



COMMANDO

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

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The Australian Commando Association's membership consists of Servicemen and women who served with World War II Independent Companies, Commando Squadrons and Regiments, all elements of Special Operations Australia (also known as the Allied Intelligence Bureau), 1 and 2 Commando Companies, 301 and 126 Signal Squadron, 1st Commando Regiment, 4 RAR (Commando) and the 2nd Commando Regiment. The Association also consists of Associate members who have served in units that support Commando units in time of war and peace and Social members whose direct family member was either Killed in Action, Died in Service or Killed in Training or a member of the ACA who has passed.

DISCLAIMER: Opinions expressed within this publication are those of the authors, and are not necessarily those of the Editor, Publisher, Committee Members or Members of our Association. We welcome any input as long as it is not offensive or abusive but if any member has a problem with a printed article we would like to be informed in order that the author may be contacted. We do encourage your opinion.

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Deadline for next edition (Edition 18, 2023):
TUESDAY, 30TH APRIL 2024
All news on members and interesting articles accepted.
(Subject to editor's approval.)
Doug Knight



Front cover: 'General Sir Phillip Harvey Bennett AC KBE DSO who in 1957 with the Royal Marine Commandos and qualified for his green beret prior to taking up his appointment as Officer Commanding, 2 Commando Company 1958-61. He later went on to become the first Chief the Defence Force and later as the Governor of Tasmania'.



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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to Edition #017 October of **COMMANDO** – *The Magazine of the Australian Commando Association*.

Editor

This is my fourth edition and there have been some recent developments of significance both for the magazine and for Australian military history.

Sadly, the last few months have seen the passing of some former commandos including;

- Colonel Ed Davis
- Major Jack Harold Skipper, MC
- Geoffrey Frederick Cohen
- General Sir Phillip Harvey Bennett, AC, KBE, DSO
- Glen Stuart Doyle
- ex-Warrant Officer Alfred James Marquis, RAN Naval Beach Commando
- ex-Sergeant Raymond Xaview Delves

Full details are in the Vale section.

This edition

In this edition is Part 4 of Operation JAYWICK and provides a reassessment that was undertaken in 2012 with regard to the actual shipping losses during the raid. Also, the consequences for the POW community in Singapore and the local population were to be catastrophic for many who were tortured and died as the Japanese had no knowledge of the saboteurs and believed it to have been undertaken by locals. There is a personal account of one of the Singaporean survivors which will be of interest and reflects the fortitude of the local population during these difficult times.

There is also a republished article from the Double Diamonds magazine about some operations by No. 4 Independent Company in Timor and later on their operations in Tarakan as 2/4th Commando Squadron.

Some Important facts

Following a reassessment of volunteer capability, it has been decided to revert back to three editions of the Commando magazine each year and these will be of larger content and distribution will be enhanced.

As mentioned in my previous edition notes on the magazine production and distribution, we are seeking to improve the content and distribution of the magazine whilst not necessarily reducing the cost of production, but of using magazine income to better support Association activities including website management, historical research, and welfare activities.

To this end we are encouraging ACA members to use the online digital copy of the magazine rather than seeking a printed copy unless they have medical issues or do not operate email accounts. It is proposed that a small quantity of printed copies will be made available to each State Branch President/Secretary for local distribution and to ADF units that are not already on the magazine distribution list.

The last edition of Commando was published via a low-resolution pdf copy which was forwarded to each of the State ACA Branch Secretary's, using their ACA email account, for onward distribution to their Branch members. Concurrently the same pdf file was forwarded to the ACA Webmaster for loading onto the ACA website and this action has been completed.

Editorial policy

Like many of the readership although I am retired, I'm extremely busy with ex-service and association commitments as well as family duties and therefore I will not be following up ACA State Presidents and others for their periodic submissions, rather only those that submitted will be included in forthcoming editions. We are all busy people but I note that many are able to post on Facebook but have difficulty in forwarding printed material in the required format for publication. I can only reiterate that this magazine is for the Association and its members and without your and their support its longevity is in question. Over to you.

In addition, a small number of submissions continue to be received in formats which make it very difficult and time-consuming to convert into appropriate formats for inclusion into the magazine and so the following guidance for contributors is provided to assist in preparation of submissions for publication.

Guidance for Contributing Authors

1. Articles must be submitted in Word format and conform to standard academic style using Oxford English spelling with footnotes rather than end-notes. Do not submit PDF documents¹.
2. Articles should not exceed one thousand words and be properly referenced using the Australian Harvard style².

