

FRONTLINE

A DEFENCE SERVICE JOURNAL

OFFICIAL JOURNAL

1ST/19TH BATTALION

THE ROYAL NEW

SOUTH WALES

REGIMENT

ASSOCIATION &

2ND/19TH BATTALION

A.I.F. ASSOCIATION.

MEMBERS OF THE

AUSTRALIAN

DEFENCE

FORCES

RESERVES

precise PUBLISHING Pty. Ltd.

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FRONTLINE



VALE GOOD FRIENDS



Mrs Elaine Elsie SCRIVEN

Beloved and cherished wife of Glen SCRIVEN (2/19 Battalion AIF), Elaine was born at East Gosford NSW on 5 July 1932 and sadly passed away at the Nora Head Aged Care Facility on 4 August 2008. Raised on the family's dairy farm Elaine worked for Arnott's Biscuits and later held managerial positions with Davistown RSL and the Umina Snack Bar. Glen and Elaine met in 1977 and were married in 1980. Elaine is survived by Glen and daughters Robin and Gleness, and their grandchildren and great grandchildren, her brother Frank and Glen's sister Audrey. The Association was represented at Elaine's farewell by Bb Pink, David Ring and John Burns.

Mrs Selma Joyce MORGAN (Late of Wagga Wagga NSW 2650)

We are saddened to report Joy's passing on 14 January 2008 following advice from her Solicitors received in August 2008.

QX22338 PRIVATE Kevin Maurice GRIFFIN, 2/19 Battalion AIF

Advice received from Kevin's family on 6 June 2008 sadly advised of his passing on 28 August 2007. Late of West End QLD Kevin was born at Kuridala QLD on 17 August 1918 and enlisted in 2/19 Battalion AIF at Townsville on 9 October 1941. He fought in the Malayan and Singapore Campaign and following repatriation to Australia at war's end he was discharged on 14 May 1946. His family advised that "Your journal was greatly appreciated by my uncle Kevin and our family did enjoy reading the journal as well but please cancel it."



QX22576 PRIVATE Victor George DEMPSEY

who served as Victor SHAHNOVSKY,
Signals Platoon, Headquarter Company, 2/19 Battalion AIF.

Victor's son Allan advised that Victor sadly passed away at his Caboolture QLD home after a long illness, early morning 8 August 2008 leaving Elsie, his wife of 61 years, sons Graham (RAAF), Allan (ARMY) and daughter Janet (QLD Police) and their families. Victor was born at Brisbane QLD on 27 April 1922. He was a cooper by trade and enlisted in the 8th Australian Division's 2nd/19th Battalion AIF at Brisbane QLD on 28 July 1941 and saw service in the Malayan and Singapore campaign. He was taken prisoner of war in the fall of Singapore in 1942 and was held P.O.W. for 3 years 7 months serving as "POW 401" in Changi and on the infamous Burma-Thailand Railway and in a coal mine below sea level in Japan until released at the end of World War 2. He was discharged on 27 November 1945. After rehabilitation, Victor served as a Sales Manager for 35 years. Victor changed his name by deed poll to Victor Paul Dempsey on 5 December 1946. Victor became involved in the Scout movement with his children during their growing up period and excelled as a bass fisherman. He retired to an acreage property in Caboolture QLD. Victor was farewelled on 14 August 2008 at Traditional Funerals Burpengary QLD.

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NX35547 PRIVATE Robert "Bob" GRAHAM, 1 Section, 16 Platoon D Company 2/19 Battalion AIF

Late of Pottsville NSW Bob sadly passed away on 22 August 2008. He was born at Finley NSW on 20 September 1918 ? (he put his age up to enlist!) and enlisted in 2/19 Battalion AIF at Wagga Wagga NSW on 21 June 1940. He fought in the Malayan and Singapore campaign and following the Capitulation served in Changi and on the Burma-Thai Railway where his culinary expertise and initiatives earned him fame as the "Doover King". Repatriated to Australia at war's end he was discharged on returned to his trade of pastry cook and baker. Bob's cherished wife Betty predeceased him on 25 July 1996. He is survived by his sons Peter and John and their families and grandchildren. Bob was farewelled at Coffs Harbour Crematorium on 27 August 2008.

NX20438 PRIVATE Edward James Bernard "Ted" HUNT OAM JP, 2/19 Battalion AIF.



Late of Sussex Inlet NSW, Ted sadly passed away at home on Monday 11 August 2008. Ted was born at Burwood NSW on 9 December 1916 and enlisted in 2/19 Battalion AIF at Paddington NSW on 19 June 1940. He fought in the Malayan and Singapore Campaign and following the Capitulation served as a POW in Changi. Following repatriation to Australia at war's end he was discharged on 13 February 1946. Post war Ted set up and ran his own painting business before joining the NSW Roads & Traffic Authority at Wollongong where he was the Officer in Charge for many years prior to retirement.

He served as the President of the South Coast ex Prisoner of War Association and in September 2007 he was appointed a Life Member of the Returned & Services League of Australia and was Patron of the Sussex Inlet RSL Club. For his immense and eminent contributions and service to Veterans and their family's and the community over many years Ted was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 1999 Queen's Birthday Honours.

He is survived by his beloved wife Pearl and his 6 sons and 2 daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, **John & Flo**, **Jim & Brenda**, **Janet & Ray**, **Jeff & Wendy**, **Bill & Jan**, **Ted & Debbie**, **Mary-Anne & Chris**, **Peter & Debbie** and their families, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Ted was farewelled on Friday 15 August 2008 at the Catholic Church, Sussex Inlet NSW. The Association was represented by Ted and Pearl's long time friends Fred and Moira Power and the Commanding Officer of 1st/19th Battalion The Royal New South Wales Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Peter Morrissey.



Pictured at Ted's farewell
L to R: Grandson Shannon - Mr Fred POWER -
Mrs Moira POWER - Mrs Pearl HUNT
& Lieutenant Colonel Peter MORRISSEY



Pictured at Ted's farewell
Mrs Pearl HUNT with her sons and daughters

NX31444 PRIVATE Mervyn Hugh ALCHIN, 2/20 Battalion AIF

Bert Donaldson advised with regret of Mervyn's passing on 22 August 2008. Late of Tumut NSW Mervyn was born at Temora on 31 July 1918 and enlisted in 2/20 Battalion AIF at Paddington NSW on 10 June 1941. He fought in the Malayan and Singapore Campaigns and following the Capitulation served in Changi and on the Burma-Thai Railway. Mervyn will be remembered with deep affection by many 2/19 Battalion AIF members who served with "U" Battalion on the Burma-Thai Railway where Mervyn's and Shorty Cooper's exceptional efforts in pilfering tucker from the sons of heaven kept so many of their mates alive during those dark days in Thailand. Mervyn is survived by his beloved wife Joan and family and his brother Donald who also served with 2/20 Battalion AIF. The Association was represented by Robert Watson at Mervyn's farewell at the Anglican Church Tumut on 3 September 2008.

Lest We Forget



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Tuesday 3, June brought the sad news of the death of Leonie Parsons from breast cancer. Leonie, wife of WO2 Barry Parsons succumbed to this terrible disease after a long illness. As I spent nearly ten years as the CFO of the National Breast Cancer Foundation I know only too well the terrible sadness that this scourge brings to the family. I have extended the sympathies of all of Barry's many friends to him and his family.

The Queen's Birthday Honour's List contained a couple of names that are relevant to the Association. BRIG Craig Williams, former Commander of 5 Brigade and Professor H J (Hank) Nelson a distinguished academic and researcher. While Hank Nelson's forte was Papua and New Guinea he edited, with Gavan McCormack, *The Burma Thailand Railway* in 1993 and also worked as a researcher and narrator on ABC's Tim Bowden radio documentaries *Prisoners of War: Australia under Nippon* in 1985. Congratulations to both of them, and all who were honoured.

Sunday 22 June saw Bob Pink and I representing the Association at the Royal New South Wales Regiment Annual Church Parade at the Garrison Church, Millers Point. The Queen's & Regimental Colours of 1 RNSWR were paraded on the day and the Colours of all other Battalions of the Regiment were positioned on the sanctuary. An extremely large attendance by officers of 1/19 RNSWR led by the Commanding Officer, LTCOL Peter Morrissey. Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO, Governor of New South Wales, Honorary Colonel of the Royal New South Wales Regiment, was in attendance and was her ever gracious self at morning tea after the ceremony. The occasion was a first for our very own BRIG Paul Couch, CSC, RFD, who is now Regimental Colonel of the Royal New South Wales Regiment.

Sunday 6 July was the Reserve Forces Day Parade and there was strong attendance by our members. Full details will, no doubt, be provided elsewhere by our Secretary. We were proud to march at the head of 5 Brigade behind BRIG Max Willis RFD ED CSI, the former Brigade Commander. The reunion afterwards at the NSW Leagues Club was a great affair with a large number in attendance. LTCOL Garry Beltrame RFD JP, having travelled all the way from Hervey Bay in Queensland to participate was, I understand, one of the last to depart. I am pleased to say that we were not thrown unceremoniously out of the establishment this year. It was, possibly due to the absence of the Sig Platoon. Bob Watson is still recovering from his heart surgery and was prohibited from attending. Kevin Jones and his son-in-law swelled the ranks and enjoyed the day. Their family most probably doubled the number watching the parade.

The Association has made a submission to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs in regard to the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Ex Service Matters. We have nominated LTCOL Dr Ted Kremer OAM MB BS (Syd), MRACMA, MRACGP, JP as a member of that Council and believe that he will be, if appointed, a strong advocate for ex-service men and women. I was unable to attend the consultative meeting with the Minister on Friday, 25 July but Bob represented the Association and conveyed my apologies. The Minister expects to finalise the membership of the Council by end August.

Sunday, 27 July was the Annual Pozieres Day Commemoration Service at St Columba's Uniting Church in Woollahra. 1/19 RNSWR paraded the Colours of 1 RNSWR and provided the "expected" extremely high standard of support that they always give. I had occasion, prior to the day to express amazement that there was any doubt about the level of support from the Unit. My thanks to LTCOL Peter Morrissey (CO 1/19 RNSWR) and WO1 Trevor Logan (RSM 1/19 RNSWR), together with the Officers and members of the Colour Party and the support staff, for their attendance! Bob Pink, Dave Ring and Tom Nolan represented the Association at the Service. Blue Waldron OAM from the Association of 1st Battalions presented a photo montage of the 1st Battalion Plaque Dedication to LTCOL Morrissey.

15 August was the occasion of the VJ Day Commemoration. As I had only returned from overseas the previous day the mountain of mail requiring my attention prevented my attendance. Bob Pink represented the association along with Mrs Jean Birch and her niece Lyn Brown. I understand that Joe Coombs and some others attended a function at Lidcombe RSL Club. Sad news from Joe that Lidcombe RSL has succumbed to the pressures facing small clubs throughout the State and will be ceasing operations shortly. Lidcombe RSL has been a strong supporter – under Joe Coombs' leadership – of 2/19 Battalion AIF and the get-togethers and moving commemorative services will be sadly missed.

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Sadly, while I was absent overseas the reports of the passing of valued members flowed in. Bob informed me of the passing of Ted Hunt and Victor Dempsey. I was also saddened to learn of the recent passing of Elaine Scriven who had been in ill health for some time and Bob Graham and Mervyn Alchin. After my return I wrote to the families of the deceased and passed on the Association's condolences. I also want to thank the Commanding Officer, 1/19 RNSWR, LTCOL Peter Morrissey, who considers the link between the current serving members and those who went before very important. Peter has, where possible, attended many funerals and tries to write to the families of the deceased.

I also understand that Keith Harris attended a Dining in Night in Orange with the Officers' and Sergeants' Mess recently and presented a 2/19 Battalion AIF bugle to the Unit. Thanks Keith, sorry I was not there to share the occasion with you. Terry Irwin tells me it was a great night. We are moving into the final stages of planning for the AGM and Reunion weekend and I am expecting a good turnout at all functions with a talk by LTCOL Peter McGuinness MBE RFD ED on his recent visit to the Battlefields of the Western Front proving a popular attraction.

I would also convey a "Well Done" and a "Welcome Back" to Association member CAPT Maree Winter on her safe return from her recent tour of active duty in East Timor.

I look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to Gosford in September.

