submarine with the loss of 1,186 lives.

The four men at the freezer were left behind and spent three years under Japanese rule – but not in a camp. They were under 'open arrest' in a building near their work but were not free to roam too far.

This account also tells how the freezer crew escaped death from the heavy almost continuous Allied bombing of Rabaul from late 1943 to early 1944, during which the ice works was destroyed.

His is a laconic account and makes it easy to overlook their luck in many ways – including when the dreaded Kempei Tai started to take interest.

This book is a window into Rabaul during the bomb-blasted years of WW2 and a rare view of Japanese soldiers in their own backyard, stripped of ceremonial veneer and artificial smiles.

Here is a very interesting study of the Japanese and the civilian prisoner experiences.

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**SPEECHES**  
**70<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION**  
**AND**  
**DEDICATION OF RABAU AND MONTEVIDEO MARU MEMORIAL,**  
**AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL, CANBERRA 1 JULY 2012**

**26 June 2012**

**MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER JULIA GILLARD**

**Speech Notes for Director General at unveiling of list at NAA**

**28 June 2012**

**PARLIAMENT**

**The Hon Julia Gillard**

**The Hon Tony Abbott**

**The Hon Peter Garrett**

**30 June 2012**

**WELCOMING SPEECH AT THE LUNCHEON, CANBERRA, 30 JUNE, 2012**

Phil Ainsworth

**REMEMBERING THE MONTEVIDEO MARU AND THE FALL OF RABAU**

Lt Gen David Morrison

**THE STATE OF THE SOCIETY SPEECH FOR THE LUNCHEON - 30 JUNE, 2012**

Phil Ainsworth

**1 July 2012**

**WELCOMING SPEECH AT THE DEDICATION, AWM, CANBERRA, 1 JULY 2012**

**ADDRESS BY**

**HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC CVO**

**GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**DEDICATION OF THE RABAU AND MONTEVIDEO MARU MEMORIAL**

**AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL, CANBERRA**

**SPEECH FOR DEDICATION SERVICE AT THE AUSTRALIAN WAR  
MEMORIAL, 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2012**

Margaret Henderson

**26 June 2012**

**MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER JULIA GILLARD  
UNVEILING OF THE ORIGINAL LIST FROM THE MONTEVIDEO MARU  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA**

This week has been a profound moment of recognition for those who lost their lives in the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* and their loved ones who remain.

Such a tragedy would always have made substantial claims upon our remembrance and our sorrow. But it was a tragedy compounded by the long delay in families being notified and many decades of confusion as to the details of who had actually been on the ship.

Thanks to the generosity of the Government of Japan, our nation has now been able to assume custody of Japan's World War II records on Australians held as prisoners of war, which included the full list of passengers on the *Montevideo Maru* being unveiled today.

This is, of course, much more than a simple tabulation of names. It enshrines the memory of these 1,050 Australian soldiers and civilians who were caught up in the most terrible war in human history, their fate taken out their own hands and consigned to a needless and violent death at sea.

The display of this list, like the new national memorial at the Australian War Memorial, assures the relatives and descendants that their loved ones will never be forgotten and that, moreover, the story of the *Montevideo Maru* will be presented for a new generation to learn and understand.

The handing over of these records is a remarkable gesture of the spirit of friendship and reconciliation between two former enemies. May it teach us to remember the past and always honour those who paid so high a price in our name.

The Honourable Julia Gillard MP  
Prime Minister of Australia

**SPEECH NOTES FOR DIRECTOR-GENERAL DAVID FRICKER**

**Unveiling of the *Montevideo Maru* list**

**Tuesday 26 June at 12 noon**

Good afternoon and welcome. My name is David Fricker and I'm the Director-General of the National Archives of Australia.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Ngunnawal people and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

I have great pleasure in welcoming the Honourable Warren Snowdon, Minister for Veterans' Affairs who is representing the Prime Minister here today to unveil the recently acquired list from the *Montevideo Maru*. We feel this is a significant action as so many gather in Canberra this coming weekend to commemorate the ship's tragic loss.

I also wish to extend a special welcome to others in the audience including the Honourable Peter Garrett, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, who lost a relative in the tragedy; Her Excellency Mrs Eriksen, Norwegian Ambassador – because there were also Norwegian sailors who lost their lives when the ship went down. Welcome also to Mr Hidehiro Ikematsu representing the Ambassador of Japan (who unfortunately can only stay with us for a brief time), representatives from the Australian War Memorial, the

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. A special welcome also to representatives of the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Society and particularly to Mrs Betty Muller and Dr Les Drew, both of whom lost family members in the *Montevideo Maru*. Also to Dr Marion May whose father was captured and sent from Rabaul on an earlier prisoner-of-war ship.

It is a fortunate coincidence that this list arrived here at the National Archives – together with other prisoner-of-war records from Japan – just in time for us to display it in conjunction with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Montevideo Maru* tragedy. We acknowledge the government of Japan's actions in giving these prisoner-of-war records to Australia earlier this year.

Something that our expert's translation has revealed is that there is an inconsistency in the document. While the cover sheet lists 208 civilians – the number historically cited in Australia – there are actually 209 names listed.

Our translator has also revealed to us that it is no easy task, translating from the Japanese characters – which don't represent every letter in our alphabet – into names that coincide with the names on service records of the relevant individuals.

