

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

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VALE GOOD FRIENDS



NX32287 PRIVATE Allen Vincent CLARK 2/19 Battalion AIF
Late of Nelson Bay NSW.

Allen's wife Joan forwarded the following letter sadly advising of Allen's passing

Unfortunately, I have to inform you of the death of my husband Allen Vincent Clark, ex 2/19 Infantry Battalion AIF. Allen has been in a nursing home for the last 21 months. He finally succumbed to a chest infection on 7 February last, one of many during his time in the nursing home. He was 88 years of age last May.

Allen grew up in Sydney, joined the Militia in 1938 and joined the A.I.F. in June 1940. He sailed to Singapore on February 4th 1941, as a member of the band as well as his military duties. He was injured during the fighting at Muar and was in hospital when Singapore fell. He was finally sent to Japan in late 1942 working in the shipyards and coalmines. At the end of the war he came back to Australia in stages arriving at 113 AGH in November '45. 113 AGH was his home until early 1946 when several patients were sent to Bonegilla.

Finally we married in 1946 and Allen started work with the Department of Navy in February 1948. He went back to evening college and completed his Intermediate & Leaving Certificates. He transferred to Treasury in Canberra in 1962. After 4 years there he had several heart attacks and hasn't worked since. Never one to sit down and be sorry for himself, he took up photography where he used the skills he'd learnt before the Fall of Singapore. He didn't talk much about POW days and only kept in touch with Keith Harris of Orange and Harold Dwyer, from Sigs. His health wasn't always good but he made the best of all situations.

We have 2 sons and their wives, Bruce & Jan & Chris & Lynne, 6 grandchildren Simone, Matthew, Andrew, Kyle, Melissa and Suzanne & 6 great grand children Mark, Melanie Luke Ashlin Jack and Michaela. We will all miss his great sense of humour and his devotion to all of us. The Celebration of his life was held at the Uniting Church, Port Stephens on 17 February last. He didn't go to meetings of the Association as we always lived away from Sydney - he always supported the Association financially. Wayne Skinner of 1/19 RNSWR at Orange NSW is a friend of ours.

MRS Lilybell Hope BRINDLEY - Widow of NX70592 Lieutenant John Millard Brindley Pioneer Platoon Commander 2/19 Battalion AIF

Late of Port Macquarie NSW, Sandy Howard advised with deep regret of Lilybell's passing aged 88 years at Tweed Heads Hospital on 15 February 2009. Her husband John predeceased her on 20 December 1999. Survived by her son Matthew and daughter Virginia and family, Lilybell was farewelled at St Thomas' Church Port Macquarie on 19 February 2009.

Mrs Ruth HOWARD – Widow of NX26768 Major James Alexander Howard, Carrier Platoon 2/19 Bn AIF and Battalion Second-in-Command 16 Australian Infantry Battalion.

Late of Port Macquarie NSW, Sandy Howard also advised with deep regret of Ruth's passing on 26 October 2008 aged 88 years.

Mrs Gladys Lola O'CONNOR - Widow of the late NX 58091 Sergeant John William Geoffrey O'CONNOR 2/19 Battalion AIF

Late of Molong NSW, recent advice from her son John, advised of Gladys' passing on 17 July 2008. Her beloved husband John ("Ock") predeceased her on 1 September 2001. Gladys was farewelled at a Memorial Service at Orange Crematorium on 22 July 2008 and is survived by her son John.



NX57265 PRIVATE Robert Peter PIGGOTT, 2/19 Battalion AIF.

Late of The Orchards NSW, Bob was born at Whangarei New Zealand on 27 December 1922 and sadly passed away at Gosford Hospital on Wednesday 8 April 2009. On arrival in Australia at 4 years of age, adverse family circumstances at the time led to him and his brothers upbringing in the Westmead Boy's Home.

Bob put his age up 4 years and enlisted in 2/19 Battalion AIF, at Paddington on 12 July 1940. He fought in the Malayan and Singapore Campaign and following the capitulation served as a Prisoner of War in Changi, the notorious Burma-Thailand Railway and was later shipped off to Japan in the infamous 'Byoki Maru' with 'Newton Force' to slave in the coal mines until he was repatriated back to Australia at war's end weighing 5½ stone. He was discharged on 12 December 1945 and found work fencing in the Dubbo area for some years. He later moved back to Sydney and worked on the Cahill Expressway before moving to The Orchards on the Central Coast on retirement.

Bob was very keen bowler all his life and the large attendance at his farewell at Palmdale Crematorium on 17 April 2009 by the bowling fraternity and his community was testament to the immense respect and high regard in which he was held. His beloved wife Wilma pre-deceased him in 1994.

Bob is survived by his daughter Kerry and husband Steve Preston and their children Samantha and Michael and his son Greg and wife Joanne. Joe Coombs, Glen Scriven and Bob Pink represented the Association at Bob's farewell and the Adjutant 1/19 RNSWR Captain Matt Dirago represented the Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Peter Morrissey and 1st/19th Battalion The Royal New South Wales Regiment.



Mrs Barbara WATSON (nee Loxley)

Barbara was born at Sheffield, England on 8 December 1944 and sadly passed away suddenly at home at Latham ACT on 24 April 2009. Much loved wife of Charlie (former OC A Coy 1/19 RNSWR) and loved mother of Jen and devoted friend of Martin. Loving sister and sister in law of Gordon (deceased) and Marlene; Sylvia and Bob. Loving aunty of Graham, Ann, Dale, Paul and Warwick. Barbara emigrated with her family and settled in South Australia in 1951.

Charlie and Barbara married on 8 December 1967 and on moving to Canberra she worked for over 20 years as the Bursar at Kaleen Primary School.

She possessed an extraordinary gift for quilting at which she was extremely talented and her love of reading resulted in a magnificent home library. Her other great interest was her love of cats.

Barbara was farewelled at the Norwood Park Crematorium Mitchell ACT on Monday 4 May 2009. John Fogarty, Peter McGuinness, Roger Perry and Bob Pink represented the Association and Commanding Officer 1/19 RNSWR Lieutenant Colonel Peter Morrissey represented the 1st/19th Battalion. The Royal New South Wales Regiment.

Lest We Forget



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Many of you may recall meeting Roger Ford, Secretary of the Tuggerah Lakes-Long Jetty RSL Sub-branch at the 2008 Reunion Meet and Greet. Sadly, Roger passed away suddenly on 8 February at the very young age of 62. While not an Association member, Roger did serve in 19 RNSWR in its early days before continuing his CMF (ARes) service with 5 Field Ambulance. Roger was farewelled on 13 February and Vice President, Mick Pass, was in attendance.

I was very sorry to learn of the passing, on 7 February, of Allen Clark at the age of 88. Allen is survived by his widow Joan, his sons Bruce and Christopher and their large families. He will be missed by all of his family and by those with whom he served. Unfortunately the Association was not represented at Allen's funeral, which took place at the Uniting Church in Port Stephens on 17 February.

I had the privilege on 6 March, together with Bob Pink, of attending, at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra for the Dedication of a Plaque to the former members of 3 Transport Association. The ceremony was extremely well done and the members of 3 Tpt Assn are to be congratulated for honouring their predecessors in this way. Our own Martin Hanson, in his capacity as an officer of the AWM, played a large part in the organisation of the ceremony. I was also extremely pleased to view our own Commemorative Plaques to the men of 19 Battalion AIF and 2/19 Battalion AIF that are now set in the walkway adjacent to the Memorial. The next time that you are in Canberra it is worth a visit to seek out these memorials to the brave men of the 19th \ Battalions who served their country in time of need!

Two of our younger (?) members have spent time in hospital recently. Bodo Schwarz had multiple bypass surgery on 5 March and two days later was sitting up in bed complaining about the service. Hard to keep Bodo down! Peter Phillips also had a spell in hospital for internal running repairs and has now returned home. Bob Pink and I were invited to Eric Wilson's 90th birthday celebrations on March 14. Unfortunately a business commitment prevented my attendance but Bob did the honours and presented Eric with a bottle of Anniversary Port. Maurie and Elizabeth Brennan, Val and Ann Barton and Jim and Margaret Forbes, were also in attendance to honour this proud member of the Association. Eric survived his birthday celebrations and was looking forward to ANZAC Day. 13 April brought news of the passing of Eileen Drinkwater, mother of Association member, Alan. Eileen was one month short of 98 years old at the time of her passing. She will be sadly missed by her many descendants. We also received belated advice of the passing on 22 July 2008 of Gladys O'Connor, widow of Sgt John "Ock" O'Connor.

Bob Piggott passed away on 8 April. His farewell was conducted at Palmdale on 17 April and the Association was represented by Joe Coombs, Glen Scriven and Bob Pink. 1/19 RNSWR was represented by CAPT Matt Dirago, the Adjutant.

ANZAC Day dawned fine, clear and warm. There was a record turnout this year with Eric Wilson and Glen Scriven leading the 2/19 Battalion with Ray Clendenning, Joe Coombs and Alf Mansfield travelling in the Land Rover that travelled behind the marching troops. I was very proud of the turnout of the young relatives who were there to pay tribute to their fathers and grandfathers. Long may they continue to show this mark of respect! I have to say that the second go round with the Reserve Forces contingent was a test of presidential stamina but, again, a great turnout. I was somewhat surprised at a remark conveyed to me that "1/19 is always late and can't get their banner organised". The senior officer who made the observation – one not known for his perspicacity – was swiftly disabused of his misconception! We had a record number on the MV Jerry Bailey with 71 adults and 6 children. Special guests were four generations of the Mansfield family and large contingents from the Coombs, Scriven, Thomas and Fanning families. David Ring had been very vigorous in recruiting former members of 1/19 RNSWR Mortar Platoon. To all who attended, especially those 2/19 families, I say thank you. It was a great day and augurs well for the future. It was also a great pleasure to welcome Peter McGuinness, taking a break from his research on the history of 19 Bn AIF.

Peter is the first former CO of 1/19 RNSWR to attend the ANZAC Day March. I was also pleased to see John Ralph back among us and to welcome Brett Cooper, former Company Commander, 1/19 RNSWR. A special word of thanks to the indefatigable Maureen Mariner who again worked the crowd with her raffle tickets, ably assisted by Ray Warden – who celebrated his 62nd birthday on board – and Graeme Gill! This raffle helps to defray the cost of the day. After returning to Circular Quay we adjourned to Phillip's Foote for a few libations and to enable Pattie Wright, author of "Men of the Line" to chat with the 2/19 men. Messages of support and greetings were received from a large number who were unable to attend. Among these were greetings from the current CO, 1/19 RNSWR, LTCOL Peter Morrissey who conveyed best wishes from all Ranks of 1/19 RNSWR to those present. Peter has been a great supporter of the Association during his term of command.

We were shocked and saddened to receive news of the sudden death on 24 April of Barbara Watson. Barbara, wife of Association stalwart Charlie Watson, died suddenly as they were planning to leave for an ANZAC Day function. Barbara was farewelled in Canberra on 4 May. I was proud to represent the Association in company with Bob Pink and John Fogarty. Peter McGuinness, in Canberra doing research at the Australian War Memorial, was also in attendance along with Commanding Officer, 1/19 RNSWR, LTCOL Peter Morrissey who continues to show the support of 1/19 RNSWR for members of the Association, particularly in sad times such as this. I have conveyed our sincere condolences to Charlie, his daughter Jen and her partner, Martin.