Roger Perry

COMING EVENTS - 2008

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	Remarks
FRI SAT SUN	26 SEP 08 27 SEP 08 28 SEP 08		1/19 RNSWR ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEEKEND – GOSFORD NSW	GOSFORD RSL CLUB	Details sent to all members 4 AUG 08. Please contact Bob Pink Tele: 0414 907 427 if not received / details required.
FRI to SUN	10-12 OCT 08		FIRST BATTALIONS ASSOCIATION NATIONAL REUNION & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEEKEND	CAMPBELLTOWN RSL	Please notify Mike Waldron Tele: 02 4975 5478
SAT	18 OCT 08	1800	RNSWR WO/SGTS DINNER – SCHOOL OF INFANTRY	SINGLETON NSW	Please notify WO1 Warren Barnes Tele: 0409 909 439
SAT	08 NOV 08		MILLTHORPE NSW MEMORIAL RE-DEDICATION	MILLTHORPE NSW	Please contact Geoff Braddon for further details Tele: 02 6367 3139
TUE	11 NOV 08	1030	REMEMBRANCE DAY	SYDNEY CENOTAPH	
SAT	29 NOV 08	0930 1800	RESERVE FORCES DAY NATIONAL LAUNCH & DINNER (Royal Automobile Club Sydney)	SHORE SCHOOL NORTH SYDNEY	Please contact Bob Pink for further details Tele: 0414 907 427

ASSOCIATION PATRONS & OFFICE BEARERS

PATRON

Lieutenant Colonel T.C. (Terry) IRWIN, MBE, OAM, ED, ARMIT, MIR, JP

PATRON

Colonel B.E. (Brian) MARTYN, RFD

HONORARY CHAPLAIN

Lieutenant Colonel Reverend Chaplain Canon C.G. (Colin) AIKEN, OAM, RFD, ChStJ

CHANCELLOR

Philip GERBER, LL.M., M.Crim.

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REMINDER NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 10th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF 1/19 RNSWR ASSOCIATION INC.
(PROUDLY INCORPORATING THE 2nd/19th BATTALION A.I.F. ASSOCIATION)

will be held at the Gosford RSL Club, 26 Central Coast Highway WEST GOSFORD NSW 2250
on SATURDAY 27th SEPTEMBER 2008 at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA

1. OPENING
2. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES
3. MINUTES OF THE ASSOCIATION'S 9th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE HELLENIC CLUB CANBERRA ACT ON SATURDAY 13th OCTOBER 2007
4. MATTERS ARISING
5. CORRESPONDENCE
6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
7. TREASURER'S REPORT
Presentation of Statement of Receipts & Payments Balance Sheet for the period 01 July, 2007 to 30 June, 2008.
Form 12 Annual Statement.
Certificate of Currency of Public Liability Insurance.
8. HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT
9. SOCIAL COMMITTEE'S REPORT
10. CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY AUDITOR
11. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS & 6 COMMITTEE MEMBERS
(in accordance with Clause 14 of the Rules)
PRESIDENT
VICE PRESIDENT
TREASURER
HONORARY SECRETARY
ASSISTANT TREASURER
ASSISTANT HONORARY SECRETARY
COMMITTEE MEMBERS (6)
12. GENERAL BUSINESS
13. CLOSURE
14. NEXT MEETING

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Nominations are hereby called for the following positions for the 2008-2009 year.

- PRESIDENT
- VICE PRESIDENT
- TREASURER
- HONORARY SECRETARY
- ASSISTANT TREASURER
- ASSISTANT HONORARY SECRETARY
- COMMITTEE MEMBERS - 6 positions

Any member who is entitled to vote at a general meeting is eligible for election as an office-bearer. (A member is entitled to vote if all money due and payable by the member to the Association has been paid other than the 2008-2009 subscription). Subject to satisfying the voting eligibility requirement, all current office-bearers will be eligible to nominate for re-election on this occasion.

Nominations for election as office bearers must be made in writing, be signed by one or more members of the Association, and be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee (which may be endorsed on the form of nomination). A form for this purpose is available from the Honorary Secretary, but it is not mandatory to use it. Nominations must be delivered to the Honorary Secretary by Monday 22nd September 2008. They may be mailed to the Honorary Secretary at PO Box 224 INGLEBURN NSW 1890 or lodged by facsimile to (02) 9328 3319.

- ❖ If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies, the candidates nominated will be taken to be elected and nominations for the positions remaining vacant will be accepted at the Annual General Meeting.
- ❖ If the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated will be taken to be elected.
- ❖ If the number of nominations received for any position(s) exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot will be held for that position(s) at the Annual General Meeting.



R.J. PINK
Honorary Secretary
1 September, 2008

CAN YOU ASSIST ?



NX35952 PTE Allan ("Bon") Charles HARRIS

Born 2 December 1912 at Narranderra NSW and enlisted at Wagga Wagga on 28 June 1940. Following service in Malaya and Singapore was discharged on repatriation to Australia at War's end on 22 January 1946.

Allan's grandson Jamie BURNS of 6 Hakea Place, Glenning Valley NSW 2261 is seeking any information on or anyone who may have served or known Allan during his service with 2/19 Battalion AIF.

Jamie can be contacted on Telephone (02) 4389 1361 or Mobile: 0434 950 621.

SICK REPORT



Allan BRIDEOAKE

recently spent a couple of days in Scone Hospital with a serious bout of pneumonia - and we are very pleased to report he is now back home. Well Done mate !



Robert WATSON

Underwent very successful surgery at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney in late May and is back home in Snowy River country and back at the helm of Tumut RSL Club.

Pictured at left: Robert's wife Christine at right and his sister-in-law Maree at left during a visit to St Vincent's

Martin HANSON

Had a miraculous escape from a horrendous motor vehicle accident on 27 July 08 at Marulan NSW which saw him spend a week or so in Wollongong Hospital's High Dependency Unit with 5 broken ribs, crushed sternum and other associated fractures and lacerations.

Martin had driven his wife Helen to their younger daughter's home in Berry that morning and en-route back to Canberra a four wheel drive vehicle travelling in the opposite direction aqua-planed in the wet road conditions, crossing to the other side of the highway and crashing into Martin's vehicle almost head on ! The force of the impact shattered the air bag into tiny fragments ! Thankfully Helen was not in the vehicle as she was staying with their daughter in Berry.

We are also very pleased to report that Martin – resilient as ever - is now back home recuperating – albeit slowly and sends his best regards to all and his sincere thanks and those of Helen and the family for the many Good Wishes conveyed during a very difficult time.



Pictured above L to R Mrs Helen HANSON, Martin HANSON, Elizabeth HANSON & Association Hospital Visitation Officer Peter PHILLIPS

Fred CLARK

of Coomba Park advises that illness will prevent his attendance at the Gosford AGM Dinner Weekend. Our best wishes Fred for a speedy return to health mate.

Helen SHEEDY

has also experienced a few "ups" and "downs" in recent times including a spell in hospital and is now back at home.

Joe COOMBS

Was also hospitalised recently and is now back on the mend.

FRONTLINE

SEEN AROUND THE TRAPS



CONGRATULATIONS

John Elliott's 60th Birthday Party at "Moira Plains" WILCANNIA



At the Government House Sydney Reception for the "Originals" MAJGEN Warren GLENNY, AO RFD ED,
Ms Ilona BIRTHA RFD Council & COL Tom
CRAWFORD LVO ISO MBE ED



At the Government House Sydney Reception for the "Originals"
Bob PINK-Angie VALENTINE FLINT – Lou EHRLER –
Ilona BIRTHA – Lyn SCOTT – Barry WILLOUGHBY

Part of the tour group which visited the French Battlefields earlier this year – which included LTCOL's Peter McGuinness, Peter Morrissey, John Brennan, Don Shearman, Ron Lyons, MAJ's Peter Godfrey, Ken McKay, Joe Fleming, & Matt Walsh.

(Photo courtesy Dotor)



DONATIONS

It is a pleasure to once again acknowledge the generosity of the following members which is gratefully received. Our Thanks folks !



'ANONYMOUS'		
LTCOL	Gary	BELTRAME RFD JP
MRS	Jean	BIRCH
MR	Colin	BRIEN
MR	Fred	CLARK
MRS	Rita	DEAN
SGT	Alan	HAYWARD
MR	Mick	KILDEY

PTE	Garry	LEWIS
MRS	June	MURDOCH
MRS	Ethel	PEARSON
MRS	Ella	PERCEVAL
WO2	Peter	PHILLIPS
DR	Jim	PURCHAS OAM
MAJ	Bryan	SCHAFER JP
SSGT	Roy	SCHMIDTKE



NEW MEMBERS¹

A very warm and sincere welcome is extended to the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter:

PTE	Terry	BIRD	KELSO NSW	2795
SGT	Mark	HOSKINS	KIKOIRA NSW	2669
PTE	Graham	NEGUS	HERMIDALE NSW	2836
MRS	Joan	PARSONS	WOLLONGONG NSW	2500
MR	Neil	PARSONS	BALGOWNIE NSW	2519
CPL	Ron	PERRINE	WELBY NSW	2575

AN INTERESTING RECOVERY

The following letter accompanied Association member SGT Alan HAYWARD's donation of a .303 Rifle butt shown in the photograph.

The markings stamped into the left side of the butt show

And on the right hand side



Alan writes:

1 x MKIII* F SERIES, 1942 BUTT RIFLE

The rifle was ill used, and was given to me to break up, take what I wanted. It was dirty – with coachwood you use boiling water to punch out dents and oil. This is how it turned out – it was common to stamp the year of manufacture on the right hand side of the butt, and on the left side a unit identification – this was also found on Knox form i.e. 1 MD, 2 MD. Individual units also marked the left side. I notice a reverse 'B' so I guess it was a 'miss' but I guess there's a link since that's how I got it. If you could arrange to donate it for me to 1/19 RNSWR on behalf of me, 2/19 Battalion AIF members, all members past, present and future of 1/19.

Regards

Alan Hayward

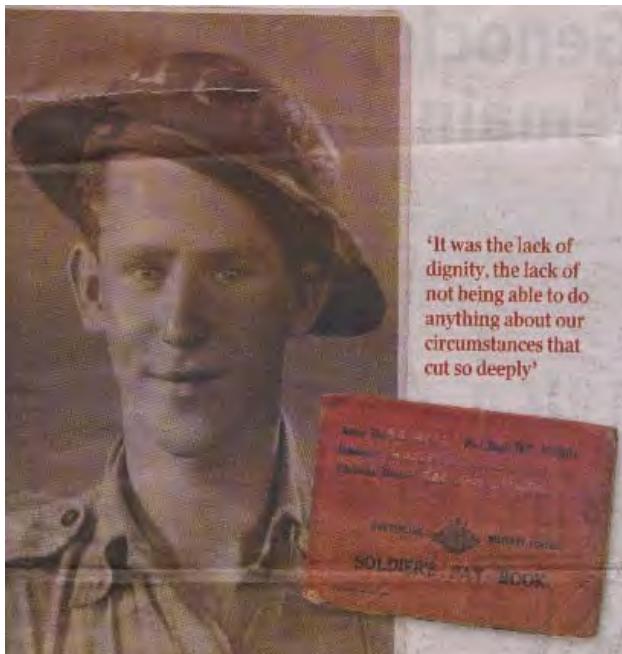
ESK QLD 4210

FRONTLINE

LIVES ON THE LINE

ARTICLE FROM THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN APRIL 19-20 2008 AND KINDLY FORWARDED AND BROUGHT TO OUR NOTICE BY REG & JOY NEWTON
A former Australian prisoner of war recalls how he cheated death as a slave labourer on the notorious Thai-Burma Railway in a new book 'MEN OF THE LINE'
by Pattie WRIGHT

Len (Bluey) GOOLEY



4th AMMO SUB PARK, D FORCE

LEN and his wife, Verna, are gentle people. They've been together a long time and are very close. They are both over 80 years old and go dancing three times a week. Len started on the Line (the Thai-Burma railway) at Ban Pong and over the next 15 months he often worked as a "human pile-driver" on 40km of railway between the Tonchan and Rin Tin camps.