¹Exceptions can be made for articles of relevance for publication in this magazine and where a word format is unavailable.

²Available at https://www.deakin.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/22-30401/Deakin-guide-to-Australian-Harvard.pdf



3. Photos and maps must be separate from the manuscript (not imbedded in the text) and scanned at a minimum of 300 DPI.
4. Photographs should include captions clearly identifying the time, place and individuals featured and the source of the photograph.
5. On first use, acronyms should be spelled out in full followed by the abbreviation in brackets – Australian Commando Association Victoria (ACAVIC).
6. Authors must obtain relevant permission for use third-party material. The use of short extracts of text and some other types of material is usually permitted, on a limited basis, for the purposes of criticism and review without securing formal permission.
7. Material can be submitted by email to acanx.commandomageditor@gmail.com
8. The Australian Commando Association Editorial Committee has absolute discretion in the acceptance or rejection of any article or materials.

9. Authors are required to provide their name and a short brief of their service history, if appropriate, or relevance of their relationship with Commandos or Special Operations. Current serving members with protected identity status are to use a nom de plume or penname.

I trust that you will find this edition both informative and educational. If you receive a hard copy please share it with a friend or mate and if you are reading the magazine online please forward it to a mate so that he or she can also be informed.

Doug Knight
Commando 4 Life

Editor - Commando Magazine
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Australian Commando Association Inc

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“Two and a half weeks ago I had a total knee replacement.

I am allergic to most opioid pain killers, morphine, pethidine and so on. Doctors were pretty concerned as to how I was going to cope with the pain of having a joint replacement, as was I.

Also the swelling and the pressure can be extremely uncomfortable and there's not a lot that can be done for that apart from ice packs 24/7.

After four days I was sent home and this pressure from the swelling was extremely difficult to handle. I remembered I had half a bottle of **be relieved** in the bathroom and I was needing relief and a decent night's sleep.

I applied around my wound and my thigh and calf, seriously 10 minutes later the relief was a Godsend. The next day I put it on 3 times during the day and had the same result.

So, I ordered 2 more bottles, this oil is magnificent.

I'm 16 days post-surgery and I'm riding an exercise bike and can do all the exercises required, my physio is in disbelief at how quickly I'm recovering as I can bend the new knee 100% which is unheard of at week 2.

So your product is getting a massive plug from me at my Surgeon's office and Physio and I hope it can help others."

Mark L



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Aug - Nov 2023

The ACAQ have been steadily growing our membership base throughout the recent months, with several new members. We've also had several changes to our executive committee with Mike McKenna coming on board as the new Vice President, Chris Jackson stepping in as the new Secretary and Luke O'Brien moving back into the Membership role.

Events

Social Gatherings:

Since our major event in July being Op Rimau Day, we've continued to hold our monthly social catchups, either an afternoon tea and drinks at the Sandgate RSL, or lunch at the Grand Central Hotel in Brisbane city.

The Sandgate RSL Sub-Branch offers an 'old school' sub-branch RSL atmosphere for members and their families to catch-up, with afternoon tea provided. The RSL staff, including our own ACAQ Social Assistant Member, working the kitchen and bar to keep us from going hungry or dry!



Members attend an informal service and luncheon for Nick Hill at the Grand Central Hotel.

An informal service was held for the former ACAQ President Nick Hill who passed away on 15 July in the US, by members at the Grand Central Hotel where we farewelled Nick with some speeches and toasts over lunch.

Remembrance Day

As President, I laid a wreath for the ACAQ at the Shrine of Remembrance at ANZAC Square in Brisbane City on Remembrance Day, along with a large contingent of military unit representatives and Ex military associations. *(Continued on page 7)*



ACAQ members during one of the monthly social gatherings at the Sandgate RSL.

The Grand Central Hotel, Platform Bar and Lounge offers our members a venue which is centrally located and located in the same building as the Brisbane Central Train Station, accessible from the train platforms, with paid car parking not too far away.



Left: The wreath laid by the ACAQ President on Remembrance Day.



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QLD Commando Welfare Trust (CWT) Charity Gala

On the evening of Remembrance Day, 11 November the ACAQ held the Inaugural QLD Commando Welfare Trust (CWT) Charity Event at Customs House in Brisbane.