Jean Birch is currently having a spell in Metro Rehabilitation Hospital at Petersham and will, when feeling fit and well be relocating to the War Veterans Village at Narrabeen.

Planning is well underway for the Annual Reunion weekend in Orange and I am sure that we will all be pleased with the program that Vice President, Mick Pass, is putting together. More details will follow in the September issue but I urge all those attending to make your booking for accommodation early as Orange is a very popular tourist attraction in Spring and Summer. *(continued over page.....)*

FRONTLINE

We are also in the throes of planning a Memorial Service, in conjunction with Clovelly RSL & Air Force Club at St Luke's Anglican Church, Clovelly on Sunday, 8 November 2009 – Remembrance Sunday. The link between 19 Battalion and St Luke's stretches back to World War 1. The 19 Battalion AIF Pozieres Memorial Cross is enshrined there and there were strong links until the late eighties. We are hopeful of re-forging those links going forward and on 8 November, in addition to the traditional observances that mark Remembrance Sunday we will also commemorate the Battle of Flers during which 19 Battalion AIF acquitted itself with distinction. More details will be in the September issue but I commend the date to your diary as an important one. Until our next meeting, whenever that may be, take care of yourselves and each other.

Roger Perry

COMING EVENTS - 2009

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	Remarks
SAT	20 JUN 09	1900	RNSWR OFFICERS' DINNER	ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB Macquarie St SYDNEY NSW	COST \$100.00 RSVP 21 JUN 09 LTCOL Don SHEARMAN Tele H: 03 9437 2383 W: 03 9450 7450
SUN	21 JUN 09	0930	RNSWR CHURCH PARADE – GARRISON CHURCH	THE ROCKS SYDNEY	See Details page 6
SAT	27 JUN 09	1330	RESERVE FORCES DAY PARADE	CANBERRA	Australian War Memorial
SUN	05 JUL 09	1030	RESERVE FORCES DAY NATIONAL REVIEW	SYDNEY DOMAIN Association Reunion NSW Leagues Club Phillip St	
SUN	26 JUL 09	0930	POZIERES DAY COMMEMORATION	ST COLUMBA CHURCH	Ocean St WOOLLAHRA
SAT	15 AUG 09	1030	VICTORY OVER JAPAN DAY	SYDNEY CENOTAPH	Refreshments afterwards at NSW Leagues Club Philip St Sydney
SAT	19 SEP 09	1800	RNSWR WO/SNCO'S REGIMENTAL DINNER OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION & BREAKFAST INCLUDED IN VERY REASONABLE COST	SCHOOL OF INFANTRY SERGEANTS' MESS SINGLETON NSW	Phone Bob PINK 0414 907 427 or Warren BARNES 0409 909 439 for a booking
SUN	08 NOV 09	0930	COMBINED ARMISTICE DAY COMMEMORATION & BATTLE OF FLERS MEMORIAL SERVICE	ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH cnr Arden & Varna Sts CLOVELLY NSW (Home of the 19 th Battalion AIF Pozieres Cross)	In conjunction with Clovelly RSL & Air Force Club ALL MEMBERS ARE URGED TO ATTEND THIS SPECIAL SERVICE
WED	11 NOV 09	1030	REMEMBRANCE DAY	SYDNEY CENOTAPH	
FRI SAT SUN	13 NOV 09 14 NOV 09 15 NOV 09		1/19 RNSWR ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & REUNION WEEKEND ORANGE NSW	ORANGE EX SERVICES CLUB & ROMANI BARRACKS	Please book your accommodation early to avoid disappointment

15-17 OCT 2010	2010 Early Warning Order for your diary	2010 1/19 RNSWR ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & REUNION WEEKEND – SYDNEY	Venue to be advised (Clovelly RSL Club TBC)	To include a Memorial Service at St Luke's Church Clovelly (Home of the 19 th Battalion AIF Pozieres Cross) on SUNDAY MORNING 17 OCT 2010
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PATRON Colonel B.E. (Brian) MARTYN, RFD
HONORARY CHAPLAIN Lieutenant Colonel Reverend Chaplain Canon C.G. (Colin) AIKEN, OAM, RFD, ChStJ
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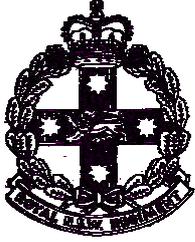
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"Primus in Terra Australi"

11 May 2009

To All Members, Ex-Members and Friends of the Regiment

2009 Annual Regimental Church Parade

You and your partner are invited to the Annual Church Parade of the Regiment at the Holy Trinity (Garrison) Church, Lower Fort Street, Millers Point on Sunday 21 June 2009 commencing at 1100 hrs. This service commemorates the formation of the Regiment on 1 July 1960 and the Laying of the Garrison Church's Foundation Stone on 23 June 1840.

The Church Parade will be preceded by a parade at 1025 hrs consisting of a Colour Party from the 2nd/17th Battalion of the Regiment and a Half Guard formed of troops from all Battalions of the Regiment. As has become our custom, the Queen's and Regimental Colours of all Battalions of the Regiment will be displayed inside the Church during the service.

Service members who are not on parade should wear Ceremonial Service Dress (1B) or Ceremonial Dress (2C). Former members and guests should wear appropriate civilian attire with orders, decorations and medals.

As in previous years, considerable effort has been made by the Church's Director of Music and the Regiment Executive to ensure the musical component of the service meets the highest standards and you will not be disappointed with this year's rendering.

It is hoped that you will be able to participate with us in the Regiment's Annual Church Parade and I look forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely,



RESERVE FORCES DAY 2009



Vice Regal Review by Her Excellency the Governor of NSW



SYDNEY NSW
SUNDAY 5 JULY 2009
 FORM UP IN THE
SYDNEY DOMAIN BY 1030 h



1/19 RNSWR ASSOCIATION
REUNION AT THE NSW LEAGUES CLUB
Phillip Street SYDNEY
following the parade at 1145 h

The Sydney Parade is planned to
Commence Forming Up / Sorting Out at 1030h - To March On at 1100h and March Off after the Inspection & March Past at 1130h.

Parades will be conducted in the following towns and cities as shown below:

CANBERRA	ACT	SAT 27 JUNE 09
[Service at the Australian War Memorial 1400h]		
LISMORE	NSW	WED 1 JULY 09
TAMWORTH	NSW	SAT 27 JUNE 09
TAREE	NSW	SUN 28 JUNE 09
WAGGA WAGGA	NSW	SUN 28 JUNE 09
[Assembly 1000h Bayliss St Wagga Wagga near Union Club Hotel for March off at 1030 h]		
PARKES	NSW	SAT 4 JULY 09
NEWCASTLE	NSW	SAT 4 JULY 09
SYDNEY	NSW	SUN 5 JULY 09

INTERSTATE

IPSWICH	QLD	WED 1 JULY 09
BRISBANE	QLD	SUN 28 JUNE 09
WONDAI	QLD	SUN 5 JULY 09
MELBOURNE	VIC	SUN 5 JULY 09
HORSHAM	VIC	SUN 5 JULY 09
HOBART	TAS	SAT 11 JULY 09
LAUNCESTON	TAS	WED 1 JULY 09
ADELAIDE	SA	SUN 5 JULY 09
MOUNT GAMBIER	SA	SAT 4 JULY 09
PERTH	WA	SUN 5 JULY 09
DARWIN	NT	SUN 5 JULY 09
ALICE SPRINGS	NT	WED 1 JULY 09

Further Information: ww.rfd.org.au



VICE REGAL REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL RESERVE FORCES DAY PARADE BY HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR MARIE BASHIR AC CVO GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The parade format will be colourful and exciting for the marchers and spectators. The parade will be held on the historic Sydney Domain a site of many military parades including the presentation by Governor-General Field Marshal Slim, of the Queen's & Regimental Colours to 3 Battalion RAR on the 24th April 1956. Another notable parade was in 1947 when Field Marshal Montgomery visited to thank Australia for its contribution to the war. We will be in a special place and making history. The parade will involve Association Standards and Banners, Light Horse, Armoured vehicles and pageantry. The Army Bands from Sydney and Newcastle will look resplendent in their Red Jackets, they will be joined by the Regimental Bands of 1/15 Royal NSW Lancers, The Artillery Association Band and the Pipes and Drums from the Army Band Newcastle and the NSW Scottish Regimental Association.

Serving and former members will be welcomed and allocated a position.

The parade will commence with Armoured vehicles and Association Banners taking up their position to hold ground. These will be followed by the individual Formations which will form up in a U shape. The Formations and Associations will be led by their Standard Bearers. The senior members of the 39ERs from the three services will be welcomed on the parade followed by Her Excellency who will arrive on the parade with a Vice-Regal escort of Mounted Police and Light Horse. The parade will be inspected by Her Excellency and then march past in quick time with music from bands in the centre of the parade ground. Unlike a street parade, spectators will have the opportunity to view their family and friends and observe the pride of their Formations and Associations for the duration of the parade.

Given the significance of the occasion all participants are requested to wear a jacket and tie. Decorations & Medals to be worn.

**ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE A
 COMMEMORATIVE CERTIFICATE SIGNED
 BY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL
 HER EXCELLENCY
 MS COURTNEY BRYCE AC
 & THE RFD NATIONAL & NSW CHAIRMAN
 THE HONOURABLE
 SIR LAURENCE STREET AC KCMG QC**

DONATIONS

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



MAJ	Tony	ANG
CPL	Kevin	BRANCH
PTE	Tony	BRAY
MRS	Joan	CLARK
MR	Tony	FANNING
MR	Jim	FORBES
MR	Alan	FOUNTAIN
WO1	Hugh	GORDON
LTCOL	Bob	GRANT ED
LTCOL	Vin	HALLINAN RFD ED
MRS	Suzanne	HUGHES
CPL	Dan	JOHNSTON
MR	Alan	McRAE
WO2	Bodo	SCHWARZ
MR	James T.	STEWART
MRS	Mavis	WARD
LT	Eric	WILSON



NEW MEMBERS

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

MAJ	Brett	COOPER	MOUNT KEIRA	NSW	2500
LT	Andrew	KFOURY	GOSFORD	NSW	2250
MR	Wayne	MATTHEWS	BAR BEACH	NSW	2300
MR	John	O'CONNOR	MOLONG	NSW	2866
MR	Laurie	SHEEDY	RAYMOND TERRACE	NSW	2324

SICK REPORT FRONTLINE



Bodo SCHWARZ pictured recuperating from recent and very successful surgery at St George Hospital. Pleased to report that Bodo is back on his feet once again and in remarkably good health.



Mrs Jean BIRCH pictured at St George Hospital after a fall from which she is recovering with physiotherapy. Keep up the good work Jean. Jean has asked that we convey her sincere and grateful thanks to all who have sent her Get Well wishes during her hospitalisation.



Mrs Colleen Barron has advised that her husband **NX57790 Bill BARRON 2/19 Battalion AIF** is now residing at the Wirraway Hostel Narrabeen War Veterans Home and sends his best wishes to all in the Association.