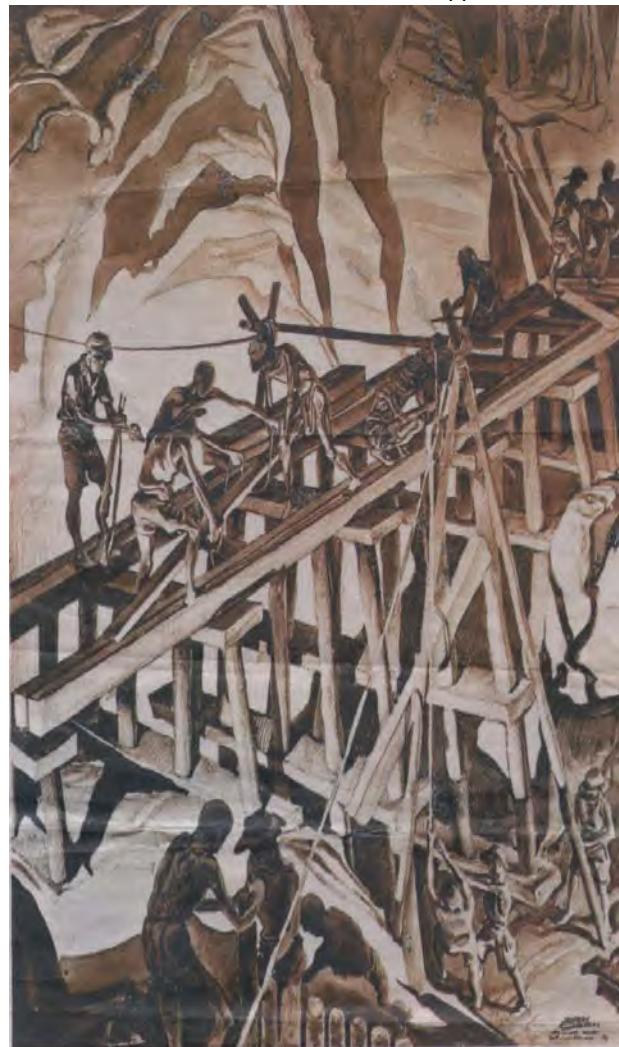
There were 40 of us Sub Park blokes who went up on the railway with Syd Barber as our Warrant Officer. Our Commander, Reg Newton, called us Alley Barber and his 40 Thieves. I was a hammer and tap man with Banjo Patterson, my mate from Mt Barker. His name was Walter, but I was the only one who knew that, as we didn't have much time for Christian names up there. I was Bluey because of my red hair. He was a redhead as well, but Banjo is obvious, isn't it?

The Japs used us as human pile-drivers, as well as hammer and tap teams, everything; no lack of work up there, especially when we were building bridges. We built a big one, I remember, up in the Tonchan area. We would fell a thick tree trunk and then wedge four handles into it and use it as a pile-driver. We had to lift it up and drop it, lift it up and drop it, to drive the tree trunk into the ground, which then became part of the bridge.

We moved back and forth through most of the camps in that area at the whim of the Japs. It was Tonchan South that we were most anxious to leave, because it was there that we hit cholera for the first time. I remember one of

our blokes starting to vomit when we were out working this day. I can't remember who he was now, but we knocked up a makeshift stretcher and took him back to camp and he was dead the next night. The cholera frightened us more than anything else.

Rin Tin wasn't a camp until we marched in. It was just jungle that we had to clear before we built the huts, and they quickly became lousy. We moved up from Tonchan to Rin Tin by barge this day and the rope broke and for a few minutes we were free. When it happened and we



started to float downstream, we started to yell, "We're free we're free." We weren't anywhere near it, of course, but it was a good moment. For a few precious seconds we mused about going out to sea and sailing home. This is an example of Jap inhumanity, one I haven't forgotten. When we were at one of the Tonchan camps, we were on another small bridge, laying the sleepers for the Line. There was a poor old coolie working on the Line with us and this Jap officer came down fast on a rail handcart.

We saw him in time and got off the Line, but the native didn't and the Jap came along and knocked him over and killed him. The Jap laughed his head off, he thought it was a great joke. What upset us was the way that he laughed,

putting aside the moment the native died. As they said, they were going to build this railway and "many men must die". Reggie was in charge and because of that stood up and took many a beating. Given what any Jap could do to you up there, Reg Newton was brave each day. A lot of times we thought he was going to get his head cut off. Everyone who was there would say that they got home because of Reg.

The Tiger, the Jap in charge of our camp, a bad one, but Reggie got around him. The Tiger was a gambler and Reggie worked that to his favour once, where he saved Shortie Cooper's life. Shortie was caught stealing from the Japs and was going to be executed, but Reg got The Tiger to agree to Shortie standing out in front of his hut with a sign that said, "I am a thief". That saved Shortie's life. Overall, I think Reg was a bully and I think he bullied the Tiger and frightened him. Reg would roar at The Tiger hence his name: "Roaring' Reg". We were lucky to have Reg Newton and that is evidenced by the fact that the casualties in D Force were one of the lowest, and it was most definitely because of him.

There was a theft of a watch on the line in one of the early camps. A chap had his watch pinched and Reggie knew who it was. So he picked four blokes and they dished out the punishment and then there was no more stealing from then on. To me it shows how practical the man was; no rucking around for anyone, on either side.

Doc Hinder and Reg and another officer, Lieutenant Ralph Sanderson, were red-hot on hygiene and cleanliness and we benefited from their efforts. You had to sterilise your dixie before you got your rice and it worked. There were only seven Australians who died from cholera at Tonchan South while the British lost 132, and there was only a little creek between us. How often do you hear that story, but it was true - you paid attention to hygiene and you got dividends, which was: you stayed alive.

I don't know how Doc Hinder looked after the sick because he had such limited medical supplies. The Japs were paying us for working and Reg kept that money to buy supplies from a Thai trader named Boon Pong. That bloke went up and down the river with food and medical supplies and whatever else he could get through, trying to help. Now there's a hero - he should have been knighted for what he did. He risked his life a thousand times over for us. We saw him on his boat on the river a few times and I know he got Doc Hinder a supply of quinine.

In all of the jungle camps we slept on a groundsheet, mostly under a tent fly, which had just enough room for you to lie down. We were usually so buggered that we'd just go to sleep, but sometimes you'd lie there and think about things. I can honestly say, not once did it ever enter my head that I wasn't going home. We'd lie down and the blokes would ask me to sing, so I'd sing songs that were popular just before the war, like *Show Me the Road to Go Home; Two Dreams Met; Pennies from Heaven; Maori's Farewell; We'll Meet Again*. Then the blokes would say, "That's enough, Bluey, that's enough."

The day I remember more than any other was when Ron Holberton and I nicked a tin of strawberry jam in the early part of it all, around Kanchanaburi. Ron said, "Let's keep it for something special." So I said, "It'll be my twenty-first birthday in May." "We'll keep it for that, then." We had it with rice for my twenty-first. I spent my birthdays around the place as I had one birthday in Singapore, two in Siam on the Line and one in Japan. We don't talk about the bad things, because if it wasn't happening to you, it was happening to someone you knew. Seeing someone with a

piece of wood behind their knees, crouched down with a bit of a tree branch between their legs, and every time they got up they got a belting. Or they were holding a rock above their heads, hardly able to hold the weight of it, with their arms at full stretch, and if they lowered it, they would be walloped. And you were grateful that you were not in that position yourself, feeling, maybe, bad that you were feeling like that. So we put it quietly away.

You know, it was the lack of dignity, the lack of not being able to do anything about our circumstances that cut so deeply. There was little to no civilisation up there for us and the baseness of how we were expected to live, quite apart from being deprived of our freedom and at times our sanity, was very tough. But over all this, our main objective was to stay alive. Just to let them know that they couldn't control us. Being young helped, and I was young - only 20. There are degrees of freedom, though, aren't there? We saw comfort women come into our camp, for example. They were in the last carriage of one of the trains going through. In fact, The Tiger asked Reggie if he wanted women to come into the camp. I wasn't around for this exchange, but I heard Reggie say he'd prefer a few more bags of rice instead of women. Two hundred and six of us went away in our unit and 120 came home, and now there are only 13 left. When we see someone from our unit, like on Anzac Day, or when I'm with Banjo, I look at him and know that his thoughts are what my thoughts are ... that we beat them, we survived.

This is an edited extract from Men of the Line. Stories of the Thai-Burma Railway Survivors, by Pattie Wright (Melbourne University Press, \$45).

THE GROCER

THE Japanese initially contracted Boon Pong, a local merchant in Kanchanaburi, to supply the prison canteens along the (Kwai Noi) river, while they took their obvious cut of the profits. So Boon Pong became "the grocer supplying the camps", using river barges to supply camps as far up the Kwai Noi as Tarkanoon, in Thailand.

He and a secret underground movement called V, centred in Bangkok, helped to supply money, medicine and food to many of the camps along the Thai-Burma railway under the noses of the Japanese. Boon Pong would take his 12-year-old daughter, Panee, on his trips up-river and she would sing Japanese songs to the guards while Boon Pong handed over supplies to the prisoners of war. He also cashed personal cheques for prisoners and paid for drugs with his own money.

He did this with relative ease, but at great personal danger. What is amazing is that Boon Pong had previously had no contact with Europeans prior to the outbreak of war. Boon Pong was a merchant in Kanchanaburi and had made contact with the Anglo-Siam Corporation, meeting a Corporal Johnston. Both were instructive in the initial setting up of the underground movement. Significant financial assistance came from members of the expat community in Bangkok, in particular from a man called Peter Heath, who was at the time interned in a civilian camp under the Thai army. The expat community and many Thais and Chinese merchants in Bangkok assisted with the simple donation of money.

Peter Heath, Ken Gairdner and Dick Hempson were the mainstays of the V organisation in Bangkok. It was a complete underground aid organisation, and without these people and Boon Pong as the public undercover face, many thousands of men would simply have perished from starvation and disease on the Line.

Pattie Wright

FRONTLINE

RESERVE FORCES DAY SYDNEY 6 JULY 08



Association Standard Bearer Bill DUMBRELL with former CO LTCOL Gary BELTRAME RFD JP & Roger PERRY



Former Comd 5 Bde BRIG Max WILLIS RFD ED CSI – Roger PERRY & CAPT Heng KHONG



CO LTCOL Gary BELTRAME RFD JP - Roger PERRY & MAJGEN Gordon MATLAND AO OBE RFD ED former Inspector General Reserves



The new Association Standards presented by the Pratt Foundation are marched on



L to R: Former CO LTCOL Gary BELTRAME RFD JP – MAJ Barry CHAPMAN ED - Tony OHLBACH - Roy MUNDINE OAM, Kev JONES & Geoff MILLGATE

RESERVE FORCES DAY SYDNEY 6 JULY 08



Tony OHLBACH - Vice President Mick PASS & Kevin BRANCH



BILL DUMBRELL – Peggy & Alan DRINKWATER



Adrian SCHLIEPER – Joe ELKUSCH – David RING & Tony OHLBACH

President Roger PERRY – MAJ Barry CHAPMAN ED – LTCOL Gary BELTRAME RFD JP & MAJ Ken MCKAY RFD ED



L to R: LTCOL Gary BELTRAME RFD JP – SSGT John FOY – MAJ Barry CHAPMAN ED – SGT Geoff MILGATE – President Roger PERRY – PTE David RING – WO3 Kevin JONES – LCPL Kevin BRANCH – CPL Dan JOHNSTON – WO1 Bob PINK OAM – LT Corinna KELLY – CPL Tony ANG – LT Tom COOPER OAM – MAJ Tony ANG – MAJ Ken MCKAY RFD ED – CPL Ron PERRINE – MAJ Robert BINNS RFD – CPL Graham ROSS – PTE Tony BRAY – CPL Bruce HANSEN – UNKNOWN – CPL Graham TIPPETT – PTE Adrian SCHLIEPER – UNKNOWN – PTE Tony OHLBACH

FRONTLINE

RFD CANBERRA & WONDALI - VJ DAY - POZIERES DAY 2008



President Ashfield RSL Club & Ashfield RSL Sub Branch
John WALSH PSM GCM BCM JP with Secretary, 8 Division
Association Ron FERGUSON at VJ DAY SYDNEY



RFD CANBERRA – At the Australian War Memorial L to R:
John WALSH-Barry WILLOUGHBY- Martin HANSON-Bruce
LOYNES-Marta FOLKARD-Kevin CONNELLY-Bob PINK



VJ DAY Commemoration Sydney Cenotaph
L to R: John WALSH-Kevin CONNELLY-Barry
NESBITT - Ken SMITH & Allan MOORE



VJ DAY Commemoration Sydney Cenotaph – Lyn BROWN
& Jean BIRCH who laid tributes on behalf of the Association



RESERVE FORCES DAY WONDALI QLD
25th/49th RQR Recruiting Team



POZIERES DAY COMMEMORATION St COLUMBA WOOLLAHRA
L to R: Bob PINK – Dave RING & Tom NOLAN

ROYAL NEW SOUTH WALES REGIMENT GARRISON CHURCH PARADE 22 JUN 08

The Regimental Colonel The Royal New South Wales Regiment BRIG Paul COUCH CSC RFD with 1/19 RNSWR Commanding Officer LTCOL Peter MORRISSEY and Officers, the Regimental Sergeant Major WO1 Trevor LOGAN and Association President Roger PERRY and Association Hon Secretary Bob PINK



COL John & Mrs Ros JACKSON
with Roger PERRY



Mrs SHEARMAN, Regimental Secretary
LTCOL Don SHEARMAN, Mrs Carmel COUCH &
Regimental Colonel BRIG Paul COUCH CSC RFD



Her Excellency Professor Marie BASHIR AC CVO, Governor of NSW & Honorary Colonel The Royal New South Wales Regiment at the Morning Tea following the service



SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

By Bruce F. BATHGATE, M.P.S., PhC., J.P.