After months of planning and preparation by members of the event subcommittee, the evening was a resounding success. Several sponsors came onboard and numerous auction items were 'sold' on the night, having been listed on an online auction platform prior to the event. We were also able to secure the Royal Australian Navy Band Queensland to play throughout the evening. Funds raised will be passed onto the CWT.



Left: Auction item – Fairbairn-Sykes style fighting knife, hand made by an ex 2 Cdo Regt soldier, Joseph Ansell.



Customs House, with guests seated.

Invictus Games participation

One of our members, Justin Donnelly, competed in the Invictus Games in Germany during September after an extensive lead up training with the National team. Justin competed in swimming, cycling and wheelchair basketball

Justin was involved in accident, sustaining injuries to approximately 70% of his body, including a traumatic brain injury. He placed well in all of his heats and finals for all of his events and did his country proud once again. We hope to include more information on Justin's participation in the Invictus Games in another article in a later edition of the magazine.



Above; Royal Australian Navy Band Queensland.



The Australian Wheelchair Basketball team, with Justin in the centre, sixth from the left.



Gold Sponsors, DT Infrastructure, receiving a framed plaque from Paul Dunbavin OAM, CWT Trust Executive Officer and Reece Dewar OAM, CWT Ambassador.

Upcoming Events

Combined Christmas Dinner & Drinks

ACAQ members will attend a combined Christmas function with the Australian Special Air Service Association – QLD (ASASA-Q) and the Navy Clearance Divers Association QLD again in Brisbane at The Ship Inn at South Bank on Saturday 16 December. As usual this promises to be a great night with plenty of fun and banter with our brother associations.

Mark Stanieg
ACAQ President
acaql.president@gmail.com



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

December 2023

RECENT ACTIVITIES

2023 – Commando Memorial Service - Tidal River

The annual commemoration activity book place on Sunday, 19 Nov 2023 with around 40 Association members and family of World War II veterans participating. The 2024 commemoration will not only be the 80th anniversary of Operation RIMAU, but will also be the 60th anniversary of the building and consecration of the Commando Memorial by World War II commando and special operations veterans.



Association stalwarts Bruce Parker and Don Bergman after the commemoration service.
Source: Trevor Bergman

Sat 9 Dec 2023 - end of year Xmas function with 2 Coy at Fort Gellibrand Williamstown and farewell for Major R and a number of long serving part-time unit members.

HISTORICAL COLLECTION

Ongoing work with cataloguing the collection is going slowly with priority being given to the Magazine and other issues. The display at Fort Gellibrand is expanding as a result of recent donations of World War II special operations memorabilia and currently signage and labelling is being undertaken.

TIDAL RIVER WALKING TRACK OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE

Sadly, due to financial constraints within the Victorian government, a number of major projects, including the proposed Commando walking track at Tidal River, have been put on hold for at least a two year period. ACAVIC will continue to engage with Parks Victoria with regard to the ongoing development and maintenance of Commando related memorials within the National Park.

WELFARE

It is with great pleasure that I advise that Neal King and his team are once again conducting the Double Dagger Ride in Rock in February 2024. Having attended a previous event I highly recommend attendance at this activity which provides support to not only Neal but also the commando related charities that he supports.

DOUBLE DAGGER RIDE AND ROCK
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ACAVIC continues to liaise with, and attend regular meetings with, the Victorian Veterans Council, Legacy, RSL and DVA networks to promote ACAVIC's objectives/expectations and support requirements in the very crowded Welfare & Advocacy arena.

Doug Knight

President

ACA VIC

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December 2023



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I joined the army in 1974, initially posted to 1RAR in Townsville, longing to apply for selection with the Special Air Service Regiment. On passing selection I served in 3 Sqn, specialising in freefall and climbing. Here I met and formed a lifelong friendship, every opportunity I would seek to go rock climbing and skydiving forming a unique bond forged in adventure and serving with other like-minded people.

Considering discharge was difficult, to leave great mates, plenty of good times. After a situation that challenged one's ethical core values, I questioned my long term future in the Defence Force! After 12 years, a new future direction, exercising greater self-control in another chosen field, outdoor adventure, and learning the intricacies of business.

Four decades seeking hidden gems in nature leaves one questioning, have I worked a day these past years? My focus in these twilight years, is to continue quality time trekking wild and remote places, and leaving behind busy urban environments, staying off well-worn tracks of highly managed locations designed to accommodate volume.