CONGRATULATIONS TO Eric WILSON ON HIS 90th BIRTHDAY



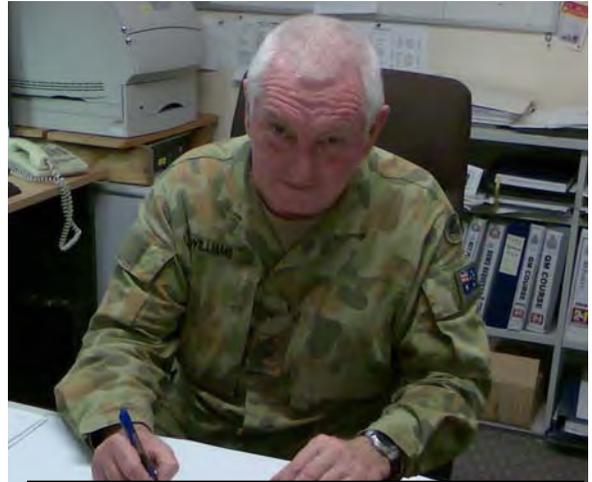
L to R: Jim FORBES, Eric WILSON, Maurie BRENNAN and Val BARTON at Eric's 90th Birthday Party at his home. WITH ALL OUR BEST WISHES ERIC



SEEN AROUND THE TRAPS



Maureen & Bob GRANT at Lulworth House Elizabeth Bay where they now both reside and send their Greetings and Best Wishes to All



WO2 Jeff WILLIAMS hard at it in his role as the Regimental Quartermaster at 21 Construction Regiment, Holsworthy.



Mrs Jean STEWART enjoying a touch of respite care at the Peakhurst Nursing Home. Jean sends her Greetings & Best Wishes to All



At Bob Piggott's farewell - L to R: Glen SCRIVEN – Joe COOMBS – Bob PINK & Adjutant 1/19 RNSWR Captain Matt DIRAGO



SEEN AROUND THE TRAPS



L to R: Former 1/19 RNSWR members LTCOL Graeme DAVIS & MAJ John THOMPSON with LTCOL Merv UREN on Ex 'Swift Eagle' at Cowley Bay QLD



Julie & Lofty O'CONNOR on their recent trip to China



Bob MIDDLETON pictured at ANZAC Cove on his recent Gallipoli visit



Julie & Lofty negotiating the Great Wall of China



Our good mate from the Chelsea Pensioners Paddy FOX, BEM pictured at far right with Captain Jeremy CURRIE, Coldstream Guards, and his bride Dr Roopa GILL, MRCP with In Pensioners after their wedding on 30 August 2008.

FRONTLINE

YAMBA NSW FALL OF SINGAPORE REMEMBRANCE

Association member Shirley Drum, husband John and Association member Cliff Lowien have for many years climbed over the shut gates at their local memorial to conduct their own service to curious glances from passers by – including some members of the local RSL .They were joined this year by a photographer friend David. Shirley's brothers Roy and Arthur Cotton were Killed in Action during the Malaya & Singapore Campaign.



YAMBA NSW 2464
20th February 2009

Dear Bob,

Enclosed photos taken at the small service Cliff Lowien and I conducted on Sunday February 15 2009. Also present husband John and photographer friend, David. Surprise, Surprise arrived to find gate to Yamba Cenotaph open. Usually we climb over the railings. No wasn't a good deed, whoever supposedly locked the gate shot the padlock in the wrong slot, the result said gate now swings in the wind and there's plenty of that over looking Yamba's main beach. Flowers were laid. Ode recited, pause for a few moments. I read from "Revelations" Chapter 7 verses 13-17. Hugs, service concluded.

Best wishes to all

Shirley Drum

8TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION BATHURST MEMORIAL RE-DEDICATED

Memorial in place for Anzac Day

By LOUISE EDDY

AFTER a year-long wait, Bathurst's Broken Blade memorial is home – in time for Anzac Day. A crane yesterday lowered the large piece of pink granite into place outside the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre.

The national memorial was built to honour the soldiers of the 8th Division. The original was destroyed by a vandal in May last year when it was smashed into several pieces. It was beyond repair so a new piece, identical to the old one, was commissioned.

The new \$37,000 Broken Blade was created by Orange stonemasons McMurtrie and Company from granite taken from the same local quarry as the original.

Bathurst RSL sub branch secretary Jim McFerran said a re-dedication has been scheduled for May 17. The ceremony will be performed by Howard Knowles, chaplain of the Bathurst RSL sub Branch.

Former members of the 8th Division and their families will attend. Two special guests will be local POWs Les Browne and Dick Johnson. Mr McFerran works across the road from the memorial and said it has been distressing to look across and see the empty space where it used to be.

"It will be really nice to walk out in future and see it back in its rightful place," he said.



HOME AT LAST: Workmen set our new Broken Blade in place outside the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre. INSET: Former prisoner of war Dick Johnson was delighted to see the Broken Blade Memorial in place in time for Anzac Day. Photos: PHILL MURRAY

ARTICLE FROM THE BATHURST WEEKLY ADVOCATE FRI-SAT APRIL 10-11 2009 Our thanks to Association Member LT Tom Nolan for forwarding the article

SOLDIER 1945

Board the ship lads, the four funnelled roller
A great depression the wars not over
Hack the trail lads, show, no pity
Hit the narrow strip it won't be pretty

Your hearts will stir, and surely rattle
Proud Australians, young men in battle
A grassy slope for a soldier's bed
Eyes were shut
Not a word was said

Soldiers wake to a raging explosion
Through the jungle, they're all in motion
Blown to bits with Dynamite
Some soldiers made it through the night

Troops set, waiting on the west coast
Ready aim fire, men search for safe post
Were in for a battering they're hearts were sure
As they waited many moons passed before
Still the heart aches for the waving boat men
They will remember them now and then

Soldier nonchalantly polishes his gun
His mind is absent and body numb
His world is broken, smells death and tastes blood
He carries a piece of shrapnel in his lung

Men wounded- men bleeding, time is still
Lead and iron showered from every hill
With a little tin hat for comfort and relief
In God like a boy the soldier believes
Dodging bullets to the head
Many prayers we cried and said

In a bloody paradise came tropical flood
Troops were limless and covered in mud
Shoulder to shoulder, they carried each other
To save the life of a wounded brother

Such is luck in the draw of war time
When you get to see sunshine
When you should have finished in a million pieces
Instead you're haunted with butchered faces

When the sound of guns sound quiet
And the sound of pain is so silent
When the war has taken your mates away
You wish to see your loved ones each day

A voyage through a rough wild sea
Frozen soaked and so hungry
After a five mile train to a hell hole place
Three years building ships in a rotten race

They are coming home, their tortured souls
The prettiest morning on the harbour unfolds
Number 13 Pymont October 1945
'Missing In Action' for a long long time!!!

Richard Dalley Stewart
Always a Soldier

**Written and Contributed by
Elle Bjeland, fiancé of Todd
(Dick & Jean Stewart's grandson)**

YOU CAN IF YOU THINK YOU CAN !

If you think you are beaten, you are,
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you like to win, but you think you can't,
It is almost certain you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you're lost,
For out in the world we find,
Success begins with a fellow's will.
It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you are outclassed, you are,
You've got to think high to rise,
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man.
But soon or late the man who wins,
Is the man who thinks he can.

~ C. W. Longenecker ~

Contributed by Jean Birch

"THE GRIM GLORY"

OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE
2/19 BATTALION AIF

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the three years since the Association succeeded in launching the 3rd edition of *The Grim Glory the Official History of 2/19 Battalion AIF* nearly seven hundred copies have been sold – either direct to members or through retail establishments. The printers have now informed me that the cost to us of future copies will be \$176.00. This means that our selling price, including postage and packing, will be \$190.00 per copy. While this still compares favourably with the retail price charged by the Australian War Memorial – the present printing is \$240 per copy – I have decided that the time has come for *The Grim Glory* to pass into history.

I have authorised the printing of a FINAL print run of twenty copies and these will be available shortly. The selling price will be, as I said \$190.00 per copy.

When these have been sold there will be no more. **If any member wishes to reserve a copy then you should get in touch with our Hon Secretary Bob Pink-Tele: 0414 907 427 Email: bob.pink@optusnet.com.au as a matter of urgency.**

ONCE THESE COPIES HAVE BEEN SOLD THEN THE ONLY SOURCE WILL BE IN THE SECOND-HAND MARKET!



FALL OF SINGAPORE COMMEMORATION ADDRESS SYDNEY CENOTAPH 15 FEBRUARY 2009

By Brigadier Bill ROLFE, AO
Repatriation Commissioner

Veterans and distinguished guests, fellow Australians. Thank you for the opportunity to reflect with you on the

commemoration of Singapore Day - a day set aside to commemorate that tumultuous time in our history encapsulated in the fall of Singapore on the 15th February 1942.

It is a difficult time for us in one sense. We and others around Australia gather in sadness to remember an event of 67 years ago while serious floods and storms ravage North Queensland and while the count continues to some 200 dead as a result of bush fires raging in Victoria. Heat waves have likely contributed to many deaths in South Australia.

Across the country many people are fearful of their jobs and savings as we face economic crisis. Our young men and women in the Defence Force, at this very moment, risk their lives in trouble spots around the world. And yet in these difficult times we can turn to our commemoration, draw strength from the sacrifice of our forbears and grimly resolve to face these disasters and crises – as they did.

The loss of Singapore is a story of controversy, of national and international political and planning failings in the construction of the so called impregnable fortress of Singapore and the allocation of defence resources. It is a story of sharp and fierce battles and of operations in a short campaign where a hardened enemy force quickly developed air superiority, destroyed the only capital ships in the region and pressured Commonwealth forces to withdraw to Singapore and eventual capitulation. It is a story of cruel and inhuman treatment of the thousands of captives.

The centrepiece of our commemoration is the 8th Division and supporting arms and services, along with many squadrons of the RAAF (such as 1,8,21 and 453 Sqns) and many vessels of the RAN (Corvettes that joined the 21st minesweeping flotilla – Burnie Goulburn, Bendigo Maryborough – and HMAS Vampire to name but a few ships.

The 8th Division formed in 1940 and eventually comprised the 22nd, 23rd and 27th Brigades. The 6th, 7th, and 9th Divisions had deployed to the Middle East and our warships and some thousands of airmen were involved in the war in Europe. The 22nd Bde (18, 19, 20 Bns) deployed in February 1941 to Malaya and the 27th Bde (26, 29, and 30 Bn) in August that year. The 23rd Brigade eventually split

into 3 composite groups; Gull Force to Ambon, Sparrow Force to Timor, and Lark Force to Rabaul. These forces have their own distinctive place in our military history but their separate deployment meant that the 8th Division in Malaya was short a third of its force. There are many elements of support to a Division and mention of one often does injustice to another but critical elements of support to the 2 Brigades, along with engineers, signals, drivers, ordnance and medical staff, were the 2/10 and 2/15 Artillery Regiments and the 4th Anti Tank Regiment.

The Japanese landed on the peninsular at 3 points of the east coast on the 8th December 1941. RAAF aircraft attacked the landing at Kota Bahru but were severely mauled in their outdated aircraft. The Indian 3rd Corps bore the brunt of the invasion in the north. The Australians 2/3 Reserve Motor Transport Company supported many of the Indian and British troops against the battle hardened Japanese under great pressure from their aircraft.