Bruce & Beatrice Bathgate

I am the son of an ex 2/19 Battalion AIF member, Captain Alec Bathgate. My wife and I have just returned from a 2 week trip to Singapore and Sabah (previously British North Borneo). We were in a group of 57 relatives of POW's

together with 10

Cadets from Barker College, Sydney and the School's Principal and his wife plus the head of the school's Cadet Corps. The Barker College contingent joined us in Sabah as did an ABC TV crew of 3 from the ABC programme Compass. The tour was under the expert guidance of Lynette Ramsay Silver (author of "Sandakan, A Conspiracy of Silence", and "The Bridge at Parit Sulong") and her husband Neil.

The 57 relatives all had the common thread of having had a family member in the Prisoner-of-War Camp at Sandakan. Nearly all of the family members perished at Sandakan or on one of the three Death Marches in 1945 from Sandakan to Ranau. The Barker College contingent were there to commemorate 3 Barker Old Boys who died at Sandakan or on a death march. Barker College also supports a Scholarship Scheme which allows girls from outlying villages in Sabah to continue and complete their education in Sandakan. The ABC TV crew was there to film a programme to be shown on Compass later this year. When I spoke with them later in the trip they told me that they had over 15 hours of film to edit down to a half hour show. I don't know how they can do that but watch out for it. Twenty one of us left Sydney on 19th April and spent the next three days in Singapore. Our hotel was at the base of Canning Hill and it was only a short walk



Gun on BLAKANG MATI



Mrs Valerie & Captain Alec Bathgate

up the hill to Fort Canning which was the British Military Headquarters for the Malayan Campaign. Here we visited what is known as The Battle Box. This was the underground bomb proof bunker of Britain's HQ

Malaya Command during WWII.

It is situated 9 metres beneath Fort Canning Hill. It was here that General Percival reached the fateful decision to surrender Singapore to the invading Japanese on 15th February 1942. The Battle Box has been meticulously restored and is today a unique war museum enhanced with specially crafted wax figures, animatronics and audio-visual effects. Here we see Australian General Gordon Bennett, seated on General Percival's right hand side, arguing against immediate surrender. He is outvoted by the pessimists (or were they realists?).

The next day we had a tour of the island itself. We visited key battle sites including the Australian defensive positions on the NW coast of the island where the main Japanese landings took place from 10.30 pm on Sunday 8th February. The 2/19 position was 4 miles wide and 4 miles deep so they were spread fairly thinly on the ground. It must have been mayhem. Also visited was the Kranji War Cemetery which is a credit to the curator and his staff for its immaculate and reverent presentation.

We also climbed up the steps on Bukit Batok to the site of the POW built memorial to Japanese dead. It was built of timber and the resourceful POW's placed many termites in the structure to hasten its demise. Unfortunately the POW's did not realise that the termites require a Queen for them to be destructive. However the memorial was demolished by the Gurkhas after the war. Then on to Fort Siloso on Sentosa Island off Singapore. Sentosa Island was known then as Blakang Mati, a place familiar to many 8th Division soldiers. Here we visited the room in which Mountbatten chaired a conference with Japanese officers in regard to their surrender in 1945. The official surrender ceremony took place in the Civic Buildings in Singapore opposite a huge padang (grassed recreational field). Of course not to be missed on any tour such as ours was Changi, with its Changi Chapel and Changi

Museum. We drove past the entrance to Selerang Barracks which due to high security we were not permitted to enter or even photograph. One member of our group was a lass named Sheila Bruhn (nee Allen). As a young teenager (17 in 1945) and the daughter of an Australian father and Chinese mother Sheila was interned in Changi Gaol. She spent the duration there and was fortunate not to be taken away by the Japanese to be a comfort woman. Sheila's father died 3 months before liberation and Sheila is a contributor of a panel on the Changi Quilt. To supplement her "diet" Sheila at one stage ate a baby mouse! She is a very interesting and very informative young lady of over 80 years of age.

We also visited the 15 inch Naval guns at the Changi Battery. These huge guns could be turned around to fire inland not just as the myth would have it seaward. The problem was the shells they had were armour piercing (for ships) and not High Explosive. They achieved minimal results. The only damage recorded was to the roof of Singapore Railway Station which collapsed under the sheer weight of a shell each of which was over 5 feet tall. Changi Beach offered us (and possibly the POW's) a respite from the heat of the day.

Then to Changi Airport. Sydney could learn thing or two from Changi Airport. Over 63 million passengers are expected to pass through this year but we did not feel crowded in any way. They have just completed Terminal 3 and are already building Terminal 4. We were there for our flight to Kota Kinabalu (Jesselton during WWII). This is on the west coast of Sabah, Borneo. Our boarding room overlooked our waiting transport and ground crew could be seen working on one of its engines. Parts were taken out, parts put back in, cowling removed and replaced and much head scratching. Then an announcement. Our particular flight was cancelled and we were transferred to another gate and another plane. We did make it to Kota Kinabalu where we were joined by other members of the tour.

The next morning out to the airport for a quick flight to Sandakan. About 10 minutes into the flight we had to turn back to KK due to, we were told, a technical problem. There was mention of an oil leak. At this stage walking seemed a better option. A change of planes then safely on to Sandakan. The POW built aerodrome at Sandakan (or the remnants thereof) could be seen in the middle of the various runways.

This was Wednesday 23rd April. After our later than expected arrival we were taken to the Sandakan Memorial Park. This memorial park is adjacent to the site of the original Sandakan Prisoner-of-War Camp. Let us not forget that between January and August of 1945 approximately 2400 Australian and British POW's held in this camp died either here, on one of the three death marches or in Ranau.

Of the 2400 only 6 survived, all Australian and all escaped into the jungle and were assisted by local

people. One of these six was the 2/19 Battalion's Keith Botterill.

A Service of Remembrance was conducted here on the site of the Number 1 Sandakan POW Camp. This commemoration area, complete with a black granite memorial structure, is on the site of The Big Tree. This was truly a big tree. It towered over the huts and was a major landmark of the POW Sandakan Camp. Troops were assembled and addressed around The Big Tree and its huge buttress root system provided a space for sleepless hospital patients to sit and talk through the night. Sadly it was burnt down after the war. Here, at the memorial, during the service we burnt gum leaves being a reminder of Australia.

*Burning of Gum Leaves
KUNDASANG*



The remains of the old boiler and generator can still be seen at the base of the hill. Wood collecting parties would go out each day to provide wood for the boiler to make steam to drive an engine to drive the generator to produce electricity for the camp ... and to power the secret radio built and maintained in the camp until betrayed.

It proved almost impossible to be able to re-live, let alone imagine, existence here. We were healthy, well fed, well clothed and we could come and go. The prisoners were exactly the opposite, yet a large number survived until they were forcibly exterminated. A very moving place.

The concluding tune played (via a tape recorder) was a stirring rendition of Waltzing Matilda intermingled with The Last Post. The strains of one tune would die down and the other take it up. A real tear jerker. The next afternoon, 24th April, was the time for one of the reasons for our trip. The unveiling and dedication of The Friendship Windows in The Anglican Church of St Michael and All Saints in Sandakan.

This is the stone church where many POW officers spent their first night in Borneo in 1942, having arrived after a grueling 10 day voyage from Singapore on the Yubi Maru. This was B Force. The OR's were quartered on the adjacent padang but anything was better than their recent accommodation. The local population had been of assistance to the POW's during their captivity. Not only with food and information, but also with maps and medicines.

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They were particularly helpful to Captain Lionel Matthews and his underground cohorts up until the time of the betrayal of the underground. Of course the locals were under the threat of death if caught rendering any assistance in any form to the prisoners. We had in our group, Melvin Funk, whose family was of great and immeasurable assistance to the POW's. One member of his family was executed by the Japs and Mel and his mother were hidden in the jungle right up to the end of the war. Another interesting and very informative member of our group. These windows were an expression of thanks to the people of Sabah. They are the result of much hard work by Lynette Silver in gathering donations and dealing with bureaucracy and frequent trips to Sabah. They are the work of Australia's leading stained glass designer and maker, Philip Handel now over 80 years of age. They are magnificent and complement the previously made and installed (2005) Window of Remembrance. This latter window is over the Western entrance to the church and the two Friendship Windows occupy the North and South transepts of the church. Truly glorious in their magnificence and colour.

Local dancers enhanced the ceremony and presentations were made to several local people who, at the risk of their own lives, gave food to those on the death marches or assisted those who managed to escape. A small token for a huge commitment. It was an early wake-up call the next day, being 25th April ANZAC Day. Dressed and bemedalled we arrived pre-dawn at the Sandakan Memorial Park. The path up to the granite memorial and memorial hut was lit by a row of tiny lights and we walked through an honour guard of local Scouts and Girl Guides.

This was a ceremony sanctioned for the first time by the Australian Government and included in the Official Party was the Deputy High Commissioner to Malaysia for Australia, the Assistant Defence Advisor



Pool of Reflection
KUNDASANG

either straight or in the tea or coffee. A Mengaris tree (The Big Tree variety) was planted down the hill below the boiler. This is as a memorial and reminder of The Big Tree. It is hard to see how such a small thin spindly thing can possibly grow to anywhere

Malaysia, The Chief Minister of Sabah, The Bishop of the Diocese of Sandakan and a representative of the Office of Australian War Graves. Light gradually dawned and we were offered a Gunfire Breakfast of tea/coffee, ANZAC biscuits and local fare. A very thoughtful fellow had arranged for several bottles of rum and this was eagerly accepted

near the size, strength and structure of the original. Not in our lifetime!! The morning was a great success for the organisers and it is hoped it will continue and grow each year, much like the Mengaris sapling. That afternoon we departed Sandakan. I should mention that Sabah is predominantly Muslim and our hotel was next to the Mosque so we were regaled, five times a day, with the singing from the mosque tower of the call to prayers. Each hotel room had the direction of Mecca painted on the ceiling. I wonder if after several weeks of it you simply don't hear it.

We left Sandakan in our air conditioned bus for an overland trip to Kundasang which is in the shadow of Mt Kinabalu on the Central Western side of Sabah. Mt Kinabalu is over 4000 metres high and totally dominates the area. Our route travelled along a sealed road which very roughly approximated the Death March route. You will possibly recall that during 1944 the local village headmen were asked to cut a trail from Sandakan to Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu). The natives thought it was for Japanese troops to move to the West Coast in the anticipated event of an Allied invasion at Sandakan, so they made it as difficult as possible. They did not realise that it was to remove all traces of the POW's and their treatment at Sandakan. The next day some of our more fit members undertook a 3 mile part of the Death March into Ranau. Your correspondent was not among them. However they made it through leech infested rivers, up and down slippery muddy slopes, over rocky outcrops to our rendezvous atop a steep incline. My wife and I did the last mile up Quailey's Hill which is a steady uphill climb all the way. Somewhat akin to "Heartbreak Hill" in the Sydney City to Surf Fun Run, only for the POW's theirs was no Fun Run.



RANAU No.1 CAMP SITE

Included in the mob who completed the whole walk were the Barker Cadets (9 boys and 1 girl ..Barker being co-ed). They were young and fit, yet fatigued, so how our POW's after 3 years of starvation could do it and the other 260 km of the march completely boggles the brain. It must have been a testament to the Latin saying "Nil bastardum carborundum est" which translates as "Don't let the bastards wear you down".