One of the last true wildernesses remaining on this planet is here in Australia, the Kimberley. Yes, the Kimberley can fill up quick in the dry season, 'Toorak Tractors' flock from the south and cram into tightly managed spaces.

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Caution is warranted, you will be alone, rivers do have large reptiles, wild 'mickey' bulls roam rangelands, campfire meals are well catered out here.

There is also Papua New Guinea and Kokoda, a personal calling initially seeking places my grandfather spoken of from his adventures during WWII; my love of his country sparked in 1985.

Trek not just Kokoda, spend quality time down on Northern Beach Battlefields, it's a must.

Age does weary us, reduced pack weight carrying only essentials for comfort, shorten the day's walk, get out and enjoying solitude and nature's wonders.

There is also an option of vehicle supported treks, creature comforts after short day walks, relaxing under a shady tree on the banks of an isolated river, fresh clean water flows past, safe to swim here, it's invigorating.

Personally, walking in nature has enriched my life with enormous benefits, physically, maintaining mobility and in assisting to balance, seeking reason and purpose in a world that is racing to an end, an end I am in no hurry to arrive.

Terry Hewett



SIGNIFICANT COMMANDO DATES

OCTOBER to DECEMBER

OCTOBER

October 1941

No.2 and No.3 Independent Company's were raised at Wilsons Promontory, Victoria.

1 October 1942

No.5 Independent Company launched a raid on Mubo, New Guinea.

October 1943

No.3 Independent Company was renamed 2/3rd Cavalry (Commando) Squadron after reforming at Atherton Tablelands, Queensland.

No.4 Independent Company reforms as the 2/4th Cavalry (Commando) Squadron whilst deployed overseas. Z Experimental Station (ZES) moved to the Fraser Commando School (FCS), Fraser Island, Qld.

24 October 1943

Sergeant Leonard George (Len) Siffleet, M Special Unit was executed on Aitape Beach, New Guinea. The moment is captured and became an infamous image of Japanese brutality to POWs during WW2.

October 1944

2/8th Commando Squadron was transported to Torokina, Bougainville to begin the Bougainville Campaign.

2/9th Commando Squadron relieves US Forces in Aitape.

10 October 1944

Services Reconnaissance Department operatives aboard the junk Mustika are compromised by a Malay Police Boat Patrol off Kasoa and Samboe Islands, Malaya during Operation RIMAU.

22 October 1944

2/7th Cav Commando Squadron departs Brisbane to relieve the US Army Regiment at Babiang, New Guinea.

25 October 2001

4 RAR Commando returns to Australia after a successful 6 months deployment as part of the UNTAET Mission in East Timor.

NOVEMBER

20 November 1942

2/6th Independent Company was engaged in heavy fighting around the New Strip airfield Bona, New Guinea against the Japanese Imperial Army.

November 1944

2/10th Commando Squadron combat operations in the Suain-Luain area of New Guinea.

November 2008

1 Company, 1st Commando Regiment deploys to Afghanistan on SOTG Rotation VIII. This is the first time an Army Reserve sub-unit had deployed on Combat Operations since WW2.

DECEMBER

December 1941

No.3 Independent Company is sent to New Caledonia to support the Free French against a Japanese invasion.

No.4 Independent Company was re-raised at Wilsons Promontory, Victoria

17 December 1941

No.2 Independent Company arrives in Dili, Portuguese Timor and begins to provide protection to the Dili Airfield.

December 1942

No.2 Independent Company begin withdrawing from Portuguese Timor.

11 - 13 December 1944

2/7th Commando Squadron is involved in significant engagements against the Japanese in Yourang & Kumbun New Britain, New Guinea.

December 1944 – August 1945

This eight-month period saw the 2/8th Commando Squadron in action almost continuously in the Bougainville area against the Japanese.

15 December 2013

Charlie Commando Company, 2nd Commando Regiment is the last SOTG Commando Company to withdrawal from Urazghan Province, Afghanistan. This ended Australia's presence in the Province which began in August 2005.



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Operation STARFISH Revisited

By Noah Salittle¹

Introduction

Special Operations Australia (SOA)² conducted a reconnaissance operation – STARFISH – in what is now the island of Lombok in the Indonesian province of West Nusa Tenggara, for about 7 weeks in the period 14 March to 2 May 1945. At the time Lombok was part of the Japanese-occupied Netherlands East Indies (NEI, now the independent Indonesia). STARFISH took place only a few months prior to the unexpectedly quick Japanese surrender in August 1945.