By mid January the 3rd Indian Corps, suffering appalling casualties were forced well down the peninsular through Australian lines where the 22 Bde were on the east coast and the 27th on the west. From this time the 8th Division suffered continual pressure on the ground from fast moving Japanese troops utilising infiltration and encircling tactics, tanks, artillery and mortars and constant air attack. But they fought on.

Elements of the 2/30 Bn (Black Jack Galleghan) had the first major contact in a planned area ambush some 5 kilometres ahead of the battalion at Gemas. They killed some 600 enemy troops before fighting their way back to the Battalion where they came under great pressure from the Japanese infantry, counter battery fire, tanks and air attack and were forced to withdraw.

At Endau on the east coast elements of each of the battalions of the 22nd Brigade formed a force to patrol the area and Jack Varley's platoon from 2/19 Bn contacted some 150 Japanese and inflicted casualties but were forced to withdraw under weight of numbers and mortar fire.

Back on the west coast the 26th Bn was next in contact but was forced to withdraw in face of encircling tactics. The fighting was fierce, sometimes hand to hand, and constant. The 2/29th Bn was deployed in the area south of the Muar river and here the 13th Bty of the 4th anti tank achieved a stunning local victory in destroying 5 tanks in succession from almost point blank range. The 2/29th

was now attacked and had to fight their way south with remnants of an Indian unit to link with the 2/19th which had been trucked from the east coast to Bakri. Australians led the breakout singing waltzing matilda. Colonel Anderson, CO of the 2/19th had to assume command of the 45th Indian Bde after its head quarters was damaged by artillery. His subsequent leadership and personal gallantry resulted in the award of the VC. He led the further breakout from Bakri towards Parit Sulong but was cut off at the bridge to this infamous location. Trapped, under continual attack and with no hope of relief they were forced to leave over 100 badly wounded men and make their way through enemy lines. The Japanese slaughtered the wounded. I led a mission to the dedication of a simple memorial to those men at Parit Sulong the year before last accompanied by a group which included Jack Varley MC 2/19 and Rowley Richards of 2/15 – the latter present here today.

At this point these two battalions alone had lost 75% of their men killed wounded or missing in action. The 65 Bty of 2/15 had fired over 6500 rounds in the move from Muar to Parit Sulong. And the fighting continued as they fell back on the Johore straits and Singapore. When eventually mounting defences on Singapore island, the two Brigades were reinforced with some 2000 general reinforcements, virtually straight off the boat, and the 2/4 Machine Gun Battalion.

The 8th Division was then deployed on the most vulnerable point facing north west where the straits were narrowest with an Indian Brigade on the left, the 22 Bde with a 15 kilometre frontage in the centre and the 27th Bde with a 4 kilometre frontage on the right. The attack came in the centre where the Japanese Guards employed 16 Battalions.

And so Singapore fell. There were some 42 Battalions involved in the Malayan Campaign, 7 of them Australian. We lost 800 men in the Campaign and many, many more in the barbaric treatment in captivity. At wars end, one third of the Division did not return.

How should we reflect on those terrible times ?

We cannot expect to see in our young, we hope never to see, the sudden half smile of recall or the turned head as a tear wells at mention of names, or place names like Gemas or Parit Sulong, or Johore, Kranji and Changi, or titles such as 'F' force. We and future generations must have this information to ensure that it does not happen again. But knowing what they did and respecting and admiring the men and women who endured is not enough. We also have to understand the heartache of families here in Australia, the fathers,thers, mothers, brothers and sisters, wives and sweethearts waited and waited and waited.... Often for someone who would not return. Whole communities were affected. Men and women were lost in the fighting. Many more were lost in captivity. The survivors struggled to re-

establish themselves. Many succeeded but others were so beaten down by their experiences that they were never the same. And families lived with these slowly dying men and their memories for the rest of their lives. We must remember them too as part of the carnage of war. We are duty bound also to remember that the tragedy and horror of the Malaya Campaign was in part due to our own lack of preparedness. Many political factors and world events were in play. The major part of our forces were in the Middle East. We raised the 8th Division, trained them largely in open country and then committed them to likely jungle warfare.

Reinforcements committed were sometimes only part trained. We have to remember this and guard against ever repeating it. We point to the lessons in the fall of Singapore and reflect on the adequacy of our Defence Force and their equipment and training. In doing so we commemorate those who suffered and died. Then also we remember the courage and resilience of these men and women in their fighting and in the horrendous circumstances of their captivity.

There are many such stories. One often has to read between the lines as the character and endurance of the men is often understated, and laced with flashes of humour. Col Magarry, writing in his history of the 2/26 Bn, deliberately did not single men out, save for one exception, which seems ironic in the present day – Private Bill Lawson from outback Queensland, a part aboriginal and a big man who consistently helped mates along the railway, sometimes carrying them when they could no longer walk. But then Bill too died. They endured as best they could for as long as they could. Adversity can bring out the best in men, and mateship will then thrive. We remember their courage and resilience and resolve to build ourselves and those who follow us in their image. We must look to such objectives to meet our responsibilities.

But to ensure that this does not happen again we must constantly test the moral depth and strength of our democratic institutions so that voices powered by our resolve can be heard. We must ensure the strength of our defence capability and the humanity of our people. We have a measure of the depths of inhumanity and we honour our dead by ensuring they are never plumed again. If we can do these things then we honour the men and women who served in the fall of Singapore and its bitter aftermath. We take up the responsibility for those who did not return, for those who did return sick in body and mind, for those families who suffered in the long wait and subsequent years.

If we do these things then the difficulties and tragedies we face in the present day are placed in context – no less tragedies, but we know we can face them.

We will remember them.

ANZAC DAY SYDNEY 2009

Jim STEWART DRUMMOYNE NSW

My apologies for not being able to attend today – please pass on my sincere best wishes to all

Lieutenant Colonel Peter MORRISSEY – ORANGE NSW Commanding Officer 1st/19th Battalion The Royal New South Wales Regiment
On behalf of All Ranks of 1st/19th Battalion The Royal New South Wales Regiment I convey our best wishes to all for a memorable and enjoyable day.

Charles EDWARDS - 2/19 Bn AIF DONVALE VIC 3111

Greetings and Best Wishes to all members of the illustrious 2/19 Battalion AIF and their descendants

Brian SCHAFER – INGLEBURN SW 2565

Please pass on my best wishes to all – I'm sorry I cannot attend as I will be in South Australia on ANZAC Day

Tuck WILSON GUNNEDAH NSW 2340

Have a good day and Cheers from Tuck & Lurline

Esther SLATER QUIRINDI NSW 2343

Please accept mine and my son Wilfred's apologies for not being there for ANZAC Day. Wishing you all the best.

Tex and Maree WINTER COSTERFIELD VIC 3523

Unfortunately we will not be able to get up to Sydney for ANZAC Day this year. We hope everyone enjoys the day and catching up with their mates.

Bill FOGARTY ADAMINABY NSW 2630

I regret that I am unable to attend in Sydney as I am running the ANZAC Day service here this year. Please extend my kind regards to all who attend and ensure you have a great day.

Allen GIDDINGS – LIGHTNING RIDGE 2834

Sorry I can't be with you this year but I have recently been elected President of the RSL Sub Branch here. Our best wishes for a successful and memorable day.

John JACKSON CHAPMAN ACT 2611

I regret that I cannot join you for ANZAC Day but I am committed to the activities in Canberra. Best Wishes to all members.

Bob LIDDEN – BONDI NSW

My apologies for being unable to attend both the March and the Reunion. Please give my regards to those who may remember me from a bygone era.

Ken KIRKBY – DEE WHY NSW 2099

I wish you Good Memories and Good Luck

Barbara BARDSLEY – GOONDIWINDI QLD 4390

My family and I wish you all a very happy day and I hope the day is warm and sunny.

Kevin JONES TOWNSEND NSW 2463

As I am committed to my Sub Branch on ANZAC I won't be able to make it this year however, All the best to everybody for a great day.

Jean BIRCH - BANKSTOWN AGED CARE

My best wishes to you all for a memorable and wonderful day.

Barry CHAPMAN RANKIN PARK NSW 2287

My kind regards to all members of the Association, their families and friends at the ANZAC Day March & reunion. I hope that it will be as successful as usual again this year.

Warren MAYBURY CONDOBOLIN NSW

All the best for the day – have a good time.

Roy SCHMIDTKE MILPERRA NSW 2214

My apologies folks for my inability to be with you, but my thoughts are with you all and have a wonderful day.

Noel SELWAY WONDAI QLD

My involvement in the town's ANZAC ceremonies and duties will unfortunately prevent my attendance again this year. My best regards to all.

Mick PASS BATEAU BAY NSW

Have an enjoyable day and remember your mates. Sorry I can't be there today – best regards to all.

Brian MARTYN NGUNNAWAL ACT 2913

Best wishes to all - I hope that you are enjoying fine weather and the company of good friends. My regards to all.

Mavis WARD

I'm sorry that I can't be with you today – but I am awaiting a new hip. Hope all goes well and that you all have an excellent day – I'll be thinking of you all.

John & Vicky SAMIN – BARRABA NSW 2347

On holidays in Kalgoorlie – All our best for a great day

Sandy HOWARD FRENCHS FOREST NSW 2086

Very sorry I can't be with you all. Enjoy the fellowship and I'll see you at the Annual General Meeting. Regards

Peter WATT MACLEAN NSW 2463 (former PI Comd and Int Offr) Wish I was with you all – some of my best memories are of my time with 1st/19th Battalion.

BRIGADIER Paul COUCH TAREE NSW 2430

Due to prior commitments in the Taree area I am unable to attend. All the best for the march and re-union luncheon.

Eddie MALCOLM - PORT KEMBLA NSW

I will be there next year and stay overnight ! My regards to all for a great day.

Bodo SCHWARZ – BULLI NSW 2516

I regret I cannot be there today – the rehab process progresses well and I hope to see you all at the AGM in November. With best wishes for a successful and enjoyable day.

Neil & Ethel MELVILLE

Regret we can't be with you due to other commitments but our best wishes and regards to all

ANZAC DAY SYDNEY 2009



FRONTLINE

ANZAC DAY SYDNEY 2009



ANZAC DAY SYDNEY 2009

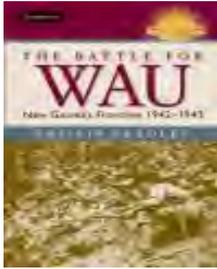


FRONTLINE

ANZAC DAY SYDNEY 2009



BOOK REVIEWS



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



REVIEWED BY 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).



THE DUKE: A Hero's Hero at Sandakan

David Matthews
Seaview Press, 2008, 235pp

David Matthews has written a fine tribute to his father, Captain Lionel Matthews, GC, MC.

While a Sea Scoutmaster in Adelaide, Lionel showed early courage when he was involved in an attempted rescue following a boating accident at Henley Beach. Later, he joined the RANR and trained as a signalman. After moving to Melbourne, Lionel joined the 3rd Division Signals, CMF. In July 1940 he enlisted in the 8th Division Signals, AIF, and sailed to Malaya in early 1941. He became known as the Duke because of his physical resemblance to the Duke of Gloucester.