Ranau Number 1 POW Camp sits just beside the road at Ranau. It was here that the Japs chained Gunner Cleary to a post and kicked him and beat

FRONTLINE

and urinated and defecated on him for attempting to escape. This barbaric treatment coupled with various types of physical torture continued for eleven days until he succumbed to eternal rest. Ranau is not far from Kundasang where we were staying for the night. It is here at Kundasang, with Mt Kinabalu as a towering backdrop, that another Australian War Memorial exists. It was established many years ago but allowed to sink into utter disrepair through total neglect. It was used by the locals as a rubbish tip. Then along came a man whose first name is Sevee and he is a Thai. He recognised the significance of the memorial and set about to restore it on his own. This he has achieved and the result is a true credit to his vision, his vigour, and his finances. He has made large gardens representing Australia, England and Sabah and a wonderful Pool of Reflection.

Well presented, well manicured, well supported and now well respected by the locals. A sunset service of love and remembrance was held here by our group with many relatives of lost ones taking part in reading poems, burning of gum leaves, raising and lowering of flags etc. Lynette Silver saw to it that relatives were involved in all functions. Everybody



RANAU No.2 CAMP SITE

had a job to do at some stage. The Australian Government has just announced a grant to Sevee of \$140000 to maintain the Memorial.

We took a trip to a spot overlooking the site of Ranau Number 2 Jungle Camp. Now it looks like an idyllic spot just beside a river with a cleared space on its bank. However it was here that, two weeks after the end of the war (and the Japs knew it through leaflet drops) that the Japs executed the remaining 15 Australian POW's, one of whom was Dr John Oakeshott whose son and grandchildren were with our group. We had one night's experience living in a jungle hut all bamboo and attap but with electricity, air conditioning and a rudimentary shower and toilet. The windows were hopper style bamboo structures held open with a stick and huge gaps around the frame when closed and no mosquito screens. The whole "resort" ran out of water for several hours and the manager had to be stirred up to facilitate a water delivery. We spent but one night in this lodge, which when compared with POW's accommodation, would seem to be 5 Star. How they "survived" 3½ years with draining work loads,

starvation, malnutrition, disease, illness and frequent bashings defies comprehension. It makes us more proud of our forebears.

On to Labuan Island and a service at the Labuan War Cemetery. Recovered remains of Borneo POW's have been re-interred here and beautifully maintained. There are rows upon rows of headstones simply saying "An Australian Soldier of the 1939-1945 War. Known unto God".

Full marks to the Australian War Graves Office and to researchers such as our leader Lynette for locating the remains of so many in the jungle off the Death March track and in the jungle camps.

Our stay in Labuan was a welcome respite from the rush and bustle, trauma, heartbreakng stories, tears and brain overload of the previous two weeks.

A flight home via Brunei and Singapore and back to everyday living. But we enjoy such everyday living due to the sacrifices and national spirit of those in the 8th Division who served us well both in conflict and in captivity.

LEST WE FORGET



2/19 Bn AIF TRANSPORT HUT - PORT DICKSON
MALAYA 1941

LtoR: Bill ROSS – Mick PEARCE – Killer KIMBELL –
Ray CLENDENNING
(Courtesy of photo sent to Ray Clendenning by
Glen Scriven)

FRONTLINE

FROM BRAD COLLIS:
100 YEARS OF SERVICE



YAMBA SURF LIFESAVING CLUB 100 YEAR CENTENARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

LONG WEEKEND 3-5 OCTOBER 2008

For all former members, associates and serving members and anyone wishing to attend are most cordially invited to celebrate this significant achievement at YAMBA NSW 2464
from FRI 3 OCT 08 to SUN 05 OCT 08

THE ASSOCIATION HAS 2 SERVING LIFE MEMBERS OF THE YAMBA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB - Brad COLLIS (1/19 RNSWR) and Cliff LOWIEN (2/19 Battalion AIF)

All details are shown on the Club's Website: www.yambaslsc.com.au/

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Brad COLLIS
Tele: 0427 684 222
Email: bradis@people.net.au



To 1/19 RNSWR Association

We wish to offer you our heartfelt thanks for your expressions of sympathy and acts of kindness towards us following the loss of our Mother and Nanna Anne Dwyer.

Thank you Roger.

Julie and Greg Coombs

CANBERRA ACT
May 2008

Dear Bob

I have just read of Gus Halloran's passing. I would have attended his funeral if I had known as he came to my husband Ron's funeral.

Trouble is we are all getting old! My best wishes to everyone.

Sincerely

Jane Murdoch

PORT MACQUARIE NSW
1 June 2008

Dear Roger

Just a note to say thank you – your letter was much appreciated. Gus certainly enjoyed his association with the 1st/19th and particularly the trip to Malaya recently.

Regards

(Mrs) Jo Halloran
PORT MACQUARIE NSW
2 June 2008

Roger Perry
President
1/19 RNSWR Association

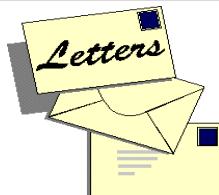
Dear Roger

Thank you for the generous note of congratulations on my award in the Order of Australia. I greatly appreciate the work that the Association is doing to keep alive the memory of the achievements of battalion servicemen.

Yours sincerely

Hank Nelson
CANBERRA
13 June 2008

Mr Roger Perry
President
1/19 RNSWR Association



Dear Roger

I have been meaning to reply to your letter of 12 Jan 08, but have been thwarted by the posting changes and assorted overseas travel. Please accept my apologies for such tardiness – I can only claim that the lack of an Adjutant has had a telling effect on my administrative organisation !

May I take this opportunity to thank you, and the other members of the Association, for the warm welcome you extended to me during my time in command.

It was always a pleasure to meet with the executive, and with members during the various occasions we came together for official functions and social occasions.

You are so right in saying that it is the links between the past and the present that continue to make 1/19 RNSWR the premier Battalion of the Regiment. I look forward to renewing my acquaintance and friendships with the members of the Association over the coming years.

Recently I have moved into a new posting as Deputy Director of the Active Standby Staff Group - ACT. This is basically the replacement for the old Reserve Staff Group, and provides reservist project officer and surge capability to Army.

On a personal note, your letter arrived at a most welcome time - the handing over of command is always a hectic time, and it was a pleasure to receive a farewell letter from the President. It was a concrete example of how the Association really does care about the members of the current Battalion, and made me feel very much one of the Regimental and Battalion family.

Best wishes to all the members of the Association.

Yours

John Brennan
Lieutenant Colonel

CANBERRA ACT
21 MAY 2008

Mr R.J. Perry
President
1/19 RNSWR Association

Dear Roger

The Medal of the Order of Australia

Very many thanks for your congratulations following my receiving the above award. I find it all a little humbling as I realize there are many who deserve an award before me. Nevertheless I feel it is an honour.

In Australia, since 1975 the recognition of citizens by granting of honours and awards has been initiated by the citizens of this wonderful country. I think this is an improvement on the old Imperial system when most of the honours and awards were made by the Monarch usually on advice from the Prime Minister and/or Ministers of the Crown.

There are many whom I thank for my award in particular our colleagues and the relatives of our deceased colleagues who sent me biographies.

I make special mention of our sub-editors Sue Hepburn and Bruce Benjamin and Geoffrey Gibson who spent many hours researching in the University Archives and many other out of the way places.

I thank also those graduates who made contributions as well as their own biographies. This assistance and support helped me greatly in the preparation and publication of our Jubilee Book.

Yours sincerely

(Dr) *Jim Purchas*

GARRAN ACT 2605
5 JUNE 2008

DID YOU KNOW ?

"Stewardesses" is the longest word typed with only the left hand and "lollipop" with your right.

No word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver, or purple.

"Dreamt" is the only English word that ends in the letters "mt".

Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing.

The sentence: "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" uses every letter of the alphabet.

The words 'racecar,' 'kayak' and 'level' are the same whether they are read left to right or right to left (palindromes).

FRONTLINE

POET'S CORNER

From the Legacy Friendship Book & contributed by Mrs Jean Birch

My Friend

When I met you I did not know
What time would bring or where we would go
We've talked and laughed about many things
And time has brought what friendship brings

A special trust, a priceless bond
That will last forever and then far beyond
Someone to share good times and bad
Who listens whenever I'm joyful or sad

You never judge me when I've done something wrong

And when I'm dreary you're a happy song
I can speak my mind and never fear

That you won't have time or 'for me' won't be here
You caringly advise me about this and that
And it matters not to you whether I'm skinny or fat

If I don't see you or call for a while
You don't get all snappy like a crocodile
Because it's an understood thing

That if there is trouble or strife
In my world or yours or another friend's life
We'd be there for each other right to the end

Because that's just a part of being

A friend

Spirit Of Life

I am the waves on the ocean,
I am the sun on the sea,
I am the light in the morning,
I am the wind blowing free.

I am your strength in the darkness,
I am your laughter and mirth,
I am the joy of creation,
I am the pulse of the earth.

I am the life in all creatures,
I am each flower and tree,
I am the hope of tomorrow,
I am the things yet to be.

I am the noise of the city,
I am the peace on the fell,
I am your past and your future,
I am today - use it well!

Iris Hesselden.

A little boy opened the family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages. "Mama, look what I found" the boy called out. "What have you got there dear?" With an astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered "I think it's Adam's underwear!"

POET'S CORNER

From Dr Jim Purchas:

The following verses were written by Private George Harding of, Perth (W.A.) late of 2/19th Battalion AIF while a Prisoner of War at Thailand, where he died in hospital from dysentery during October, 1943.

The poem was printed in the *Young Witness* on 23 October 1945. I still have the original cutting. I do not have any idea who was responsible for giving the poem to the local paper or whether it has ever been published since 1945.

MUAR

By NX55430 PTE George Norman HARDING

Your Lochinvars were dandies and your Galahads had looks
And you read of their adventures in your pretty history books.
Tho' our Andy is no dandy, as a man he's surely right.
He proved himself a winner in a thick and dirty fight;
There was lead that flew like cocky chaff, thick as merry hell,
And Andy rose among it: That's the tale I have to tell ...

The 29th were trapped they said and fighting hell for all;
The 29th were trapped they said and Andy heard the call,
He gathered in his men and said: "The 19th will be there,"
Said Andy, "If they hold a while, we'll go and do our share."
19th rallied quickly; all set to make the grade,
Andy, looked them over, cool and calm, and unafraid.

It was just two miles from Muar where we met the Nippon force,
And ten miles from the causeway where the river made its course.
Some miles of swamp behind us and the jungle on each side,
It was new and woeful country for a leader to decide;
But Andy set the 19th up and gave them all his trust,
They were good men and he knew it, and those good men raised the dust.

Nippon got a headache on that sunny afternoon
When our guns beat out a tattoo for the rising of the moon.
But the moon was hidden in the clouds; the night came quick and dark,
And the firing of a rifle was a quick and sudden spark.
Then sudden as the nights falls in the tropic latitude,
The din of battle ceased as tho' to make the night less crude.

Morning came and fierce attack built up on every side,
Andy spurred the 19th on and got them in his stride
The enemy were ten to one at under estimate.
No quarter asked and none inferred in 13 hours of hate.
Again night fell and silence reigned, except when once or twice,
A twitching finger fired a shot into the world of vice.

The sun arose next morning, heating tired and hungry men,
Who braced themselves to battle with the enemy again,
There were noble deeds that morning, where the rubber jungle grew,
And the Nippon line was broken and the 29th came thru.
That night hell blazed a time or two where Andy's army lay,
And his spirit cheered and urged them in his own uncanny way.

When the dawn came flashing quickly, we were fighting our way back,
And a lot of heroes stayed behind to beat back the attack.
The Colonel gave his order, "we must fight to get us out,"
"The 19th boys can do it;" and the 19th gave a shout.
A marching song came ringing thru, in a high falsetto pitch
And the boys marched into lead-storm from jungle and from ditch

We battled thru till afternoon, we struck machine gun nests ...
They halted us till evening and treated us as pests;
They had us jammed in hollows, while they peppered us with lead
Then Andy's voice came drifting in ...
"Run in lad" it said.
I gasped: "Where can I run to?"
He bellowed, "Anywhere,"
I up and ran and bullets tried my patch of space to share.

"Good lad," Andy shouted and an overwhelming pride,
Surged strong and fast within me as I saw our Colonel stride,
Where the bullets floated thickest, then he called for a barrage of mortars,
And those deadly nests fell to a bayonet attack.
It was nightfall when we passed them, but the battle wasn't done?
There were road-blocks for the convoy each one covered with a gun.

"The 19th must fight thru. The 19th will get through,"
The Colonel's voice was ringing, and every fellow knew
That Andy was a mate in spite of rank, pips and looks ...
The sort of mate you read about in wild Romantic books.
That night we crossed the Causeway where the swamps were wide and deep,
And weary men were marching, mostly moving half asleep.