There are still many questions surrounding this document and the information it holds. We don't pretend to know all the answers. However, for the relatives of those believed to be on the *Montevideo Maru* when it sank, who have no gravesite to visit, this list is an object that provides a tangible link to the family members they loved.

I would now like to invite Minister Snowdon to address us and officially unveil the list.

## **MINISTER SNOWDON SPEAKS AND UNVEILS LIST**

### **DAVID FRICKER returns to the lectern:**

Thank you Minister for making the time to be with us today. We are pleased that you were able to join us on this significant occasion.

I would also like to thank Minister Garrett, Mrs Muller and Dr Drew for being with us today. We would like to present you each with a small folder, which contains copies of the pages on which your family members are listed and also copies of some other documents from our collection.

I would like to remind you all that this list will be on display for the next week in our *Memory of a Nation* exhibition.

We are very proud that, after that period, we will have the information available on a new website, which will be accessible from next Saturday. It features the list as a digitised document which people can search by name and provides links to individuals' service dossiers and other information in our collection. It also enables family members to add personal tributes and photographs to the site.

The document will also be available on our RecordSearch database as a digitised record.

Briefly, before we finish here, I would also like to extend thanks to the National Archives staff and other professionals who have been involved in the conservation, translation, and curatorial work necessary to place this item on display.

We are grateful to translator Dr Ta-Yan Leong for his diligent work in translating the Japanese document in time for today's event and Marilyn Minell who helped. And to Dr Keiko Tamura who has given her expert advice on this document and other records in our collection relating to the *Montevideo Maru*. I also wish to thank those who have worked to digitise the contents and to link that information to other items in the National Archives collection. And also those who have created the new National Archives website dedicated to the *Montevideo Maru*. I know many of our staff have been involved in some way in ensuring the public have access to the contents of this document, and I thank them all.

I would like to invite everyone to join us for a light lunch in the Bruce Room. Our staff at the doorway will show you the direction.

**28 June 2012**

**Ms GILLARD** (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:07): I, alongside the Leader of the Opposition, do believe that it is appropriate for parliament to mark this moment and to note that, on Sunday, the Governor-General will unveil at our pre-eminent shrine of honour, the Australian War Memorial, a commemoration of the loss of the *Montevideo Maru*.

I would also like to note before the parliament that, as we remember the lives lost in that sinking, included among the dead was the grandfather of the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth. In the Midnight Oil song that he sang, *In the Valley*, he expresses his loss so movingly:

*My grandfather went down on the Montevideo*

*The rising sun sent him floating to his rest.*

They are indeed at rest in our nation's remembrance. It is a tragic tale about the fog of war, the confusion that war brings, the damage that can be done by friendly fire and, indeed, the keeping of details from relatives for far too long. This is a truly remarkable Australian story, one of sacrifice and courage, and their loss will not be forgotten.

**Prime Minister**

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=CHAMBER;id=chamber%2Fhansardr%2F38b26896-2425-4184-83c1-0584f5b1cf86%2F0120;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansardr%2F38b26896-2425-4184-83c1-0584f5b1cf86%2F0123%22>

**Mr ABBOTT** (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (14:06): I rise on indulgence to note the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* on 1 July 1942, which was one of the worst disasters ever to befall our country. The ship was carrying more than 1,000 survivors of the Japanese assault on Rabaul, including many civilians—even a Salvation Army band. Those on the ship included the uncle of a former leader of the Labor Party, Kim Beazley, and I understand that the grandfather of the member for Kingsford-Smith was indeed on the *Montevideo Maru*. Tragically, it was an American submarine that sunk the ship. Even worse, news of the disaster was suppressed until after the war, compounding the uncertainty and grief of relatives. On Sunday, within the grounds of the Australian War Memorial a new memorial will be dedicated to those who died with Lark Force, in Rabaul, and on the *Montevideo Maru* and in this parliament too, we will remember them.

**Mr Abbott**

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=CHAMBER;id=chamber%2Fhansardr%2F38b26896-2425-4184-83c1-0584f5b1cf86%2F0119;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansardr%2F38b26896-2425-4184-83c1-0584f5b1cf86%2F0123%22>

**Mr GARRETT** (Kingsford Smith—Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth) (14:09): I want to add my remarks to associate myself with those of the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister. As Patron of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, I am absolutely thrilled that at last the nation will have an opportunity to commemorate the

sacrifices made by some 800 soldiers, who were prisoners of war on this vessel, and some 200 civilians, including my grandfather, who perished at sea 70 years ago this Sunday.

I also reflect on the fact that I inherited this position from a former Leader of the Opposition, Kim Beazley, who also had a relative who perished there.

In closing, can I say that for those families and friends who perished at sea this will be an incredibly important day. They have waited many, many years for the appropriate recognition of the sacrifice of their family members and I very much look forward to representing you, Prime Minister, at that dedication.