Lionel was awarded the MC for service during the Malayan Campaign, but his true heroism was displayed when he took a leadership role in Sandakan PoW camp. He contacted the civilian prisoners in their camp on Berhala Island, and local police and administrators. Under his guidance, radios were constructed, and contact made with Filipino guerrillas. In retrospect, it is unfortunate that the Filipino offer to help release the Sandakan prisoners (presumably to join them) was declined. This decision was possibly based on concern about likely casualties during an escape. We can say that any casualties would have been lower than the ultimate fate of those at Sandakan, but those in the camp did not have this foreknowledge.

Lionel Matthews was betrayed to the Japanese, and executed in March 1944. His GC was awarded posthumously for his gallant work in Sandakan.

OHAMA PRISONER OF WAR COALMINE AND OTHER POSSIBILITIES

By **PATTIE WRIGHT**

The primary reason for my recent trip to Japan was to research for a book I have begun, the biography of Chief Petty Officer Ray Parkin, HMAS Perth and for this, I wanted to 'walk the ground' so to speak. Ray spent twelve months as a POW at Ohama after time spent as part of Dunlop Force in and around Hintok on the Thai Burma Railway. I have visited the Thai Burma Railway and have a small sense of the place and I wanted to visit the other slice of Ray's POW existence in Japan.

I also wanted to acquaint myself with some awareness of a culture I have perceived from only one side, that of Japan as the aggressor in a war some sixty years ago. I needed to see a clearer, present day picture of Japan and its people. But it was the Ohama prisoner of war camp and old coalmine at Sanyo/Onoda on the south-western coast of the island of Honshu, that was of most interest to me. The camp sits on the very edge of the Inland Sea of Japan looking out over the Shimonoseki Strait and the Island of Kyushu. It is also equidistant between Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Another objective was to interview any surviving Japanese guards from the Thai Burma Railway who would talk to me. Last year, I had my first book published by Melbourne University Publishing, under their Miegunyah Imprint, titled "The Men Of The Line". It is an oral history of 68 ex-prisoners of war from the Thai Burma Railway, all Australians, bar two. As there are now conservatively estimated to be 129 camps on the Line, I still have some work to do. I would like to publish another, perhaps companion volume, to complete these remaining camps. But then I got to thinking about including some 'disparate' stories from the Line; Japanese stories. So my working itinerary for Japan was filling.

I became acquainted, via email, with the excellent women of the POW Research Network Japan and in particular, Taeko Sasamoto and Yoskido Tamura and the most unusual Tomoyo Nakao. Jack Thorpe from Western Australia and Bill Flowers from Victoria kindly introduced me to the Network. Our relationship started badly in that I rearranged my initial travel dates to later in January, as I wanted my 19 year old son, Bart to accompany me and I needed to wait for his timetable to fit mine. Well, I was for the chop and the sky had truly fallen, but time does heal most things as it did in this case of culture differences.

So the plan was in place; I was to interview three Japanese ex-guards from the Thai Burma Railway and then visit the Ohama POW camp and interview a Japanese ex-camp guard, Mr. Sato. The Council at Sanyo-Onoda were welcoming and helpful. But before I get ahead of myself, in all this preparation, I imagined I would visit two other places and sadly, I managed only one. The Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo was one and the other was Yokohama War Cemetery. I didn't make the Cemetery. Bob Pink provided me with a list of 2/19th chaps who have their final resting place there and I thought I would visit and pay them my best 'gedday's'.....next time fellas.

As an added piece of spice, just a short time before my departure, the Japanese Prime Minister, Taro Aso, had finally been forced into admitting that his father's company had indeed used Allied POW's as slave labour in the family coalmines. The Shadow Vice Defence Minister Yukihisa Fujita had been hunting Aso, it seems, for some time to extract this admission and so I thought it might be interesting to ask our Government, through a contact of mine at Austrade in Melbourne, if I

could meet the Shadow Minister and I prepared a very precise email and it wound its way through Austrade in Tokyo to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who knows where else? My initial contact was with Austrade in Tokyo, where we were to have a meeting, when I had a free couple of hours during my ten day schedule. I thought it was to be a polite meeting for no particular reason and basically it was not at the top of my tree, but I was wrong. I cancelled the first appointment with the Embassy as an interview with the first guard, an ex-Engineer from the Line ran over....I wasn't about to rush through my interview to sit and drink tea with an Embassy official. I made the decision of "a bird in the hand"

To my astonishment, the Australian Embassy in Japan then began to re-arrange their previously 'too busy' schedule to accommodate mine. They were chasing me. When we did finally arrive at the Embassy, and what a building it is, my Austrade contact said "Oh no...you're not having the meeting with me, I'm to take you to the fourth floor....now let me see, I don't know the code for that floor, I've never been there before." So, I figured I wasn't in for what I expected.

I was greeted by a 'Sir Humphrey'; a comfortable bureaucrat who quizzed me ever so politely, without being specific, about what I was doing in Tokyo. All in all, I guess I now have 'a file' in DFAT and border crossings could be difficult. But the issue that stuck somewhat in my craw, as the Americans would say, is that I was chided for even considering that I might talk to the shadow Minister about POW's, coal mines, the Japanese PM et al. And all without being stated. But what was stated was that I might "...upset the delicate balance held between Australia and Japan at present." Gentlemen, to be held in such high regard!? None of the above I took in too kindly a manner and when 'Sir Humphrey' suggested that the Thai Burma Railway was somewhat close to his heart as his now dead uncle had been an English Officer at Changi, my only, and I now think, uncalled for, rather nasty comment was "Well...he was lucky". It didn't go down all that well. We have since emailed and I have connected him with the FEPOW Association in England. You see, our comfortable bureaucrat had no idea of his uncle's battalion or experience, so I was able to chide him.

In the final wrap up, I could only interview two of the three ex-guards from the Thai Burma. The most interesting bloke to me was the one who decided he had to have an eye operation just at the time I was in Tokyo. He is the Korean guard, Mr. Hi-Han-Ne, or The Lizard, from Hintok a convicted war criminal who had been sentenced to 20 years in jail. He served less.

The two remaining ex- guards I did meet provided me with astonishing interviews. The first was, a very pale faced, 90 year old, Major Sugano, 5th Engineers Regiment and a career officer from a military family who did think quite a lot of himself. Mr. Sugano is also the gentleman responsible for bringing back the Locomotive C5631 to the Yasukuni Shrine. He is very proud of what the Engineers accomplished on the railway and when I asked him, rather pointedly about their annual celebration at the Shrine, he demurred by saying 'It is not a celebration, just a gathering together of our members in order to clean the locomotive'. He was sad to say that there are only a handful of surviving members to help keep up the maintenance of the locomotive. The basic tenure of the interview was one of polite investigation by me and rearranging and avoidance of the facts by Mr. Sugano. Tamurang Paat was the camp in which this Engineer, "...didn't see anything untoward....I stayed in my office a lot and didn't see any mistreatment." He did agree with my question, coldly, that if the Japanese had fed, clothed

and provided safe water, medical provisions and shelter, the railway may well have been completed earlier with much less loss of life. He didn't like the question, as it has only one answer. I could detail more of the questions and answers during this interview, but the telling moment was when everyone was leaving the small conference room. I was not too sure of how to say 'Thank you' to Mr. Sugano or if, in fact, I wanted to. I also did not feel too obliged to shake his hand, but it seems as if he understood and walked over to me and offered his hand. He smiled and at that moment, our eyes did meet very directly and I was chillingly made aware that he knew that I knew he was lying and that he remained in control. It is a hard moment to put into words, but the whole two-odd hours of conversation came down to that moment of 'I am a Japanese Engineer who did what he wanted and is still getting away with it.' It was a cold realization for me.

The second interview was with a very kindly Mr. Morohoshi, somewhat a different personality to Mr. Sugano. Even now, the Japanese Army still hold its pecking order in place, in that, Mr. Morohoshi still calls Mr. Sugano 'Major' and Mr. Sugano looks down on Mr. Morohoshi as a lowly Private. Mr. Morohoshi was a hygiene orderly at Hintok, and Lieutenant Hiroda's batman and friend. Mr. Morohoshi saw and talked about the cholera in that camp and tried to persuade me that he helped in a couple of small ways. Hiroda was hanged just after the war. Mr. Morohoshi was saddened by his friend's manner of death and said it was unfair. I made no comment. I perhaps know more of Hintok than any other camp and when, by my line of questioning, Mr. Morohoshi realized this he began to garble and retreated to the ploy of, 'I was moved away and was sent to build another railway in Sumatra before any of that happened.' I doubted him in almost everything he said. I also felt sorry for him. He was very long-winded in his answers and often digressed to wherever he wished to feel safe. What was I to do? But, in his mind, he was being polite by answering my questions.

Because of this mildly strange tactic, and tactic it was, my blood pressure was beginning to hit a critical stage, yet outwardly I remained polite. Finally I asked 'the moral' question of, "How could you be so close to such horror, depravity and brutality and now, not recognize what you did was entirely wrong by every tenet we have in a civilized world?" Translation makes it very difficult to 'hit the moment' with any impact and for the interviewee, it most certainly helps, but my body language and cranky eyes said a lot. When Mr. Morohoshi tried to answer this question by detailing what difficulty they had in supplies and deadlines etc. etc., I did begin to mildly hit the roof, say loudly, "This is a moral question, so do not gloss over it by evading the history and giving me your strategic supply problem remembrances." I received no respectable answer, there was none for him to utter. Both interviews were astonishing in their collusion over history and each was only partly satisfying, in that, it was all so expected. It was like going to a restaurant you have been looking forward to experiencing, being presented with a wonderful meal and having no cutlery with which to eat.

Both of these men wanted to meet me and came out into a cold Japanese winter to talk about their wartime experiences. Each brought photographs and books and each had a smile on their faces and was very generous, but they were in no way truthful. I have been taught to respect my elders and I did find it very difficult to understand how such apparently kindly gentlemen could have done, caused to be done and witnessed what they did on that infamous railway. So to all who are reading this, the conundrum does continue.....why and how could any human being treat other humans in the bestial way they and the Imperial Japanese Army did? I don't have the answer. And, neither do they. Duty, honour, obedience to the

Emperor, is not enough. It was not enough then and it is profoundly to be condemned now. To put you in the interview room somewhat more; at least four other people attended each of these two interviews, all but one taking notes of my questions and the gentlemen's answers. These were mostly female members of the wholly volunteer group, the POW Research Network of Japan. During each interview, at least one of them would urge me to be tougher with my questioning, as they also knew that each man was lying or gilding the lily. The one who wasn't taking notes was my son, Bart, my ace in the pack. At each interview, one of my questions, but more likely, statements was "Do you realize that my son, who is now 19, was of the age of the men you drove to death up there on the railway?" There was little to no response. My point was made.

We then fast-trained it out of Tokyo to the historically beautiful Kurashiki, near Hiroshima, where I was to meet Mr. Nagase. There are many things you can call Mr. Nagase and the one he has strived longest to be remembered for, is that of a man of peace. At the outbreak of the war, Nagase Takashi was a 4th year, English speaking University student when he joined the IJA. He became an interpreter in the Kempetai at Kanchanaburi and a torturer. Part of his story is told by Eric Lomax in 'The Railway Man'. It is the story of the torture of Mr. Lomax by Mr. Nagase. Almost unbelievably, they met and reconciled long after the war and remain in close contact.