If we made the river safely... if we crossed the narrow bridge,
If we got thru Parit Sulong we could rest upon the ridge.
But Nippon held the "bridgeway" and the jungles by the road
And he came in from behind us like a Mephistolean goad.
Two hundred yards of roadway, two hundred yards across,
It looked as tho' the pennies fell and Nippon won the toss.

All day and night he belted us with mortar and with shell,
And his aeroplanes flew over to machine gun us to hell.
And groups went out to open up the way to let us thru.
But no way opened up for us and those returned were few,
They thought they had us beaten, and their ultimatum came,
One complete Surrender... "come on give up the game."

But Andy laughing softly turned their great demand away
"No surrender," said the boss, and settled down to stay.
They hammered us with fire and cajoled us with their jeers,
But under Andy's influence the boys withstood their sneers,
The morning came, a bloody day, the help for which we prayed
Had not come thru... It was up to us to make the final grade.

0, you can have your heroes of imaginative birth,
But I have seen the greatest men that trod this sorry earth,
The wounded never whimpered, the dying never cried:
I know because I tendered many gallant men who died.
Nippon pressed us fiercely to wipe us out complete,
Hats off to the rear-guard who covered our retreat.

When the pressure got too crushing, we destroyed the guns and trucks
And beat it to the jungle with its swamp and poison muck.
As we swam across the river, they gunned us from the air,
But a miracle had happened...
There were fifty paces where no guns were covering the way
And treading soft like thieves we crept into the jungle hidden by its friendly leaves.

We were split a dozen parties and the jungle was our friend
As we crept along a course which seemed to have no end.
That night we slept the sleep of tired, sore, and hungry men
Wakened fitfully by jungle noises now and then.
For not yet were we sure the foe had left an open way.
We awakened stiff and hungry to fight another day.

In the afternoon of that day we saw a friendly truck.
And tired bones and listless eyes, exalted at the luck.
We'd made it back to safety and those friendly faces smiled
As they looked upon our party, we were dirty, we looked wild.
They gave us food and clothing, and razors for a shave,
A tear or two rose in me - but then I'm not so brave.

It's good to sit by shady trees and listen to the birds
Which twitter in the branches and the leaves as they are stirred,
And to feel the wind which fans the brow in contrast to the sun.
To sit and watch the colour-scheme on clouds when day is done.
And good it is to recollect the heroes that we knew
With some regret, but swelling pride;
For memory rings true.

And Andy? That's him over there with calculating face;
A man? A soldier and a mate, and none can take his place.
The boys who know are proud to own a leader such as he
Walk up and meet our "Andy,"
Colonel Anderson V.C.

FRONTLINE

ROSE FORCE

THE FIRST TO FIGHT IN MALAYA

Produced with the kind permission of Lieutenant Colonel Neil C. Smith, AM of
"Mostly Unsung Military History Research and Publications"

*Continued from
June 2008 Newsletter:*

This largely flat area was honeycombed with tracks leading in all directions and the enemy were moving along a track adjacent to the track being used by the Australians. The enemy troops were all wearing Asiatic dress and had their weapons tied to their bicycles or slung under their clothing.



SGT Bert DONALDSON & PTE Lance CROWLEY
2/19 Battalion AIF, Members of ROSE FORCE

After some trouble the Rose Force party found a boat and crossed the Sungai Simpang Kanan. As they did this they observed the Japanese crossing the river at points both higher up and lower down. No time was therefore lost in reaching Batu Pahat to advise the British troops of the enemy movements. Batu Pahat was reached at 5.00 pm where they found the British Battalion on the point of withdrawing from the town of Koris, some seven miles south. All information with reference to the enemy was given to the battalion to be forwarded on with all speed. The battalion did not withdraw entirely after getting the information, but left two companies in position in the town.

The Rose Force men spent the night with this battalion at Koris and the next day travelled by various means of motor transport to Johore Bahru General Base Depot, to try and link up with the remainder of the Force arriving there approximately, at midday on the 24th of January. The endurance and success shown by this party was of the highest order and was largely due to the excellent leadership of Lieutenant Sanderson.

They crossed what should have been impassable country, in the five days covering approximately fifty miles, having only two meals in that time and very little sleep. They suffered no casualties, did not lose any of their equipment and accounted for between sixty to seventy of the enemy, also gaining very valuable information.

The movement of the remainder of the Force left at Bukit Siput was as follows: On Monday the 19th of January, after the Lenga had left, the remainder of 21 all ranks were to report to Division HQ at Labis that night. They were then

ordered to a position between Labis and Yong Peng. At nine o'clock on Tuesday 20th of January, Captain Lloyd reported to 27th Brigade HQ just north of Labis and gave what information was to hand. Early in the afternoon the party moved to Rengam taking up accommodation in Coolie Lines, nor far from the township.

Captain Lloyd went to Labis at 7.00 pm to wait for the party returning from Lenga. As there was no sign of the party, Captain Lloyd moved over the bridge that was about to be blown and waited until daylight just south of the town. On Wednesday the 21st of January at eight o'clock, as there was no sign of Lieutenant Sanderson's party, they returned to Rengam.

Captain Lloyd reported to 8th Division HQ at midday at Paloh Estate near Yong Peng. It was reported that Lieutenant Sanderson and the party were missing and they received a request from the General Officer Commanding to take the remainder of the party through to Parit Sulong Bridge and try to clear the bridge so that the remainder of the 2/19th and 2/29th Battalions could continue down the road towards Young Peng. Clearly General Bennett considered that a small but well armed party could surprise the enemy that were holding the bridge, and in turn hold it long enough for the troops to get through.

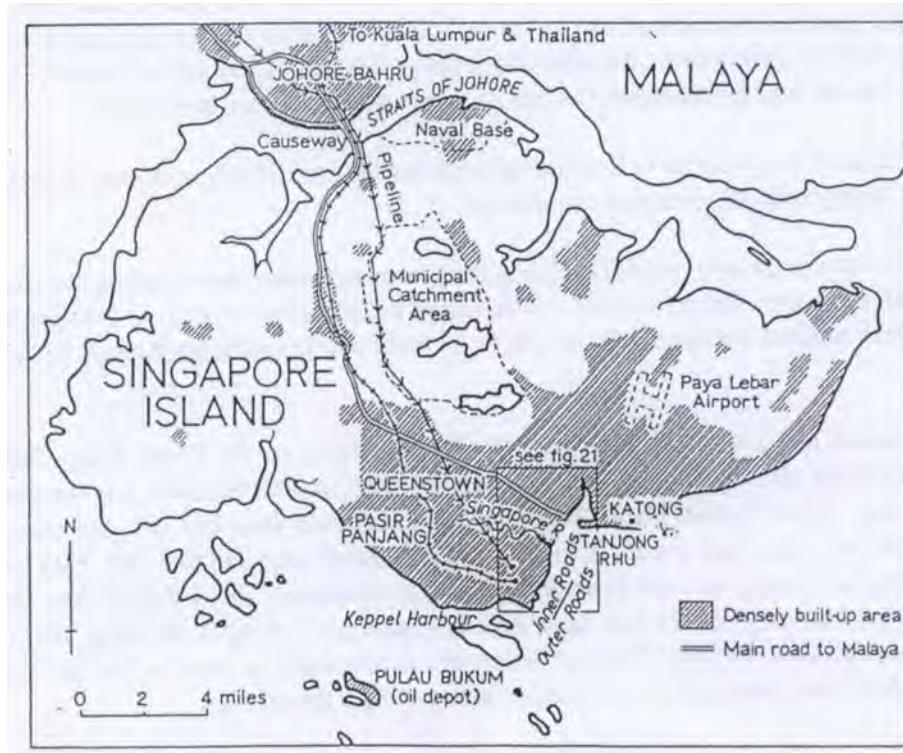
The General Officer Commanding gave instructions that a wireless message be sent to Lieutenant Colonel Anderson who was in command of the force fighting at Parit Sulong, telling him of the planned arrival of the Rose Force men. It had to be sent in clear, and as Lieutenant Sanderson was known to Lieutenant Colonel Anderson and his association with the Rose Force was also known, the following message was sent: "Look out for Sandie". This message was received by Lieutenant Colonel Anderson who understood its meaning. Captain Lloyd returned to Rengam and collected the party of only seventeen all ranks, sickness having reduced the number considerably. At 6.00 pm the

FRONTLINE

At 6.00 pm the party arrived at Yong Peng as enemy planes were bombing the cross roads and bridge area. The entire town was in flames and all traffic stopped. At 7.00 pm the flames were subdued sufficiently for a dash to be made and the party got through without damage. Captain Lloyd was told that there were four Battalions on the Young Peng - Parit Sulong road and after some delay was informed that the Punjabi's Battalion was the most forward one. While Captain Lloyd was collecting information from this unit and enemy movements out in the front, a party of English and AIF troops came into their HQ. They had come from Parit Sulong and were in a very bad state of exhaustion. They informed them that the way they had come via the Iron Mine road was impassable owing to the large force of enemy coming down the road. Three battalions were to have made an attack before dark that evening, but it was postponed for some reason until first light the next day.

The only alternative track was one running past the top of the Iron Mine and starting some four to five miles from Yong Peng. The party moved to this track and camped for the night. By Thursday the 22nd of January, that track soon became to a dead end and great trouble was experienced making any headway through the swamps. Parties of Indians from the 45th Indian Brigade were met all day, having come from the Muar area. The going became too slow with the size of the party who were heavily armed, and a small party of four was sent on ahead. The country was swampy with high reeds and most of the time the members of the Force up to their waists in mud. During the late afternoon parties from AIF Battalions who had been in action at Parit Sulong were met coming in the direction of Yong Peng.

They informed them of what had happened and that the remainder of the units were all attempting to reach Young Peng, via this and other routes. That night was spent returning near Yong Peng, where a halt was made on the edge of a swamp. The party returned to Rengam on Friday the 23rd of January, where they spent the remainder of the day, after sending two men to hospital. At nine o'clock on Saturday the 24th of



SINGAPORE ISLAND. SCENE OF THE LAST STAND BEFORE CAPITULATION ON 15 FEBRUARY 1942

January, they reported to Division HQ at Rengam and made efforts to contact forward battalions to find out if they had any information about the party that was overdue from Lenga. They remained at Rengam awaiting orders.

We started our first sortie behind Jap lines on the 28.12.1941 and fired our first shots on Sunday 28.12.1941. On January 27, 1942 we were returned to our units because of the number of casualties to our battalions in Muar and elsewhere. We had spent practically one whole month north of Muar and behind Jap lines on patrol work etc. After rejoining our respective battalions we were withdrawn back onto Singapore Island. After I was wounded on the first morning after the Japs landed I ended up in hospital and took no further part in action, being taken prisoner on February 15, 1942.