**Minister Garrett**

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=CHAMBER;id=chamber%2Fhansardr%2F38b26896-2425-4184-83c1-0584f5b1cf86%2F0121;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansardr%2F38b26896-2425-4184-83c1-0584f5b1cf86%2F0123%22>

**Minister Albanese**

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=CHAMBER;id=chamber%2Fhansardr%2F38b26896-2425-4184-83c1-0584f5b1cf86%2F0123;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansardr%2F38b26896-2425-4184-83c1-0584f5b1cf86%2F0123%22>

## **WELCOMING SPEECH AT THE LUNCHEON, CANBERRA, 30 JUNE, 2012**

**Phil Ainsworth**

**30<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

Good morning Minister and Patron Peter Garrett, Lt Gen David Morrison, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome all to this 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary gathering of our Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Family. Last year at our commemorative luncheon 165 attended; this year, just look around, what a difference a year makes! Today we have over 600 here to celebrate the lives of our 1,400 servicemen and civilians who died 70 years ago during the Japanese invasion of Rabaul and New Guinea Islands and its aftermath, culminating in the Australia's worst maritime disaster when the Montevideo Maru sank.

Tomorrow is a solemn day when we attend the dedication of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru national Memorial in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial, when we commemorate the loss and sacrifice of our men. Today we celebrate their lives through sharing our stories and experiences over a shared luncheon with relatives and friends, all here with a common purpose, all sharing a common bond. Our family must grow until we embrace the relatives of all our lost men and can communally provide solace and assistance in their understanding and reconciling their loss.

On behalf of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, I welcome you all. Some have come from overseas, many are from interstate and most have travelled long distances to be here to experience these once in a life time events. Welcome and thank you for coming.

Today we have here 2 survivors from the tragic events of 1942, Norm Furness and Sister Lorna Johnson nee Whyte - please stand or wave your hand so people know where you are sitting. There are few survivors left with time and fragility taking their toll.

The relatives of at least 150 men who perished at the time of the Japanese invasions are represented here today. Next year there will be many more. Mr Moller, the son of one of the Norwegian victims of the MV Herstein, is also present here today -welcome.

Also present are supporting organisations, the Australian Army, the Australian Government, National Archives of Australia, the RAAF Association, the Salvation Army, the NGVR & PNGVR Association, PNGAA and more. It is indeed wonderful to see this breadth of representation.

We are here to enjoy each other's company and celebrate the lives of our men - let us do just that.

## REMEMBERING THE MONTEVIDEO MARU AND THE FALL OF RABAU

Lt Gen David Morrison

30 June 2012

Veterans, families of those who were lost on the *Montevideo Maru*, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

War is a terrible thing. It reaps souls and lives un-lived and leaves waste, sorrow and broken years in its wake. Too often our remembrance can appear to give more emphasis to the nobility of sacrifice, rather than face the anguish and deep personal sorrow such sacrifice demands of those who go on living. At times, our ceremonies can gloss over the mistakes that are made in war, but mistakes and miscalculations are intrinsic to battle because war is solely a human endeavour.

That is not the case today, for at this gathering we remember one of the most tragic episodes in the annals of Australian military history. The sinking of the requisitioned transport vessel the *Montevideo Maru* by an American submarine the *USS Sturgeon* forty miles West of Luzon on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1942 was the culmination of a chain of disastrous strategic and tactical decisions.

No official passenger manifests have yet surfaced to confirm this - but it is believed that 845 military prisoners of war and 208 civilian internees from Rabaul perished when the ship went down. Among those never accounted for were the grandfather of the current Federal Minister Peter Garrett and the uncle of our Ambassador to the United States Kim Beazley, who was a missionary in Rabaul when it fell.

This was a tragedy on a massive scale. But in those dark early months of the Pacific war, bad news abounded. Darwin and other parts of Northern Australia were bombed. Singapore fell with thousands of Australians captured; Ambon and Timor followed.

Yet the true fate of the defenders of Rabaul has remained shrouded by mystery and uncertainty. That is because the Japanese-arguably for propaganda purposes -permitted the prisoners of war captured in Rabaul to write to their families and loved ones in Australia.

We can only imagine the heartbreak of those wives, parents, sons and daughters when at the war's end their men-folk could not be found when Rabaul was recaptured. Indeed, when Australian troops arrived in July 1945 they could only account for a mere four civilian survivors and a handful of missionaries from the Vunapope mission.

Slowly the picture emerged from survivors like George [Gordon] Thomas, who had remained behind, that over a thousand captured or interned Australians had been forcibly boarded on to the *Montevideo Maru* for transportation to Hainan and then ultimately to Japan.

We now know from the Japanese and American records that they never arrived. The darkened ship was stalked by an American submarine, which engaged it off Luzon and sank it with terrible loss of life.

Rumours abounded of Australian survivors but none ever emerged to tell their tale. Indeed, an Australian Officer –Major H.S Williams - was dispatched personally by General MacArthur to attempt to get to the bottom of this matter and bleakly concluded that there had been no survivors.

The troops of the Rabaul Garrison, comprised primarily of men of the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion AIF, bore the brunt of these losses. Many of them had been induced to surrender by Japanese pamphlets assuring them that they would be treated in accordance with the Geneva Conventions only to be promptly and callously executed in the Tol Plantation south of Rabaul.

In the current edition of *Quadrant* Magazine, the estimable Peter Ryan- a veteran of the New Guinea campaign- who continues to write with passion and authority on defence issues- described the faulty strategy of forming detachments of 'penny packets' in the form of small isolated garrisons around the archipelagic approaches to Australia as the Japanese threat materialized. I commend his article to you. His capacity to puncture cant at his ripe age amazes me.