Mr. Nagase had what can truly be called an epiphany at the very end of the war. He was made to accompany the small group of officers and men, both British and Australian, who travelled back up the Line in order to locate the graves of those lost on the railway. It was on this journey that Mr. Nagase realized the dimension of the horror his country had caused and it was here that he determined to spend the remainder of his life seeking forgiveness and in fact actively working towards helping those in need in and around Kanchanaburi, Thailand. He has done many good and honourable things and spent most of his life trying to reclaim some sort of balance for himself in order for him to try and understand what he did as a young man.

Mr. Nagase met me at the end of a long laneway, greeting me hardly and challenging me immediately, "Why do you want to meet me?" I was very taken aback and thankfully gave an unprepared answer from my heart "Because you are a brave man." There was no flattery and from then we spoke openly and met again the next day. At our second meeting, he allowed me to film him and ask specific questions. He answered honestly and asked for forgiveness for what he had done; he spoke about his concern regarding the military aspects of Japan rising up again and of his dislike for the Emperor and it's culture. Again I mentioned that my young son was the same age as those who had died so badly on the railway. He sadly agreed and apologised to us all. My son, who is no one's fool, liked this man and thought well of his honesty and toughness. The striking part of our interview was my last question. A question I only asked this once in Japan. 'What do you think of the bomb being dropped?' His anger and horror at what one part of the globe had done to the other was complete and he expressed a real and sudden anger. Sad for me to say, about a man I admire, but Mr. Nagase, ever sincere in his apology and continued searching for forgiveness, had no thought at how obviously hypocritical he was being. As they say in the classics 'it stuck out like dog's balls'.

Our final venture into the countryside of Japan was to Sanyo/Onoda city and the POW camp at Ohama. This camp went through many name changes, finally ending up as Hiroshima Branch No. 9 Camp. It held 142 British, 244 Australian, 3 Americans and 1 Dutch doctor

FRONTLINE

as prisoners/coal miners; 23 men died there; 9 British and 4 Australians. The most devastating was, the beating to death of Dougie Craig of the 2/19th in November, 1944.

Ohama is a small rural area of this city, and is now almost a country beach retreat. There is a large caravan camp nearby, a 'lovers hotel', a rejuvenated beach for families and a beautiful picnic park with 10,000 cherry trees on the hill overlooking the old Ohama camp. The day was cold, grey and misty and the camp has no longer any markings of a camp – nothing of what happened on that land. The camp was in a small gully at the beginning of a rise to the hill behind. It's very green, lush, overgrown and neglected. It is a sort of out of the way place. The small road that leads into where the camp was built has just two houses on it and in the centre of what was the barracks area, there is now a three story pale yellow apartment block, with a broken asphalt car park exactly where the British and Australian barracks were constructed.

The mine mouth is now lost amongst tall, forested bamboo along the road's edge to the sea and all traces of the cemetery, or garden or oppression have vanished.



Mr. Kenji Yasushige, Pattie Wright, Mr. Sato and my son, Bart, in the background. We are standing on the edge of the entry to the old mine-mouth, which is no longer evident. (Dated Feb 5th, 2009)

Our visit was arranged by the local Council through their public relations manager, Kenji Yasushige, who was to be my interpreter. Kenji, my son Bart and I became good friends. The night before we were to visit the POW site, we all spoke openly about the present Japanese generation's attitude and knowledge of atrocities, POW camps, et al. Kenji freely admitted he knew very little of it and neither did many, if any, of his contemporaries. He is a very happy, middle class family man, who found himself defending his country and its past and one can only imagine anyone would do the same, if you didn't really know what happened that is. However, it all came a little unstuck for Kenji during the actual visit to the site the next day.

Kenji asked me if I would mind him contacting the local media and could I give a media interview during my visit to Sanyo/Onoda. Consequently, when the visit began at the Council chambers with a courtesy meeting with the Mayor, Hirofumi Hirai, a truly honourable ex judge in the human rights arena, the media were massed. Five newspaper journalists and one news cameraman – we now had a convoy going to the POW site. A very old and tiny Mr. Sato, who was struggling with the cold, greeted us at the old camp site. He answered all my questions and everyone was duly impressed by the 'coming together'. One of my earliest questions to Mr. Sato was, "How long were you at the camp?" Answer, "The whole time it was open." Much later on in my

questioning, I asked Kenji to ask Mr. Sato if he remembered any brutality towards any of the POW's in that I knew of a brutal murder of an Australian soldier in November, 1944 by the guard Date. At the mention of the name, Date, Mr. Sato's head shot up and through Kenji, Mr. Sato said "I wasn't here then, that was before I arrived." Kenji just looked at me with a very pale face, read, loss of face, and nervously translated Mr. Sato's answer. Kenji then looked me straight in the eyes, "He is lying". I agreed and in order to calm a nervous Kenji in front of the media, said, "Don't worry Kenji, I know, it's normal. I'm used to it. I won't take it any further, so don't worry." There was nothing to gain by any further questioning.

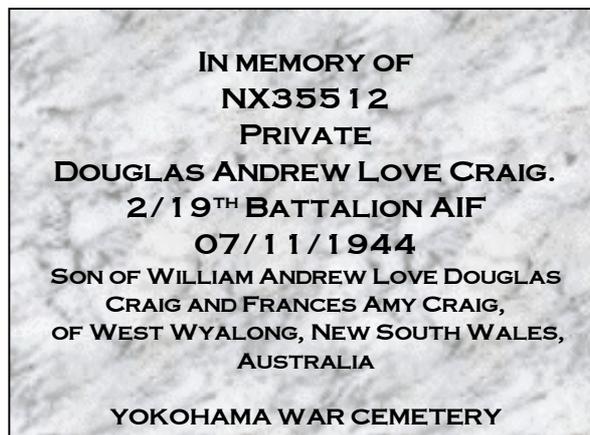


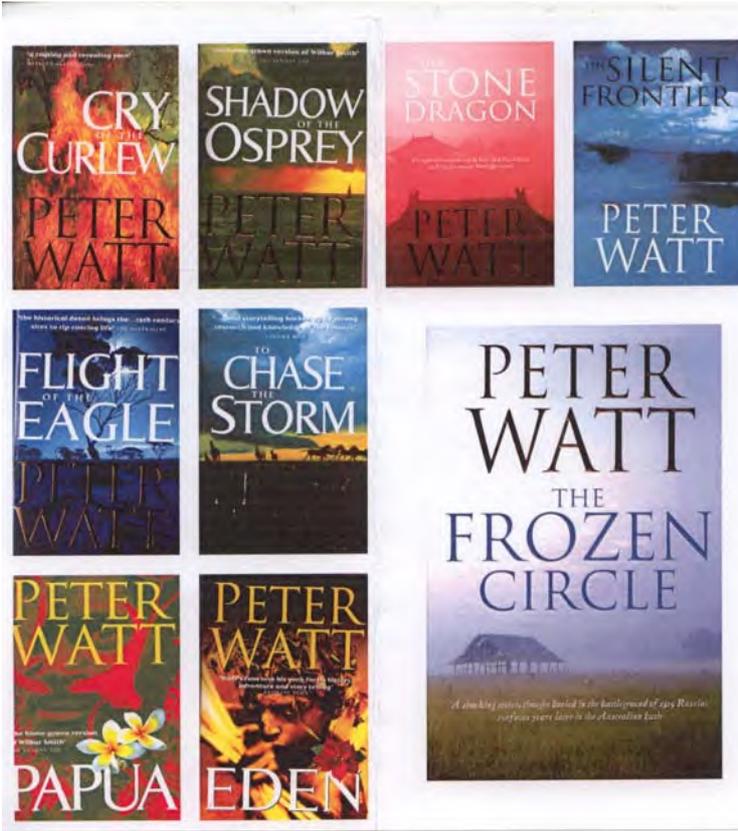
STANDING ON THE SITE OF THE BRITISH BARRACKS AT OHAMA, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OLD CAMP. Left to right - Mr. Kenji Yasushige from the Sanyo-Onoda Council and interpreter, Mr. Sato (ex-civilian camp guard), unknown newspaper journalist, Pattie Wright.

Mr. Sato looks so intent because I had just given him a photo copy of the 'mug shot' pages from The Grim Glory. I do wonder, now that I look at the picture, what he must be thinking and if he found any faces he remembers. (Dated Feb 5th, 2009)

I have it in my mind to round up my visit to Ohama POW camp, by initiating a move to have a plaque laid at that old camp, so that men like Dougie Craig and the other 389 men won't be forgotten. I think the 'comfortable bureaucrat' at the Australian Embassy and many others might be called on to help.

As a follow-up to this story, I received the emailed Japanese newspaper stories of my visit and asked a friend to do a general translation. What leapt at me and made me wonder at how our relations with Japan remain so untruthful is evidenced in part by the journalist's coverage of the story. In small part, 'Mr. Sato says, there were 340 people and they spent time growing vegetables and so on and living in harmony.'





ASSOCIATION MEMBER CAPT PETER WATT HAS FOUND FAME AS A WRITER - AS THE NOVELS SHOWN AT LEFT SO READILY TESTIFY !

Peter has spent time as a soldier, articled clerk, prawn trawler deckhand, builder's labourer, pipe layer, real estate salesman, private investigator, police sergeant and advisor to the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary. He has lived and worked with Aborigines, Islanders, Vietnamese and Papua New Guineans, and he speaks, reads and writes Vietnamese and Pidgin. He now lives in northern New South Wales.

Peter's ten novels are all a good read and have received rave reviews !

WORLD WAR 2 BLITZ WAGGON RESTORED

Former unit member (and we hope Association Member !) Trevor ALLEN of Bellbanger (Griffith) sent in these before and after photographs following his magnificent restoration of the World War 2 Blitz Wagon complete with 8th Australian Division vehicle formation sign, which will be used at ANZAC Day and Commemorative Ceremonies. Well Done Trevor !



THE TOCCHINI TALES

Reminiscences of a Halifax Bomber Pilot.

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT Sydney Alberto TOCCHINI, D.F.C.

Royal Australian Air Force who served with his Australian crew in 51 SQUADRON RAF

Contributed by his nephew – Association member Troy THOMAS



Continued from the March 2009 newsletter:

Our target, Bochum, was in the Ruhr Valley, the industrial heart of Germany and the happy hunting ground of 4 Group, Bomber Command, of which 51 Squadron was part.

The various commanders went through the areas and aspects of the operation in which their responsibility and expertise lay, telling us precisely what the target was, why it was important to take it out, what bomb load and what types of bombs we were carrying, which were the most heavily-defended areas, where we would strike searchlights, how many aircraft would be on the raid, what other squadrons would be taking part, how the target would be marked, the colour of the flares, our position in the stream, our time on target, the colours of the day (to be used if you were in trouble), the times to listen out for any recall, and all those other things that you would have no control over once you were in the air. The briefing was over, we were given a hot meal usually bacon and eggs or the like, then out to the aircraft. It wasn't getting any more comfortable! This was my first take off with a full bomb load. I can tell you I was all concentration. The Halifax had a very bad habit of swinging to the left on take off so it was very important to get the tail up and rear wheel off the ground quickly to stop this swing. Somehow we managed it, but you know that because I'm still here.