I did really try to do my bit

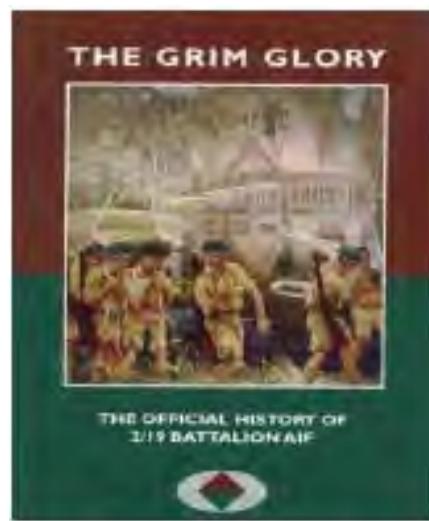
H.J. "Bert" DONALDSON

FRONTLINE

ROSE FORCE NOMINAL ROLL DECEMBER 1941/JANUARY 1942

NAME	INITS	NUMBER	REMARKS
Adams	J C	NX3008	2/20, Enl 23 Jan 41, RTA 27Jan 42
Alcock	J	NX35841	2/19, MPD 11 Feb 42
Austice	L M	NX35535	2/29
Barry	L G	VX36027	2/29
Black	A G	NX59181	2/18, KIA 9 Feb 42
Bredin	W W	VX44683	2/19, MPD 22 Jan 42
Chapman	E S	NX19155	2/18
Comerford	J M	QX17117	2/26 Died Malaya 25 May 43
Cox	J L	QX13993	2/26
Crowley	J L	NX52475	2/19
Donaldson	H J	NX56216	2/19
Dorrington	O	NX40545	2/18
Doyle	E L	NX19361	2/20
Flanagan	W J	NX68859	2/20, Died Borneo 9 Jun 45
Flower	W R	NX37701	2/30, 2/29, HQ Rose Force
Frame	C W	NX40365	2/18, Died Borneo 19 May 45
French	H J St G	NX37311	2/30
Goodman	G A	7262748	32 Coy RAMC, HQ 3 Ind Corps
Graham	R		1 Perak Bn, FMSVF
Hargreaves	J R	VX48538	2/29
Harvey	C	NX58216	2/30, Died Siam 16 Dec 43
Harvey	W		1 Perak Bn, FMSCF
Horswood	E J	OX16947	2/26
Kerr	G D A	QX10585	2/26, Died Malaya 19 Jun 43
Lau	V J	QX13931	2/26
Lee	G A J	NX32214	2/18
Lewis	T P M		1 Perak Bn, FMSVF
Lloyd	D T	NX70438	Capt, 2/30, HQ Rose Force
Lydon	J M	NX25220	2/20, KIA 10 Feb 42
Lynch	F M	NX45642	2/20
Manwaring	R	NX35311	2/19
Maxwell	W K	NX36907	2/20, POW MPD at sea 12 Sep 44
Moore	J	NX55453	2/18
Neville	H H	NX52941	2/18
Parker	W C	NX26087	2/20
Perring	M	NX45187	Lt, 2/18
Prescott	W	OX17269	2/26
Pullen	R S	VX41595	2/29, MPD 22 Jan 42
Punja		GSF4620	Ind GS Corps
Reeves	R L	NX31029	2/30
Robb	A		1 Perak Bn, FMSVF
Rose	A T C		Maj 2 Bn A&SH
Sanderson	R E	NX52523	Lt, 2/19
Shipsides	R A	VX44447	2/29, Died Borneo 3 Apr 45
Spurrel	F S	VX55616	2/29, MPD 15 Feb 42
Stark	R	NX59092	2/30, KIA 28 Jan 42
Stewart	A		1 Perak Bn, FMSVF
Sullens	E P	VX55426	2/29
Taylor	B	NX4337	2/30
Thrower	M J L	NX60363	2/19
Tout	P C	QX13260	2/26
Travis	B	NX26605	2/19
Van Reven	T C		1 Perak Bn, FMSVF
Weir	W E	NX37519	2/30
Wilding	N E	NX26829	2/30

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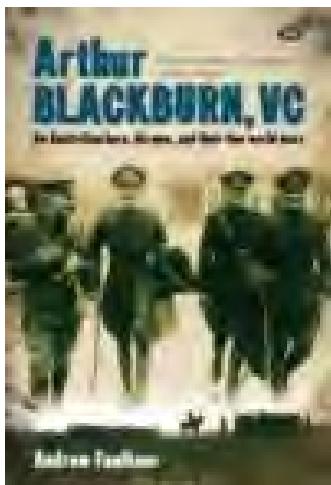
bob.pink@optusnet.com.au

BOOK REVIEWS

Reviewer: JOHN DONOVAN

Arthur Blackburn, VC: An Australian hero, his men, and their two world wars

Andrew Faulkner
Wakefield Press, 2008, 498pp



A skinny youth, Arthur Blackburn might have seemed to be an unlikely hero. However, actions speak louder than appearances, and he made the deepest penetration of the Turkish lines on 25 April 1915. Soon promoted to lance corporal, then 2nd lieutenant, he left Gallipoli with the 10th Battalion

on 22 November.

Blackburn's VC was awarded for an extraordinary series of attacks at Pozières. Soon after the presentation he returned to Australia ill, and took no further active part in the First World War.

After short parliamentary service, Blackburn combined the duties of SA coroner with private legal practice between the wars. He was also involved with that state's Returned Soldiers' Association.

Blackburn initially commanded the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion during the Second World War, leading it in Syria, and then in early 1942 to Java on the *Orcades*. There, Blackburn commanded a composite force including the 2/3rd and the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion, which served with the 2/3rd in Syria. The force had some success against the Japanese, but surrendered after the Dutch capitulation. Years of imprisonment followed.

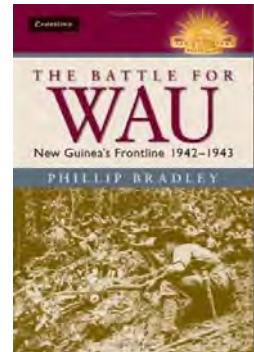
After the war, Blackburn campaigned for special care for ex-prisoners, and testified at the war crimes trials. He became president of the SA Returned and Services League, and a commissioner of the Industrial Relations Court. Like many veterans, he died relatively young.

This book is a fine tribute to a brave Australian.

THE BATTLE FOR WAU: New Guinea's Frontline 1942-1943

Phillip Bradley
Cambridge University Press, 2008, 285pp, \$75.00

Phillip Bradley invokes the memory of Leonidas and his 300 Spartans in his dedication 'Go Tell the Australians'. This is appropriate, as few of today's Australians are likely to have ever heard of Wau and the battle that raged for it in 1942 and 1943. While Captain Sherlock, George Warfe and Damien Parer were once household names, now the 'quality' media in Australia misuse Parer's film clip of Sergeant Ayre helping Private Johnson across a creek near Salamaua (some months after the battle for Wau) when they need a 'bite' on the Kokoda Trail, the only battle of Australia's war in PNG that still resonates.



For this reason, this book, and others sponsored by the Army History Unit, are important, to tell new generations about the deeds of their forebears. Bradley covers the events comprehensively, including the early actions of the PNGVR and the 2/5th, and later the 2/7th, Independent Companies around Salamaua and Mubo, the Japanese advance on Wau, Sherlock's defence of Wandumi, and the tense days as the 17th Brigade was flown into Wau, to hold, then repel the Japanese.

Bradley does not neglect the USAAF aircrew who flew into the hair-raising Wau airstrip, often under fire. Without their efforts, Wau must surely have fallen, and the New Guinea offensives would have progressed differently, and probably more bloodily.



JOHN DONOVAN

John Donovan worked in the Department of Defence for over 32 years, principally in the fields of intelligence, force development and resource management. He also served for several years in the Australian Army Reserve (Infantry).

Phillip Bradley has written a fitting tribute to the defenders of Wau.

FRONTLINE

Bill LOWCOCK'S WAR STORY

NX10682 PTE William Mackenzie LOWCOCK
2/19 Battalion A.I.F.

Bill's story continues
from the June 2008 newsletter:

There were no guards inside the camp, but we occasionally struck one or two of them when we were outside on working parties. These were Japanese frontline troops. They caused us no problems. We had strict instructions to do what we were told.

One lasting memory I have of the early days in Changi was the fact that the British officers had the Officers' Mess going again. A large building set out on its own in the middle of beautiful lawns surrounded by coconut palms.

At night time, Jimmy Arthur-Smith and I and the Miles boys used to walk over close to this and somebody would be playing the piano, beautiful piano playing. And then at 10 o'clock the bugle would sound lights out and the piper would play the Highland Cradle Song.

Whenever I hear that tune now, it brings back memories of those very early days, when we did not know what was going to happen in the day or month or week. We were just waiting to see what.

About April or May 1942 a couple of hundred of us were marched into Singapore where we took up residence at the Great World. This had been a dance hall and it was quite a large set of buildings, well weatherproofed, wooden floors.

From there we were sent on working parties into the docks at Singapore. Unloading ships, loading ships, carrying bags of rice, tins of food and there was no shortage of food in the Great World because we used to bring home (against orders, of course,) as much as we could smuggle out without getting caught. A tin of condensed milk would fit, uncomfortably, in the crutch of your shorts and your water bottle could be filled up with sugar and nobody would know the difference. If you were caught of course, you got a bashing. But that was a fair risk.

The guards there were still Japanese soldiers. They didn't cause us any great deal of problem. We did what we were told. Got the occasional rifle butt in the back if you didn't move quick enough but things weren't all too bad at the Great World. We ate well, and things were going quite well for me then until I caught dengue fever. Got sent back to Changi.

Dengue was just like a very bad attack of flu, but it lasted for a couple to three weeks and I got over it and I rejoined the rest of the unit in Changi Barracks. (Selerang)

Shortly after I recovered, a team of us was sent to Lornie Road on the outskirts of Singapore right opposite the Singapore golf links. We were housed in about four very nice homes which had been presumably been occupied by the British white people and there was no sewerage of course. We had to dig holes all over the lawns but there was a little bit of electricity, not very much of course.

And here we were engaged in building the shrine on top of the hill in the middle of the golf course. They built bridges. They brought Chinese stonemasons in to cut the most beautiful effigies to put on each end of the bridge. The workmanship was absolutely first class. I think after the war it was all demolished, of course.

But my job there was to row a barge. You have seen them row these great big barges with the oar at the back and you move it backwards and sideways and after a little while it becomes quite easy. I took the barge up a canal or lake in the middle of the golf course, someone loaded it up with gravel and I rowed the thing back to the other end and somebody unloaded it. Here again, a fairly cushy job.

The Japs were not all that bad but it was about this time that the changeover came with Jap guards. They brought in Korean soldiers with Jap officers to replace the front line troops.

These were a different class of people altogether. The Koreans hated the Japs and they hated us. The officers were presumably of a class unfit for front line service and didn't like the job they were doing and things got a bit rough after that.

One of the officers in the house next to us had a habit, if he was in a bad mood he would walk up the front line and kick the fellows in the shins. Nothing you could do about it but that was the way it went.

A funny thing happened there. In between the changeover, all of the old guards disappeared one day. We woke up and there were no guards there. This went on for about four or five days until the new guards arrived.



FRONTLINE

After a couple of days of this, I got a bright idea. We had with us a Sergeant who had been with us on guard duty at Kuala Lumpur and I put it to him and he put it to the officer. Why don't we take half a dozen men and wander around town.

So, we all got dressed up. We borrowed proper clothes, boots, socks and we all put a red cross armband on our arms. Six of us plus the Sergeant formed up on the road outside the wire compound and we marched straight down Lornie Road into the city and through to the Great World. A lot of our other fellows were still there. The thing was that nobody challenged us. We saw a few cars with Japs in them and if we did that, we gave a very smart eyes right and the Sergeant saluted. We marched in step all the way.

We went into the Great World. Going through China Town on the way, the Chinese were very pleased to see us and they loaded our packs up with food and we got into the Great World. They had plenty of food there and we loaded up with food and then we marched all the way home again with not a blow struck. Everybody in our house ate pretty well that night.

Then all the guys in our house were transferred down the road about a quarter of a mile to an old wooden building, we don't know why, but we were engaged in cleaning up exercises around the place. We were wandering around picking up this and that, not doing a hell of a lot really at all.

Funny thing happened, Jimmy Arthur-Smith and Len and Dick Miles and I built ourselves a leanto in which we slept. We had rough bunks and we were quite comfortable. Food wasn't all that bad.

We had our own cookhouse nearby and one day while we were out on the working party, I picked up a bofors shell. It had obviously not been fired. It was not in its case, just the shell itself without the brass case. I took it home and I decided I wanted to see how this thing worked. So I unscrewed the detonator top and pulled all that off and I figured out how all that worked. On the base of the shell was this white substance. I couldn't figure out what it was so I got a nail and I was poking with this nail and all of a sudden swoosh.

What I had been poking at was the phosphorous type of stuff that is the tracer element that enables you to see where the shell has gone after it has been fired.

This went off like a gigantic roman candle. I have never seen anybody move so quickly. Jimmy and Len and Dick, one minute they were there and

next minute they were out. But it didn't do any damage. It didn't explode or anything. With this shell in my hand with this stuff streaming out the back of it for about 4 or 5 seconds, I was feeling an awful bloody fool but no damage was done.

Shortly thereafter I contracted scrotal diphtheria as we found out later. My testicles swelled up to the size of tennis balls and covered with weeping sores. Very painful of course, and I was put on light duties and they put me into a building across the road which had been converted into a hospital. After about a week there they sent me back to Roberts Hospital at Changi. The treatment there consisted of scrubbing off all the sores back to the raw flesh and bathing it in a saline solution twice a day. After a week of this, it started to clear up and I eventually recovered.

There was a lot of it going around quite an epidemic of it. We were in an isolation ward and after I got back on my feet, I wasn't supposed to go outside. There was a message came in that Johnny Bell was outside and wanted to see me. So I walked out up into the main quadrangle in the middle of the hospital, found Johnny and we had a bit of a yarn. Then he went off and I didn't catch up with him until a couple of years later.