Peter Ryan was right. It was folly to send token forces to Rabaul to wave the flag and far too many brave young Australians paid the ultimate price for it. The dead of the *Montevideo Maru* silently rebuke Australia and remind us some 70 years later of the consequences of neglect of the nation's Defence - that paramount obligation of the state to its people.

It is altogether fitting that we pause today to reflect on the loss of those men and the burden their families carried for years - always wondering; always hoping against hope that somehow a loved one had survived and been found. We remember them with great respect on this 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their death.

We can pay them no greater homage than in ensuring that young Australian soldiers are never again sent overseas-especially into our near region - with inadequate training and equipment and no plausible strategic concept justifying their service.

Today is a day for sombre reflection on lives cut short and futures squandered. I was encouraged by reports in last weekend's media to the effect that among thousands of prisoner of war records handed over by Japan to Australia earlier this year, we may finally achieve some closure for some of the families who lost loved ones as a result of the sinking. These are presently being catalogued and translated by the National Archives.

This work, and the commemoration of the *Montevideo Maru* memorial tomorrow, underscore both the depth of the tragedy, and the national remembrance of that terrible event. We have not forgotten.

<http://www.army.gov.au/Our-work/Speeches-and-transcripts/Anniversary-of-Montevideo-Maru-sinking>

## **THE STATE OF THE SOCIETY SPEECH FOR THE LUNCHEON - 30 JUNE, 2012**

**Phil Ainsworth**

**30 June, 2012**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It has been a relatively short journey since late 2008 when a small group of interested people assembled to assist bereaved families, who had tried so long to receive public recognition for the sacrifice of their men in Rabaul, the surrounding New Guinea islands and the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* and receive public condolences for which they deserved, to where we are here today.

Firstly, I would like to place these tragic 1942 events in perspective, the 1,400 deaths represent a casualty rate of 82% of the 1,700 Australian men present at the time of the invasion. The number captured is about 6% of all Australian POW's taken in all theatres of the war, and their deaths comprise about 15% of all Australian POW's who died during capture. As a maritime disaster, the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* with over 1,000 Australians aboard compares in number with HMAS Sydney, when 645 were lost and the hospital ship Centaur with 258.

The initiator, leader, driver and foundation President of the Group was Keith Jackson, who is not here today, but to whom so much is owed. Keith's company, Jackson Wells, was also a major sponsor for the administration of the Group during this period.

The Group selected a number of objectives and work commenced.

1 A *Montevideo Maru* plaque was dedicated at the Subic Bay Philippines Hellships Memorial on 1st July 2009 with about 12 members present The Australian Ambassador to the Philippines was in attendance.

2 A comprehensive submission was prepared and presented to the Australian Government in November 2009 advocating the correction of the outstanding issues. The report was accepted in its entirety.

3 On the 21st June 2010, both houses of Federal Parliament, on behalf of the Australian people, passed resolutions recognising and honouring the sacrifice and loss of our men and offering condolences to their families. Over 350 attended these ceremonies.

4 The Federal Government made a grant of \$100,000 to start the funding for a National Memorial.

5 Research work commenced here and in Japan seeking the elusive missing nominal roll

6 Work proceeded on having the site of the wreck declared a war grave. Unfortunately little progress will be made until the governments of Australia and the Philippines ratify the 2001 UNESCO Convention which affords protection on vessels in international waters. No one has any idea when this is likely to occur.

7 An advisory group was established with the AWM in January 2010 to apply for a site and plan for a significant national memorial to commemorate the sacrifice and loss of our men.

8 In conjunction with the above activities, advertising and promoting the Society's work towards finding the families of the lost men and growing the Society proceeded, and the success of this may be measured by the attendance here today and tomorrow.

Keith stood down as President early 2011 due to ill health. Please show by acclamation our appreciation for Keith's outstanding work. On behalf of us all, thank you Keith.

When Keith departed, a major change in the structure was necessary. Somehow I ended up as President with Andrea Williams being the Sydney representative and editor of the monthly newsletter and with Don Hook in the growing and important position of public officer and Canberra representative. Kerry Sibraa agreed to remain Vice-president while Richard Saunders of Irish & Saunders accepted the honorary position of Treasurer. I thank Liz Thurston, Marg Curtis, Lindsay Cox and Frazer Harry for committing themselves to the Executive Committee. Importantly, the Society's programme of activities and objectives remained unchanged.

During 2011 a permanent exhibition, explaining the Japanese invasion in the New Guinea Islands, the Tol Massacre and the sinking to the *Montevideo Maru*, was established in the Australian War Memorial.

A submission to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority was made to have historical information with resource references about these matters included in the national school curriculum, to ensure future generations of Australia would be aware of the dark events of 1942. So far the acknowledgement has been meagre; however, recent discussions may prove to be to the Society's advantage in this regard.

On Saturday 2nd July 2011 the 69th Anniversary, a commemorative luncheon at the National Press Club, attended by 165 members was held followed by a memorial service at the Duntroon Chapel the next day, when a similar number of people attended.

The planning and fund raising for the national memorial continued throughout the year, the result of which you will see tomorrow at the Dedication Service. Thus the original objectives will have been attained within a three and half year span, a considerable achievement, only possible with the hard work of the committee and persistent and confident support of members. I thank you all for making these things happen.