Figure 1 - Map showing the STARFISH AO, on the island of Lombok, the next major island east of Bali. The Lombok Strait was (and remains) a key line of sea communication between Australia and Southeast Asia.

Lombok and the neighbouring island of Bali are of course well known to Australians these days as tourist destinations. Given that many of the general Australian public are probably unaware of the fact that Australian and British members of SOA operated on Lombok (or indeed in many other parts of what is now Indonesia) during World War II, we thought it might be useful to revisit some aspects of this perhaps little-known operation.

We do not propose to focus here on re-telling the operation, but rather to highlight a number of aspects of interest, based on existing records and a visit by the author to the key locations in early April 2023, 78 years after the operation.

We have endeavoured to be precise with pinpointing the locations and have been guided by:

- Photographs and maps in the SOA file on STARFISH.
- Descriptions in the after-action report, on that same file.

¹A long serving Commando officer.

²SOA was one of the component parts of the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB) and was led by British officers from the (British) Special Operations Executive (SOE). It used the cover name Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD). It was tri-service (but mainly Army) and mostly Australian but had significant numbers of British servicemen and small numbers of Canadians and New Zealanders. Initially it also included Dutch members (amongst whom were some native Indonesians). AIB in turn was led by an Australian "Controller", with a US Deputy, operating under the General Headquarters Southwest Pacific Area (GHQ SWPA), which was commanded by US General Douglas MacArthur.

- Use of commercial mapping applications, including Google Earth; and
 - Visits to the locations and interviews with locals.
- In some cases, there may be minor discrepancies, for example the locations shown on maps and photos in the Outline Plan may not have been exactly as used in the operation nor are the maps attached to after action report overly precise. Furthermore, the maps of the time often lacked detail or were inaccurate. Likewise in some cases we had difficulty identifying place names - where possible we have used current Indonesian spellings. In 1945 the southwest corner of Lombok, where this operation took place, was sparsely populated and the terrain was difficult, with lush forests and few roads or even tracks. Even by today's standards this part of Lombok remains relatively remote. Some of the locations we would otherwise like to have seen during the April 2023 visit, especially those in remote forest/mountain areas, were not readily accessible.

Background

Significance

Lombok itself had little direct strategic significance in terms of Allied war planning for either the ultimate invasion of Japan or the expulsion of the Japanese from the NEI:

- US forces had already swept through the Dutch part of New Guinea and had occupied parts of the eastern NEI islands. In October 1944 they had landed in Leyte, Philippines to commence the liberation of the remainder of the Philippines as one of the stepping stones towards the ultimate invasion of Japan. Most of the NEI had therefore simply been by-passed.
- Australian forces were heavily engaged in military operations in New Guinea to contain large isolated Japanese garrisons there; and
- The predominantly Australian landings in the British and Dutch parts of Borneo were still in the planning/preparation stage – the Tarakan landing (Operation OBOE 1) took place in May/June 1945 (Operation OBOE 1); Brunei and Labuan Bay in June/July 1945 (OBOE 6); and Balikpapan in July 1945 (OBOE 2).

The rationale behind STARFISH was as per the Outline Plan on SOA's STARFISH file³: The Lombok Strait (between Lombok and Bali) had considerable operational importance as a means of entry for sub-

³Available on-line at naa.gov.au, as National Archives of Australia (NAA) A3269, D7/A, (Item 235188) "STARFISH", digital p. 131.



marines operating from Australian bases into the Java and South China Seas.⁴ Submarines had been experiencing considerable trouble from Japanese coast defence batteries on the southwest corner of Lombok covering the southern entrance to the Lombok Strait.^{5,6} The batteries consisted of a 3-gun battery (5.5" or 6" calibre) and two single guns of unknown calibre. Allied air strikes were launched on 7, 9 and 12 January 1945 and aerial photography suggested that the main battery had been put out of action, but that the two single gun positions remained intact. The United States Navy Combined Task Force 71 (CTF 71)⁷ wanted intelligence on: bomb damage caused to the coast defences; the presence of any further hidden defences; and progress of repairs to these defences.