And so into the air, down to Reading which was the usual assembly point, the point from which the main stream set course for the German targets. At that point we would be at four or five thousand feet and climbing. Out across the Channel, the enemy coast ahead. As briefed, one of the gunners gave the navigator a fix as we crossed the coast. We were now in enemy territory, we

had crossed the Belgian coast by about one minute when we saw the first shot fired at us in anger. Out to starboard and at our precise height there was the noise of a cracker going off, a flash of red, all of which dissolved into a small black cloud which seemed to drift quietly past us. Being very new to the circumstances in which we now found ourselves I can recall thinking, "Gee! That doesn't look as though it would hurt you much". How wrong I was. About half an hour later we were over Bochum and what a different situation. As they had told us at briefing this was one of the most heavily-defended areas in the Ruhr Valley.

As we came up to the target, which we could see from about fifteen minutes flying time away, it seemed to be covered in a black cloud and in this black cloud were hundreds of red lights which kept flashing on and off I realized of course that this was a very large collection of those innocent black puffs we had seen over Belgium. The cold realization came to me that we had to fly through that maelstrom. How could any aircraft fly through that? I didn't know the answer but others were trying to do it so we had no option. There was no sense in trying to dodge the flak the Germans were throwing up, they weren't aiming at a particular aircraft, they were just boxing an area of sky which they calculated was our release point and through which we had to fly.

The quickest way through it was in a straight line. Over the target the bomb aimer virtually gave the flying instructions.. "Bomb doors open", I opened the bomb doors. "I see the flares.. hold her there.. steady.. left.. left.. steady.. hold her there.. steady.. steady.. bombs gone!" In the meantime all hell was breaking loose around us. And it was not over yet! After releasing the bombs you were required to fly the aircraft straight and level for at least one minute so that the camera which was activated by the bomb release could take a photo of where your bombs landed. A very long minute!

There were some terrible sights of aircraft being hit, catching fire, men jumping for their lives, wondering how long before you would be one of them and then the realization that you were through the target area and on your way home, but at the same time chastened by the thought

that there was a still a lot of enemy territory, flak and aircraft between you and home. However, good fortune stayed with us and we did get home without further incident other than those which accompanied any bomber raid at that time and in those weather conditions.

We had completed our first operation. What a mixture of emotions! Elated that we had survived, shocked that so many had not, face to face for the first time with death and destruction that to this moment we had only heard about and which never had any impact upon us. Apprehensive in the knowledge that this was our first of at least thirty of the same terrifying experiences we had to get through. Our eyes were opened wide that day!

Taffy Evans

and how he restored my self respect

Taffy was the Engineer Leader on 51 Squadron. Each category of aircrew had a Leader in charge, such as Navigation Leader, Bombing Leader and so on. The leader's job was to keep his section up to the mark on their duties in the aircraft, check their logs, check their nav plots and generally to make sure that each person in his section was capable of doing his job in the air under operational conditions.

These Leaders were usually men who had completed their first tour of operations and were back for a second tour. They were not a member of any particular crew, they had certain limited privileges, they could pick the crew they wanted to fly with, but were expected to complete their second tour within a reasonable time. Our engineer Harry (aka Blue) Copley was out of action and off flying duties. He had badly injured his hand while locking the elevator controls after our last trip.

To his and our unhappiness we were on the battle order for the day which meant that he would miss a trip and may have to fly with some other crew to make it up at some future time. It had other ramifications, too, which we won't dwell on here. Taffy Evans elected to come with us as a spare bod. The target was in the valley of the Ruhr as usual - another hot one. It was a cold crisp clear night, you could see for miles, which meant that for miles before we got near the target we could see the reception the Germans had waiting for us.

The flak was like a fireworks display, the hundreds of shells with their tracer burning red as they rose from the guns, bursting even redder, and silhouetting the aircraft against their glow. The searchlights stood out cold and very clear, moving backwards and forwards across our flight path like sentries guarding the entrance to hell. In the front of my mind was the thought of what can I do to

get out of this. In the back of my mind I knew there was nothing I could do. This could be it! In the Halifax there is a step down between the flight deck and the bomb aimer's position.

Taffy had been downstairs giving Bert, our bomb aimer, a hand. Just as my spirits were at their lowest looking at this (to me) terrifying sight ahead he came up from downstairs and standing on the step, looking out over the aircraft's nose, seeing exactly what I was seeing in fear and trepidation, he said, "Isn't that beautiful." that remark shook me. In the face of it I could not - let my true feelings show. It brought me back to the job in hand very quickly. And I am forever indebted to Taffy for the help he gave me without knowing. Taffy came with us a couple of times until Blue was fit again and able to rejoin the crew. (Blue did not have to make up the lost trips, and was eventually awarded the DFC).

Any Runway Will Do

It was another of those not-so-beautiful English winter nights. We had been to..... and as usual the opposition was more than enthusiastic, and again as usual we had returned to England and more particularly to our own aerodrome at Snaith in Yorkshire where, to be conservative, the weather was bloody.

We were flying E Easy which by far was the oldest aircraft on the squadron and by far the thirstiest. It was a dark right and again as usual we were not the first home, so we were at about the middle of the stack. In other words we had to wait our turn to land. Yorkshire is quite close to the North Sea and in winter North Sea fogs come rolling in like clouds at ground level, which in fact is what they really are.

And so it was on this occasion. Our turn to land had come and we were at the top of the queue when a huge fog bank came rolling in along the ground blotting out everything in its path, including our aerodrome. At this time the other half of the squadron were still in the air waiting their turn, and we were in the funnel (on our final landing approach). The control tower apparently thought conditions too dicey and fired off a red Verey light which meant that all aircraft should stand off and not attempt to land.

At the time I had reasonable visibility and could have landed the aircraft but we had been told to stand off so that is what we did. We pulled out to go round again - well that was the theory! At the same time as they fired off the red the control tower called up the senior pilot on the squadron, Charles Boyer by name, and asked him to make his landing to decide whether it was safe for the rest of us to get down. **To be continued.....**

Bill LOWCOCK'S WAR STORY

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

Bill's story continues
from the March 09 Newsletter:

Here we built our huts again and this was a much cleaner camp than Tonchan, not so far from the river and maintenance work on the line, the Tiger, the Jap Commander had become a lot more amenable. Thanks very largely to the efforts of Reg Newton and the fact that the line had been completed up as far as he was concerned and all we had to do was keep it open. We had more time off and we weren't working such long hours, but we were still getting the odd bashing here and there.

It came Christmas time in Tampii and Reg persuaded the Tiger to allow us to put on not only a Christmas Dinner, but a pantomime and entertainment. Using funds saved up from our Japanese pay, and with the help of Boon Pong, considerable rations were purchased for the big dinner and we really had full bellies on that day. The Japs agreed to allow us to put on a pantomime. I didn't take part in it, but the fellows did a good job. They built a stage and they put on Cinderella (well their version of Cinderella anyway). There were three ugly sisters, Reg Newton, Captain Westbrook and Doc Hinder. Now it was a real riot.

There were some British in camp with us and boxing matches were arranged. A ring was erected in the middle of the compound and several boxing matches took place. One particular guy from the British Forces, a West Indian, was a really good boxer, I remember him.

Another thing too was at the conclusion of the whole thing on Christmas night, one of the British produced a violin. It was a full moon almost that night and I can always remember this guy standing in the middle of the boxing ring playing most beautifully on this violin. He was a very talented player.

It was about this time that I had a lot of malaria, some dysentery and my bronchitis was starting to give me trouble, so Doc Hinder decided I should go back to Tha Sao Hospital Camp. I didn't want to leave, but he was the boss and I did what I was told. A number of us went back down there. It also had been the original base camp when we first came up to the country. It was now a hospital camp, dirty and we were all mixed up. We weren't

with our own unit fellows at all, we were put into wards according to what disease we had and there were a lot of Australians there and it was a case of making acquaintances there all over again.



The first thing I did at Tha Sao was to contract scabies, which was a disease caused by mites which breed in dirty conditions. I had pustering sores all over both my arms and there was no treatment that they had that would do anything for it until one day a Chinese doctor came around and he produced a hypodermic syringe (a needle I think a veterinarian would have used) and he took two big syringes of blood out of each of my arms and gave it back to me in my buttocks. An experiment, he said. Well within three days my scabies were starting to disappear and within a week they were gone completely. I don't know even now if it was a Chinese treatment or if it was something out of our own medical books. It worked.

A chap I had palled up with there in the same hut, went out on a working party in the Japanese food stores. He said I know where there is an awful lot of sugar to be had quite easily. So we went to work quickly and we borrowed two kerosene tins and that night, a very dark night, we sent out on a raid of the Japs stores. We just got through the bamboo fence around the compound and all of a sudden the lights went on and there is a Jap guard screaming out "kura kura" and we scarpered very smartly back through the hole in the fence, back to our own hut, threw the tins under the bamboo beds and then pulled the blanket over us. When the Jap guards came through looking for someone we were all snoring soundly, thank goodness.

It was a task though, that I first came across the treatment that was used for tropical ulcers. I am not sure whether it was Weary Dunlop or Coates or who it was who designed this, but it was very efficient. What they did was, they sharpened spoons (teaspoons or dessertspoons) until their edges were like razors and with that they scraped all the ulcerated flesh and the clean flesh right down until there was nothing left of the disease. No local anaesthetic was used and we sat on each leg and an orderly held onto each arm and a piece of bamboo was put between the patient's teeth.

This worked well with the smaller ulcers, but of course the bigger ones that chewed right through to the bone were untreatable and in most cases, the limb had to be amputated.

The biggest problem with Tha Sao at that time was boredom. There were no working parties except cleanup around the camp. Nothing to do and the other big problem was amoebic dysentery. We never struck any cholera in any camp I was at after South Tonchan. But amoebic dysentery became the big killer. There was very little in the way of proper medications to treat it and the death toll was quite heavy.

After a month or two at Tha Sao, this would be early 1944, the team I was with was moved back to Tha Muang, another light duties camp, not far from Kamburi (Kanchanaburi). This was a very clean camp and no hard work but the Jap guards and the Jap Commander were particularly brutal bastards.

The Jap Commander was a young fellow, looked about 12 years old, Japanese dressed like a proud peacock. We dubbed him the Boy Shoko. He was a particularly nasty type. He would bung on check parades in the middle of the night just for the heck of it.

I can remember one day, for some reason, the entire camp was paraded in the middle of the compound, with several thousand men and he kept us sitting there all day in the sun. No food, no water, no nothing, until about 10 o'clock that night. Not long after that the rest of the battalion came back from Tampii and we became a complete unit again.

Taking stock of my own possessions at that time, I had no shirt and no shorts and I covered myself with a lap lap and a pair of Japanese rubber boots, no hat. I had a blanket, an army issue pack and water bottle. Inside the pack I had a mess tin and spoon an ordinary table knife that I sharpened up to use as a razor for shaving every now and then, a small tin with some personal belongings I still maintained including my one or two photographs I brought from home and my diary which I still wrote up every day or two.

It was unfortunate that late in 1944 the Japs put on a search while we were out on a working party somewhere and they took the diary. I was a bit worried after that that they would sit down and read it because there were some very uncomplimentary things in it.