I now speak of the future direction of the Society. The Society was established to achieve a number of objectives, all of which have, for practical purposes, been achieved. When this weekend's activities are finalised and accounts reconciled, there will remain a legacy of cash for an ongoing Society to operate or for other purposes should its members, you, so decide.

The executive have given this some thought over the past few months and, subject to an AGM to be held later in the year, it has been agreed there remains a role for the Society, but its activities will alter according with the agreed new objectives.

Proposed new objectives could be:

- 1 continue to grow our family, Society, by actively connecting with the other unrepresented families;
- 2 organise and sponsor seminars appropriate to the work of the Society. For example, a suggestion is a seminar to discuss and understand the painstaking work which went into the authentication of the NAA Montevideo Maru list and invite our Honorary Member and private researcher, Harumi Sakaguchi, to Australia as a keynote speaker;

3 continue to run annual and regular functions for members to network and stay in touch, perhaps on a regional basis so members may meet without the travel it requires for all to come to Canberra;

4 perhaps the funding of a scholarship for a researcher to undertake Society or related projects;

5 funding of scholarships for children of direct relatives of victims or for Papua New Guineans who live in the areas affected by the wartime events

And, I am sure there are many more if we put our mind to it.

None the less, the change in direction and scope of the objectives set will influence the extent and intensity of the involvement of members and executives. This in turn will suggest the likely structure which will best suit. The Society could continue with the present structure with amended objectives. Another way would be to amalgamate with a kindred organisation such as the PNGAA. This will not happen tomorrow, but change will occur and relatively soon.

I must also speak of and acknowledge the donors who have made all of this possible. In keeping with the Society's privacy policy that details of donors are not advertised, it is still necessary to discuss the importance of and thank the organisations and individuals for their generosity of spirit.

The initial target of \$400,000 was achieved just before Christmas 2011 and this allowed the committee to proceed with confidence. Donations have been categorised with government grants making up 52% of the total followed by 31% from private companies, non-profit organisations and wealthy individuals and 17% from members. One hundred thousand dollars each from the Australian and Papua New Guinean Governments and \$10,000 from the Queensland State Government makes up the larger proportion. On behalf of the members I thank all who donated and ask you to show by acclamation our appreciation.

Another but usually unheralded part of donations include sponsorships and or in kind donations. It is a difficult area to assess. However, using a percentage of the cash total raised, between 40 and 60%, which other non-profit public organisations incur, and having knowledge of the variety and amount of this is received by the Society, the value of in kind type of donation to the Society is between \$250,000 and \$600,000 Organisations and individuals who have assisted in this way include:

- Australian War Memorial,
- National Archives of Australia,
- The Salvation Army,
- Jackson Wells, Sydney,
- King & Co Property Consultants, Brisbane,
- Irish and Saunders Pty Ltd
- Papua New Guinea Association of Australia
- NGVR/PNGVR Ex members Association
- 2/22<sup>nd</sup>/Lark Force Association
- Committee members,

- Harumi Sakaguchi and assisting researchers,
- Temora Aviation Museum,
- Historical Aviation Restoration Society and
- Society members.

Thus, if the cash donation from all sources is \$400,000, the total capital donated to the Society since inception for all its activities would range between \$650,000 and one million dollars - breathtaking, is it not?

Functions such as today's luncheon and tomorrow's dedication service just do not happen, much work is involved, particularly when the numbers have escalated to what we see here today and, perhaps an even greater number tomorrow, weather permitting.

Many people have assisted in many ways including all members of the committee and others in the Society, however, you can take it from me, we would not be here today without the efforts of two, Andrea Williams, our Secretary and Editor and Don Hook, our official officer and Canberra representative - Andrea and Don, please come up on the stage and receive the acclamation you deserve.

An unseen support, only few in the Society are aware are the researchers and background people who network and combine their efforts to achieve wonderful things. The Society has a policy to carry out independent research to seek and authenticate documentation - for instance the Society was made aware of the recently received 'Montevideo Maru List' by a researcher in Japan, the document the National Archives of Australia (NAA) unveiled this week. When approached and advised of the 70th Anniversary commemorations of the Society, NAA generously fast tracked it's procedures to ensure the translation and hopefully the authentication of it was available in time. Upon request NAA provided an early electronic copy of the document for independent translation and authentication. I thank David Fricker and his staff for this. Margaret Chalker the acting Director General of NAA is with us today, Margaret, thank you.

While there is insufficient time to mention everyone, I do need to mention our independent Japanese Researcher, Mr Harumi Sakaguchi, an extremely modest retired United Nations public servant who was UNDP resident coordinator in Papua New Guinea from 2000 to 2004. Mr Sakaguchi has been an independent researcher specialising in the Australian and Japanese experience during and after the Pacific War. Educated in the United States, he is a proficient speaker and writer of English. Coincidentally, Mr Sakaguchi comes from Takasake, Gunma Prefecture, where the late Captain Kasahara of the Montevideo Maru was born He researches documents to assist bereaved families from war, such as the 'Montevideo Maru List', to reconcile with their loss through knowledge about their lost ones, and for Japanese families, endeavouring to have the remains of soldiers returned home. For instance, his main research area is the Cowra outbreak during the war.