Anyway I got caught and in due army procedure, I was paraded before the CO of the hospital, being out of bounds, from an isolation ward and I was fined 10 shillings which went into my pay book and it all shows in my army records which you will find in my cupboard. Having recovered from all this I went back to the unit at Changi and I had only been there a week and I got up one morning and found something was wrong with my right leg. I didn't seem to have any feeling in it, no power in it, so I reported sick.

The doc made a few tests and said "you've got berri berri". So back into Roberts Hospital. I lost the use of my right leg and my right arm – no feeling and no power in it, although the left leg and arm and everything else worked fine. It was caused by diet deficiency which was the result of being so sick with the diphtheria and I didn't eat. This was the final result of it. A better diet and three teaspoons full of marmite per day for about two weeks. That's why I hate marmite now, or vegemite (same thing), but it cured me.

While I was in there, there was another chap who had a chess set and he taught me to play chess and I got quite interested and fairly proficient at chess, but I wouldn't even know how to play the game now.

To be continued.....

NOR ALL THY TEARS

NX45804 Driver Herbert James McNAMARA, Carrier PI, HQ Coy, 2/20 Battalion A.I.F.

Continued from June 2008 Newsletter:

In the confusion of the earlier organisation a number of radios were saved, and in the Great World access to all needed radio parts gave daring ones all the opportunity they needed, and we soon had a regular service, hearing in the night what we read in the 'Syonan Times' next morning. This latter journal, the mouthpiece of the New Order, they allowed us to buy, in the early days, but they were down on radio from the beginning.

Entirely to no purpose. Our O.C. was hauled over the coals, not for receiving outside news, but for spreading news outside. He was asked how prisoners were able to give BBC news to natives and they were never satisfied with his explanation that they got it from other natives; but our sacred radio remained intact and our daily bulletins continued. The romance of the hidden radios would make a book itself, but we won out all along the line. In its best there was a news service worthy of Reuter's and at the Great World it was a little less. In Thailand it was cruder and less regular, but in both it prevailed over all opposition. On the 'Bioki Maru' and during most of our term in Japan we had to rely mainly on the indiscretions of our enemies until the very last when we acquired a Dutchman who could read Nip papers.

For the first couple of months the 'Authentic' was kept among a very few, and among the rank and file it was liberally supplemented by rumours. Much of the 'Authentic' was itself unreliable, coming from Chinese stations strongly inspired by wishful thinking. Verbal reports gathered at random were often highly fantastic. "The well-dressed Chinaman", the "Chinaman in the Rickshaw", the "Tamil who spoke perfect English", were half-mythical identities who from time to time told prisoners the latest and these identities were responsible for much wild speculation, but they helped to pass the time until we got the 'drum' and the reports were rarely depressing. Indeed the Germans made a daily habit of surrendering to the Allies after a terrific Russian drive. Just after the surrender there were isolated camps where prisoners were allowed to listen to the Nip's own radios, and civilians working on outside jobs had their own 'sources'; but usually we had to be at great pains to keep our static boxes out of sight. In spite of many searches, we were successful right through. One genius contrived a set that could be carried back and forwards in a water-bottle. Another was concealed

in a concertina and another in a broom. The sloppiness of the average Nip search helped us along, but the element of luck was often needed to tip the balance. They might have something in here, said one Nip, as he thrust his bayonet into a bucket of rice. There were two buckets, and the other held the works'. But I think that the Oscar was earned at Kuala Lumpur jail. I have said that it should have been possible for anyone in the Houdini class to conceal a grand piano on his person during a Nip search.



I have never heard of this feat itself being performed, but conceal an ordinary radio in a prison cell while it was being searched by several Nips, must have come pretty close. How was it done? Professional magicians do not reveal their secrets, but as this was an amateur job details were available. It was kept under the only stool in the cell. As the Nip in charge of the search party came in he was greeted with great ceremony and offered a seat. Graciously it was accepted, and from a sitting position he kept a diligent eye on his charges to make sure that they searched every one of the comparatively few cubic inches in the cell. None of them had the effrontery to ask him to stand up while they searched beneath his august posterior.

It would not have been possible for them to check all the leakage in Thailand, for as one camp became a bit 'hot' another supplied the deficiency, as there was always communication between camps. *What do you think of the news?* Oziki asked a Pommy. *What news? The news of the landing. What landing? The landing in Sicily. I don't know anything about a landing in Sicily. Well you must go about with your eyes closed and your ears blocked up. You're the only bastard in the camp who doesn't bloodywell know about it. And he gave up in despair.*

But even if we were without the 'Goods' we would have had an idea how things were going, for the Nipponese were not made for keeping secrets. Wherever you were you could generally rely on a hint or two. There were occasional 'blitzes', when a dead silence would reign for a time, but these were generally followed by a fruitful issue. Even

the cautious ones could see no harm in giving us news favourable to Nippon, and because of the technique of Nip propaganda, that meant giving us all the news. For example, it would be announced that island 'A' was impregnable and America was doomed if any of her troops attempted to set foot on it. Then that the attempted American landing was repulsed. Then that the Americans had been lured into a trap, and every advance they made brought them nearer to destruction. Then that island 'A' was useless commercially and could not be used as an air base. Then that American troops on island 'A' were cut off on all sides and were doomed to starvation and the Japanese were making wonderful progress in China. We soon learned to complete this arithmetical progression when given the first three terms.

Similarly it was possible to sift the wheat from the straw in the papers printed in English. The Thai papers and the Syonan Times gave us as much information in their own way as the BBC. Indeed it was suggested that the editor of the latter journal was purposely giving the British version between the lines. Certainly the bulletins gave little heed to the viewpoint of the audience. No doubt wishful thinking Asians could see an early finish to the war from the announcement that there was a rice shortage in Australia, but it is hard to see what comfort they could derive from the announcement that the oil shortage in America was so acute that the Yanks were hard put to it to get enough kerosene to heat their homes. They related with high glee that Churchill had admitted that the war would continue till 1946, and painted a gloomy picture of the great disappointment this would be to the allied peoples, but not saying a word as to who would be in it with them or who Churchill would have thought would win it in the end.

Their military successes were astounding. Not only were the allied forces usually annihilated, but on one occasion they were heavily annihilated. About the only time the allied lost less than eighty percent was when they were said to have been decimated. They seemed to think that this was an even more appalling fate than to be heavily annihilated. Their raids on Australia were many and uniformly successful. They launched a terrific offensive on the suburbs of Broome and doubtless many of our Boomerangs failed to return from this encounter. Frequently they went back to the Island Campaign, and recalled the success with which they had attacked the fortress of Bukit Yimah, a fortification about as impregnable as the Boggabilla Line. They tried hard to inoculate a philosophy appropriate to the new conditions into the liberated peoples under their rule. The Philippines, they said, had been reluctant to depart from the barbarous habit of

working eight hours a day, but under refining Nipponese influence they were now doing twelve hours a day 'for the sheer joy of working'. The following account of the contrast between life under British oppression and the freedom of the New Order is a typical example of their efforts to instil a similar spirit into their Malayan proteges. There was never a night when we could stay at home; never a night when we were in bed earlier than two o'clock in the morning. We were having a meaningless, purposeless existence in a dream-entertainment world. The cinemas, the cabarets, the races, the parks, night rides, joy sprees, weekends by the sea or in the hills - that was the rhythm of pre-war days.

The cabarets were indispensable to we modern youths. After the show we went to cafes and restaurants where we were debauched in luxurious foods and costly drinks. But in the last freed from this tyranny by the 'New Order': The beds we sleep on are just hard planks - no more sofas or cushions or springy beds. I sleep in a strong concrete shed ~ sixpillars and a roof, with nailed down corrugated iron sheets to form two walls, while the other two sides open to the sun, wind and rain. When it rains the roof leaks in changeable spots, while the wind teases us by sending us splashes and sheets of water, so that we have to dodge and shift about. Finally an umbrella in each hand proves an effective – remedy, until the frivilous wind dies down and the rain ceases to patter.

Thus did Mr C.L. Cheah adjust himself to the changes wrought by war - in the manner of a true philosopher, but the task of converting a whole empire to a like lofty doctrine was too heavy a one for a few small editors, and empty stomachs drove philosophy from the souls of those who have given a more materialist meaning to the expression: "Co-prosperity Sphere".

When we called at Manila on our way to Japan our coal was loaded by a Philippine more shabbily dressed than the humblest wharfie in Singapore, and although the Nipponese had given his country its independence long before the Americans had proposed doing it (provided the inhabitants obeyed the Nipponese soldiers, of course) he was roused to the deepest ingratitude. Look at me! he explained, Would you think that I once wore a tuxedo? We had a good time before the war ~ us and the Americans. Now we live like animals. It was not long before the gradually disappearing population began to look to us for assurances of another change. American aeroplanes boom, boom, boom, boom, soon come? the kids asked us as we marched past.

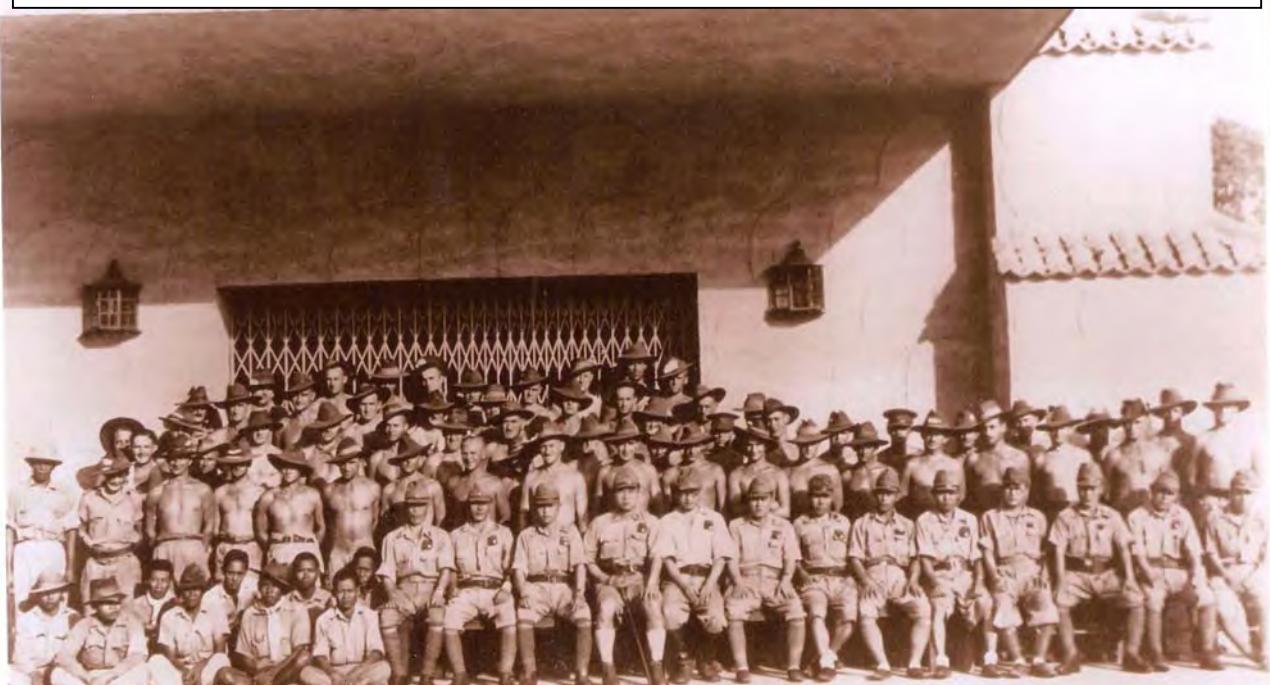
To be continued.....

FRONTLINE DOWN MEMORY LANE



15 SEP 1987 SERVING 1/19 RNSWR POLICE OFFICERS & GUESTS
1/19 RNSWR OFFICERS' MESS DINING IN NIGHT INGLEBURN

L to R: Unknown – Unknown – CAPT PHILLIPS – WO1 Peter DELAMONT - Senior Police Offr Bernie DOYLE ?
CAPT Peter WATT - CAPT Tony HARVEY - Unknown - Unknown - CAPT Bob BURRAGE BM
(Photo courtesy Peter Watt)



(Photo courtesy of Lance CROWLEY 2/19 Bn AIF)

Above photo taken mid 1942 - mostly 2/30 Bn AIF and a few 2/29 Bn AIF and a few Gunners from Victoria and 1, 2/19 Bn AIF. Seremban Road just outside of Singapore was double storeyed and was built around a square of lawn and was where all the food for the Prisoners of War was stored to be delivered. 1150 AIF men worked there for 18 months