There were no repercussions from that. By now we were seeing a bit of British Air Force activity. Bomber planes would fly over, usually at night

time and at a great height. At Tha Muang one day, one of these Liberators came over. He would only be 300 - 400 feet up. You could see the gunners in the blister and the tail gunner quite clearly. He didn't have his bomb bay doors open so he was only on a recce flight and there was a big Japanese petrol dump only a mile or two from our camp.

But a Japanese guard on the perimeter of our camp got the bright idea. He had the Japanese rifle which was like a pea shooter. He took a shot at the plane as it went over and a couple of seconds later the tail gunner turned on him with a zzz.brrrr. Exit one Jap guard. That tail gunner was a hell of a good shot.

Some of the fellows that rejoined us at this camp were Bill Saunderson, Ken Sweet, Harry Simmister, Mac Watts and Snow White. At night time in the huts, there was very little light except the odd oil lamp and Kenny Sweet and I used to start an argument just to keep ourselves in trim. We both knew Sydney very, very well and we started arguments just about where one street ran or what suburb was next to another – silly damned things and we would go on for an hour or more. Arguing backwards and forth, but it kept the mind going. The mob got sick of it and they would say "oh shut up" and we all went to sleep. I forgot when previously listing my total of assets, I had one blanket.

At this time, Tha Muang was a final concentration type like camp entailing all the work parties that had come down or were coming down from the line. The line was finished and all the work parties were brought back to Tha Muang where a large hospital section was put up and the camp consisted of Australians, British, Dutch but mainly British and the British were in charge of it. Weary Dunlop was the Chief Medical Officer at this camp. Our officers were Newton, Westbrook and Sanderson. A team of us was sent very high up the line. We travelled by train. I can remember there was Bill Saunderson, Macky Watts, Ken Sweet and we went to a camp called Lin Thin.

We established our own camp there and we were under tents on the river. A special job – a railway bridge over a cutting had subsided. The piles holding the thing up had not been put down to a sufficient depth and when a heavy rail engine went over it, it sort of sagged in the middle. Our job was to repair it. Although there was a bit of speedo, this camp was actually quite a good one. We built it ourselves and there was probably only about a hundred of us there. The food was quite good and the Japanese were not all that bad to get on with.

To be continued.....

NOR ALL THY TEARS

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

Continued from March 2009 Newsletter

But Christmas gone and we became aware that we were rapidly becoming the same shape as those that had been there all along. A suddenly contracting stomach is an uncomfortable thing, and though we all thought that we would be out in six months (don't ask me why) we were beginning to wonder if we would see the distance.

The ration was getting smaller and ricier every day. The daily query "What's the dinner Eke"? was met with the daily answer "like wheat only white", and the answer was daily becoming nearer and nearer to being the whole truth. The Hong-Kong ballast we had scorned at Singapore was not an all-valuable luxury, and we had little to flavour it with or supplement its vitamin deficiencies. The cooks camouflaged it in a hundred ways, but it was still rice and it was still very little.

The monotony of the camp was not yet pressing too heavily on those of us who had been accustomed to finding monotony the least anxiety, but the food problem was. We thought we were finished with work but began to wonder if we would be released before we entirely disappeared.

Therefore we accepted philosophically a rumour that a party was being formed to follow the Pommies to Thailand. We had no desire to come in close contact with our hosts once more, and still less to work under them, but the supplementary rumours of plenty of food in Thailand, confirmed by those who knew a bit about geography, took much of the gloom out of the prospect.

Then, again, Thailand was closer to our own troops, and fighting was going on along the Burma border. For what reason I again don't know, we suspected that the fighting was heavier than our news bulletins suggested, and we felt that we could be free earlier if we went to Thailand even if we didn't get a chance to escape.

A vast complexity of rumours gradually took shape, and it became known that we were to go as a party of five hundred to be known as "D" force. Six officers were to accompany us: Roaring Reggie, The Horse, Rammer, Westie, Sandy and the Doc. All of them with the exception of Roaring Reggie, were well-known to us during the glorious scrounging era, and Reggie was soon to make good the deficiency. It was he who had concealed

the radio in the prison cell while the Nips searched it. Six officers to five hundred men was quite a modest quota of brass by Changi standards, but it was progressively reduced until we were free.



The Horse and Rammer were pulled out at the big hospital (?) camp at Kamburi, and Reggie and Westie were separated from us when we went to Japan. Only Sandy and the Doc were there for the Day of Reckoning. At last they stacked us on trucks and gave us a bumpy ride to Singapore railway station. Another chapter had commenced.

CHAPTER VIII - THAILAND

Twenty-five in a small covered steel truck, we made a hot and hungry trip up the mainland. Two men had planned to escape on the way, and I think that many more would have done so if the conditions of travel had been known. There were no guards on the individual trucks and the doors were left open.

The latter was almost a necessary condition of our getting there alive, for the heat of the trucks was dreadful, but we could have left them almost anytime if we had known where to go. They closed them once only, and that was for a small stretch near the top of Malaya, (Alor Star) and then only on one side. They began closing them themselves, but when we saw that only one side was being closed for some special reason, we cheerfully volunteered to do the job ourselves: and pleased to see us so willing to cooperate, they let us. Of course we left an opening wide enough to see through, and got a good eyeful of an aerodrome only partly screened by a paling fence.

We passed through all the old battle-fields, with their gaping ruins of scarred buildings, and the twisted wreckage of steel bridges, and broke out into long, sodden plains of rice. We crossed the border into more rice-fields, wider and more sodden, with bulky elephants pulling odd bags on rough sleds made of forked branches. Then into the hills, and at the close of nightfall, into a modern railway station. There we got a nasty jar

A vicious Thai guard, magnificently dressed, save for the lack of boots, drew out a party to get food, and aggressively we were got ready for a meal. We arrived next day at a large railway centre, were called off the train, lined up and counted. There was much exchange of words when it was found that we were two short. Finally they bellowed something horrible at Reggie, sat us down and issued some bananas. There were a few Pommies working about the lines, and some of us were able to exchange words. Conditions were not too bad here, they said, but they were pretty crook "up the line". There had been bombing nearby. They had received much the same news as we ourselves. We were at Noprodok, near Bampong. After much delay we were loaded on open timber trucks, on top of other loading, and moved it up the line".

The line was like a switchback, save that the rises and falls were on one side at a time. The loose earth was practically unballasted and the load swayed precariously. We saw prisoners at intervals, but had little opportunity to exchange a word. One called out proudly that they themselves had built the line, and we called back to tell him to build another and die, a conventional Australian greeting that could, perhaps have been better chosen under the circumstances.

We saw one buying food from a Thai without taking much care to see if he were being watched, and we hailed it as a good sign. Finally we arrived at Kamburi (Kanchanaburi). It was a centre of great activity. We saw Australlans, Pommies, Dutch, Thais and Japs. More zealous than any, some of the Japs were working. I've been here a week and all I've done is watch those bastards working, said one Australian. Could we wish for anything better? We learned afterwards that there was a Japanese army prison camp here, and the toiling Nips were those guilty of conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline.

There were Thais about the road and these waved money to enquire if we had anything to dispose of, and we hailed this as another good sign. We marched some couple of miles through dust and Thai women lined the road with water. I felt satisfied that at last we were in a place where we could drink water that could be drunk safely and deeply. If I had only known! No harm came of that drink, but when I learned the sort of country we had come to, I could taste cholera germs for months.

Finally we got somewhere, and with a little trouble got a bath from a couple of wells, were given enough tents to house some of us, and finally a feed. The feed was alright, but left us vastly thirsty. I looked ominously at the sky, but an old hand told me not to worry, as he had been there

six months and had not seen rain yet. If he had been there another six months he would scarcely have seen it stop, but it spared us for the night, and next morning we were ordered to move off. Some short distance away were were turned loose in the jungle, given crude tools to clear ourselves a camp and enough tents to accommodate most of us. The rest of us made shelter out of various things that often proved more effective against the rain than the tents, though still not very effective. By nightfall we had settled in. And that was Kamburi!

Even to us, well accustomed to the fantastic, Maburi broke new ground. Here was a camp in the heart of the jungle, devoid of wire, almost devoid of guards, and in it a "shopping centre" on a level of the wildest easter bazaar. For the Nips let the Thais in and they came in. With their baskets on their shoulders they come out in droves and on the ground they sat in an array of colours of story-book fantasy. With fresh food in a thousand varieties they sat cross-legged, hailing us in a language that was new and gestures as old as mankind.

If ever our dream of a land of plenty was realised, it was in this first vivid impression. Eggs, bananas, melons, pawpaws, guavas, mangoes, tomatoes and onions. Ducks, fish and steak. Rich merchants from Singapore, we had clothes, watches and portables, and they paid good prices and sold amazingly cheap, profiteering at both ends, no doubt, but still leaving us the means of living well.

True the Japs bashed us for selling, but that merely made it necessary to step into the nearest shrubbery. Our buying was unhampered, and our selling might just as well have been. We dined on the things we had dreamed about, on salads, eggs, meat, fish and fresh vegetables. They cooked them to our taste, making omelettes of subtle delicacy in small iron pans, and brewing coffee, iced or hot and they boiled eggs.

The egg trade was hampered by the language barrier. To distinguish a raw egg from a boiled one is hard, and enquiries useless when the maximum common vocabulary is the one word "Yes" repeated in answer to all questions. It was solved by an enterprising merchant who did business with the local scribe, seemingly an English scholar. We were then greeted by a scrawled sign in pencil: "Hullo Australia! Here are your breakfast - egg cooked 5 cents, egg no cooked 5 cents." An oral lesson enabling the seller to distinguish "egg cooked from "egg no cooked" was apparently included in the fee. Others followed suit and the remainder pirated the new verbal vocabulary. business flourished.

To be continued.....

FRONTLINE

DOWN MEMORY LANE



56TH BATTALION MILITIA B COMPANY

Photo courtesy of Mrs May and Mrs Lorraine HUGHES

All Temora men. Photo taken at either Temora or Walgrove about 1940. Militia U.T's (Universal Trainees) taken into camp for training by Militia. Association member Bert DONALDSON of Temora has amazingly identified the majority of those in the photo from nearly 70 years ago !!! Well Done Bert ! Can any reader identify / advise the names of those not shown ?

BACK ROW L – R Bill HAYWOOD, G. BARTLEY,HOWARD, Tom McNAMARRA, Jim WINBANK, Bill Mc MILLAN, Chas McELLENEY, Merv ALCHIN, Lloyd CARTWRIGHT, Thomas WOODS

2ND ROW L – R O.E. RYAN, UNKNOWNPENFOLD ROBINSON, Colin MEPHAM, Stan AXTEL, Glen Kenneth HUGHES, George DONALDSON, Charles EDWARDS

FRONT ROW L – R W. Mc CRONE, Bert DONALDSON, Frank GERHARD, Lt. Jim FARRELL, Les MACAULEY, Sid GILES, Ces MACAULEY



COUNTRY RECRUITMENT EXERCISE IN MAR/APRIL 1973

Steve Shaw (back to camera) Tim McCombe, John Samin, John Foy and John Elliott discuss the relative merits of the previous night's accommodation (goat pens at Mudgee Showground)

(Photo courtesy CAPT Bill EDWARDS)