Mr Harumi Sakaguchi confirmed the authenticity of the 'Montevideo Maru List' presented to the Australian Government earlier this year. He said it could well be titled 'The Montevideo Maru List - recorded data considered identical to that which Major Harold Williams found in the mimeographed 'Katakana Roll' he discovered at the Prisoners of War Information Bureau in Tokyo on or about 28 September 1945.' The title is important – it is not a copy of Williams' list, it is as described in its title.

Mr Sakaguchi will prepare a detailed description of how he arrived at his conclusion and when that is available the Society will publish his findings in its newsletter 'Memorial News'. This will ensure there is no misunderstanding of its significance. Mr Sakaguchi is presently working on the discrepancies of names between those in the document, Major Harold Williams ' list and other extant lists.

The Society has recognised Mr Sakaguchi's significant contribution to its members by offering him the award of Honorary Member, which he has accepted. Please show your appreciation for his service to the Society by acclamation.

We must remember the other Prisoner of War (POW) documents recently gifted by the Japanese Government, which are still to be processed by NAA. Australia must in the spirit of reconciliation and reciprocation, search for and give the Japanese Government documents held in our records about the Japanese war dead, particularly those many thousands who perished in Papua New Guinea.

Other nationalities were involved in the area of conflict that our Society is interested. For instance the protagonists, the Japanese, have recently taken steps to invite those who were prisoners in Japan during WW2 to revisit Japan and receive an official apology. I understand this has been well received by those involved, including Lorna Johnston who went to Japan last November. There are victims from innocent countries such as Papua New Guinea and Norway the former when their country was overrun and the later who were caught when their ship was destroyed , taken prisoners and went down with the Montevideo Maru. There were also the 600 British POWs shipped from Singapore of whom only 18 survived, the Indian POWs who were used in their thousands for forced labour and suffered hugely and then there were the Chinese forced labour battalions.

The Norwegian families are aware of the dedication of our national memorial and wished they could have attended. The Gustafson family sent a message saying they would have liked to have been here for the dedication. There is one family member here today, Mr John Moller, please stand so we can see you.

When countries go to war, many people are hurt and these are in the main, civilians. Australia and Norwegians lost civilians internees in the Montevideo Maru and so too Japanese merchant seamen were lost. Imagine the thousands of Papua New Guinean civilians who were killed and or affected by the war. As our families reconcile their war time losses some 67 years after the war, we should also consider the reconciliation which must be still occurring in Japan where so many of their men were buried in unknown graves. Together, we must contemplate the tragedy of war and resolve it must never happen again.

The Society is viable but requires new objectives and a reorganisation to maintain its momentum. After the accounts have been reconciled and the future of the Society consolidated, an Annual General Meeting will be held to set the direction for the future. As your President, my personal commitment is complete and I will be stepping down. This will provide an opportunity for a new executive and ideas, to allow the Society to progress to the next stage. Although the Society's history is short, its success in achieving its objectives has been spectacular – thank you members and friends for your wonderful support.

## **WELCOMING SPEECH AT THE DEDICATION, AWM, CANBERRA, 1 JULY 2012**

**Phillip Ainsworth,**

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2012**

Good morning Your Excellency, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, I welcome you to this important service, the dedication of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru national Memorial.

It is wonderful to see here, today, a few survivors from Lark Force and so many relatives of the one thousand four hundred servicemen and civilians who died seventy years ago. Many of you have travelled far, to pay tribute, in this fitting way, to our long forgotten men.

It has been a relatively short journey since a small group of interested people assembled to assist the bereaved families who had tried so long to receive due public recognition for the sacrifice of their men and the condolences which the families so richly deserved, to where we are here today. This group is known as the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society.

The public recognition for the men was received when the two houses of Federal Parliament in June 2010, by resolution, acknowledged the loss and sacrifice and offered condolences, on behalf of the Australian people, to the bereaved families. Many of us here, who were present in Parliament then, will remember that experience for the rest of our lives.

Just three days ago, the Australian Parliament again paid tribute to the loss of our men through eloquent words of acknowledgement and comfort given by the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader and the Society's Patron.

Last Tuesday the public unveiling of a significant document recently given by the Japanese people to the Australian people was made. This is a list of prisoners of war and internees who perished with the Montevideo Maru. It has been translated and authenticated.

The memorial you see represents the power of the sea which took so much, from so many of you, seventy years ago today - it rages yet enfolds; a maelstrom one minute, yet peaceful and beautiful the next. This monument is a symbol of duty, sacrifice and honour. It is a focal place for reflection for those seeking solace and reconciliation towards understanding and closure from those tragedies seventy years ago.

ADDRESS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC CVO  
**GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
**DEDICATION OF THE RABAU AND MONTEVIDEO MARU MEMORIAL**  
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL, CANBERRA  
1 JULY 2012

Admiral Ken Doolan  
Chairman Australian War Memorial

Mrs Nola Anderson  
Acting Director

Mr Phil Ainsworth  
President, Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society

The Honourable Peter Garrett  
Representing the Prime Minister

His Excellency Mr Charles Lepani  
High Commissioner for Papua New Guinea

Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I feel privileged to be with you this morning in our much loved place of remembrance and reverence, to dedicate a memorial of great import to our country; to honour service and sacrifice, to reflect deeply on a chapter in our military history that is not as well-known as it should be.

Let me begin with its context - the 20th century - a time remarkable for advances in technology, education and social development, but a time more destructive of human life than any before.

It began amid the last great colonial war, and ended just as the scourge of global terrorism was about to appear on the world stage.

A century that saw the most terrible events in human history - the First and Second World Wars.

In the first, Australia lost over 60,000 lives. And during the second, our nation suffered some of its greatest individual tragedies.

There are already in these grounds memorials to the huge Australian losses in Bomber Command, and in the horrific Sandakan Death March.

Today we remember another such event.

We honour the memory of a group of Australian soldiers and civilians who lost their lives in a six month period in 1942.

Some were killed in the defence of Rabaul or in other parts of the New Guinea islands. Others later died as prisoners when the ship transporting them, the *Montevideo Maru*, was sunk - seventy years ago today.

The centrality of the prisoner-of-war experience to Australia's Second World War can be measured by the profound loss of life. Only two out of three survived. The ordeal of three and a half years of captivity.

These losses made up half of all the combat-related deaths suffered by Australian servicemen and servicewomen during the Pacific War. The suffering of survivors continued long after their return home.

So too, the grief of those who lost loved ones.

My friends, there is another form of grief, the kind that arises from uncertainty, from not knowing the fate of dear ones. Uncertainty brings dread and cruel hope.

This was so for families and friends of many of the men we honour here today.

What had happened to all these missing Australians?

Ladies and gentlemen, located on the island of New Britain, Rabaul was the capital and administrative centre of the Australian Mandated Territory of New Guinea.

Its attraction lay in its airfields and natural harbour. For Japan, these were keys to the advance into the south-west Pacific.

The value of these assets had been recognised - well before the outbreak of war with Japan in December 1941.

In March and April of that year, members of the 2/22nd Battalion, AIF, had begun arriving in Rabaul.

They were joined later by a detachment of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, gun crews and batteries, and a detachment of the 2/10th Field Ambulance.

They were known as "Lark Force".

Their job - to protect the airfields surrounding Rabaul, but they were ill-equipped to face the force of the Japanese invasion.

After days of aerial bombardment that had destroyed or led to withdrawal of the handful of RAAF aircraft in New Britain, Japanese troops began landing in the early hours of 23 January.

The Australians, 1,300 of them, faced a vastly superior invasion force of over 5,300, which combined strong air and naval support.

Australian defenders put up what resistance they could, but with no air support they had to withdraw.

28 Australian soldiers died in the fighting that day. Of the survivors, 400 escaped New Britain and returned to Australia. Those who remained, including 300 Australian civilians, were rounded up and interned as prisoners of war.

A grisly fate was ahead for those captured on New Britain after the fall of Rabaul.

Soon after after their surrender, a group of 160 were bayoneted or shot in what has become known as the Tol Plantation Massacre.

On 22 June 1942, 850 military prisoners and 200 civilian internees, were marched from their camps to Rabaul's harbour.

On other days they had walked the same route to work on the docks.

This time they carried whatever kit they possessed. They were flanked by guards with machine-guns.

Chinese and New Guinean dockside labourers saw them board a ship, the 10,000-ton *Montevideo Maru*.

Before the war it had been a passenger ship on the China-Korea route, but the Japanese had commandeered it.

They were using it to transfer their prisoners to China's Hainan Island, then occupied by Japan.

The dockside labourers were among the last to see the *Montevideo Maru's* human cargo alive.

Tragically, nine days later the ship - not marked as carrying prisoners of war - was sunk off the coast of the Philippines on 1 July 1942 by the American submarine *USS Sturgeon*.

The lives of all 1,050 Australians on board were lost in what remains to this day our nation's greatest maritime tragedy. More than a thousand men lost - each a son, a brother, a father, or an uncle. Each story a special burden of grief for loved ones at home.

Did they still live?

It must have been terrible to receive the news one dreaded to hear, but it was no less terrible to be constantly buffeted between hope and despair. For families of the men who had been on the *Montevideo Maru* there was never any news during the war.

Japanese authorities had known of the loss since shortly after the sinking. The ship's owners were informed just three weeks after it happened - and in January the following year the Japanese Navy Department sent details of the sinking to the Prisoner of War Information Bureau, with a nominal roll of the prisoners and civilians on board.

During the war the Red Cross made several enquiries concerning the men who had been captured on New Britain. They received no answer.

Like many who waited in Australia for news of the men lost in south-east Asia and the western Pacific in 1942, families of Lark Force and the civilians who had remained on New Britain, spent years wondering and hoping.

By the end of September 1945 lists of men recovered from Japanese prison camps were being published every day. But still more than 5,000 Australians remained unaccounted for - including those who'd been imprisoned at Rabaul.

Suggestions about the loss of a Japanese ship carrying many missing men from Rabaul first appeared in Australian newspapers in September 1945. An Australian officer fluent in Japanese, Major HS Williams, was searching through records in Tokyo's Prisoner of War Information Bureau when he found a list of 1,056 names.

Many of these names were of servicemen, identified by name and serial number; the rest civilians. Their place of capture was given as Rabaul. Many appeared to be Australians - but

the names had been translated from English into Japanese script and then back again, and this made things difficult.

Director of the Prisoner of War Information Bureau admitted that the Japanese had known full details of what had happened to the men from New Britain since early 1943.

The translated roll reached Canberra in late October 1945 - telegrams were sent to families across the country confirming what they had feared. Few of the men taken prisoner or interned at Rabaul in 1942 had survived the year.

The roll Williams unearthed later went missing.

Very recently, what appears to be a copy of it re-surfaced in Japanese archives among other records of Australian prisoners of war. The Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs presented it to the Australian Embassy in Tokyo.

My friends, as we stand here today, on the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*, and recall all who perished in defence of Rabaul and the islands, we need to comprehend the sheer size of this loss.

In one night in 1942, nearly twice as many Australians lost their lives as did in the ten years of the Vietnam War. They, their families, deserve to be remembered.

The men who died will always be in the hearts and minds of their loved ones, but now, in this special place, we have a tangible reminder of their story in the form of this splendid new memorial by artist James Parrett.

His sculpture brings together abstract form and concrete loss. Large sweeping curves convey the power of the sea and the magnitude of the tragedy.

Today, we re-affirm our promise to remember them, their achievements and their fate; we renew our pride in what they did, and we honour their profound sacrifice.

Admiral Doolan, ladies and gentlemen.

<http://www.gg.gov.au/pdf/speeches/2012/s201207011105.pdf>

**SPEECH FOR DEDICATION SERVICE AT THE AUSTRALIAN WAR  
MEMORIAL, 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2012**

**Margaret Henderson**

Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honour and a humbling experience to represent so many people today.

- Some died many years ago in World War II.
- Some have died since.
- Some, like me, are descendants of those caught up in the tragedy of war.

My name is Margaret Henderson. I am the daughter of the Reverend Thomas Simpson and his wife Nellie. We were stationed at a remote mission in New Hanover by the then Methodist Church. Tom had to build this mission from scratch, including the house. His circuit included the leper island of Anelaua.

My story is not unique. It is similar to that of many other civilians who were in PNG at that time.

The Australian Government recognised that war in the Pacific Islands with Japan was imminent. It arranged for the evacuation of European women and children in PNG to Australia.

Some courageous nurses opted to remain to minister to the needs of the sick and injured. Most ended in POW camps in Japan.

Just before Christmas in 1941, my parents were instructed to be ready to leave New Hanover within an hour.

When the order came, my mother and father grabbed a few essentials (mainly for me as I was only 7 months old) to be ready for Frank Saunders boat which was collecting us for the voyage to Kavieng.

After a night in Kavieng, the women and children were put on another Saunders boat for the much longer and dangerous voyage to Rabaul. There were many sad goodbyes as the men were left on the wharf as hostages to fortune.

On arrival in Rabaul, we farewelled Frank Saunders who had risked so much for us all.

We were crammed onto the *Macdui* for our perilous voyage to Australia. My mother praised the *Macdui* crew for their care of their passengers. I was sea sick all the way to Sydney! We then caught a train to Adelaide.

My mother believed that the Japanese Navy knew that our ship was carrying refugees and allowed it to cross the Coral Sea without harm. There was evidence of Japanese ships in the area.

I have often wondered what would have been my fate if we had not escaped when we did. We were the original boat people. Others were flown out of PNG in the last planes to leave the danger zone. We must all be very grateful to all those who helped in our evacuation.

Like many others, we arrived in Australia with no money, few possessions, no documents such as marriage and birth certificates, no bank books and no passports or means of identification.

Many fleeing families were forced to find shelter wherever they could. My mother and I were welcomed by my maternal grandparents with whom we stayed for eight years. My brother John was born in August 1942.

I am eternally grateful to my grand- parents, John and Mary-Ellen Sudlow for the love and security they provided during those years.

To my knowledge no provision was made to evacuate the civilian men. They were left, like the soldiers, to their fate. The policy was 'every man for himself'. Some did manage to find their way back to Australia. Their stories are of severe hardships, ill health, and terror.

My father and others were planning to get away in a Saunders boat, but were captured in New Hanover. I have spoken with people who watched Tom and his friends who were marched blind-folded and hand-cuffed to the Japanese boat which took them to Kavieng.

My father was listed as being on the Montevideo Maru when it was sunk 70 years ago today. After talking with the late Canon May, I was persuaded that Tom was never in Rabaul and was not on the prisoner-of-war ship.

My further research has indicated that he was beheaded in Kavieng shortly after his capture. I understand that his crime was to intervene in the execution of a young soldier. Both were then killed.

My mother waited confidently for her husband's return from December 1941 until October 1945 when the dreaded Government telegrams arrived. Nellie, and all the others were informed of the death of their loved ones.

The long period of doubt and uncertainty was over, but for most it was replaced with an overwhelming sense of loss and a realisation that their lives were changed forever.

As civilians, they were not eligible for the financial and other support that was available to the relatives of servicemen. My mother was forced to work to support our little family. Others went back to PNG to search for information about what had happened. Mental illness and suicide were not uncommon in surviving families.

For me and my family, and many like me, today is of great significance. Our great loss and the sacrifice of our

- Husbands,
- Fathers,
- Grandfathers,
- Brothers,
- Uncles,
- Sons,
- Sons-in-law, and
- Friends.

They are now formally recognised in this hallowed place.

Today's stately ceremony is their funeral and this magnificent symbolic sculpture is their headstone.

My heartfelt thanks to all those concerned with organising this day and all who came to share this momentous event with us.