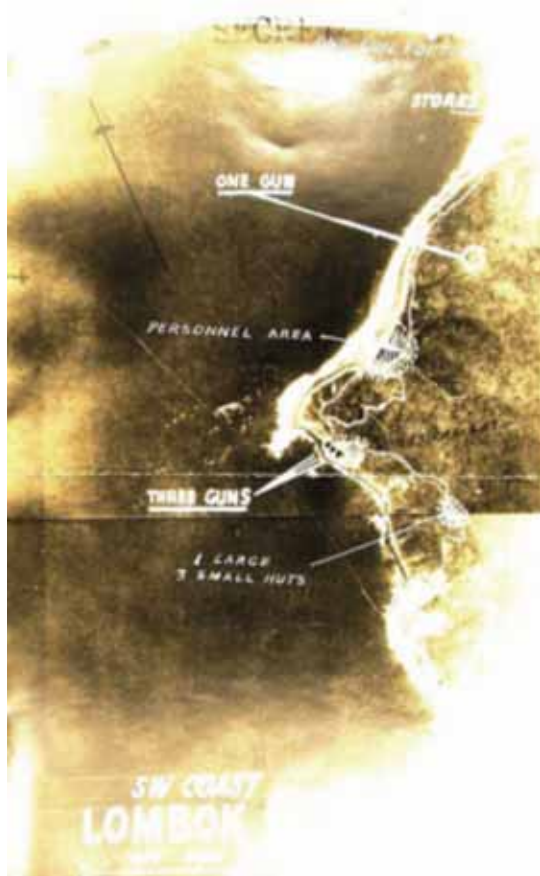


Figure 2 - The target area, showing the 3 guns, a fourth gun just to the north-east of the 3 and reference to another fifth gun "further north" (off the photograph), from the STARFISH Outline Plan.⁸ STARFISH never actually got to the target area.

⁴The native craft HMAS KRAIT carrying the JAYWICK party from SOA had transited the Lombok Strait in September and October 1943 on the way to and from the target area off Singapore. HM Submarine PORPOISE carrying the RIMAU party bound for the same target area transited the same strait on the surface by night in Sep 1944.

⁵The southern entrance to the strait is only about 20 km wide.

⁶SRD Projects Summary September 1945, digital p. 100 was a little more explicit, saying "on a number of occasions subs had been shelled and damaged."

⁷Described as "the Allied Submarine Command at Fremantle" in Courtney, G.B., *Silent Feet - The History of "Z" Special Operations 1942-1945*, (Slouch Hat Publications, 1993), p. 238.

⁸NAA 235188, digital p. 165



Figure 3 - Battle Damage Assessment after the air strike of 9 January 1945, showing the 3 co-located gun positions, from the STARFISH Outline Plan.⁹ STARFISH's role in Phase 1 was to confirm the damage, monitor repairs and locate any other guns.

SOA

SOA Advanced HQ was in Morotai (in what is now the North Moluccas province of Indonesia) and the SOA HQ unit controlling operations in Java, Bali, Lombok and Timor and the islands in between them was Group D, based at the Allied Intelligence Bureau's (AIB) Luger Maintenance Section (LMS) near Darwin. The SOA radio station at Leanyer, near Darwin, provided the communications link between parties in the field and Group D and SOA HQ. SOA Rear HQ remained in Melbourne.

For SOA this period was the beginning of its most significant contribution of the war, including acting in direct support of the Australian military landings in British and Dutch Borneo. The initial deployments of three significant SOA Borneo operations had just begun:

- AGAS I had just been landed in British North Borneo.
- SEMUT I, II and III had just been landed in Sarawak; and
- PLATYPUS I had just been landed near Balikpapan, in support of the upcoming OBOE 2.

There were at this time some minor SOA operations, in co-operation with the Dutch, in those islands in the eastern part of the NEI still under Japanese control; and the operations accompanying US submarine war patrols (OPTICIAN) operating in the South China Sea were still underway. In Portuguese Timor, the tragedy of the destruction and/or capture and hostile turning of the communications of almost all the SOA parties continued until the end of the war.

What we know of Operation STARFISH

There are a number of accounts – both official and popular – of STARFISH already in the public domain.

⁹NAA 235188, digital p. 164.



In the National Archives of Australia (NAA) there is the SOA file of the operation, including pre-operational planning documents, correspondence to and from the party while it was in the field as well as an after-action debrief.¹⁰ STARFISH is also included in the immediate post-war history of SOA operations¹¹; it is mentioned in a separate SRD (i.e. SOA) Project Summary (dated September 1945)¹²; but it is mentioned in only 5 lines in the post war summary of intelligence activities of GHQ SWPA.¹³ There is a relatively authoritative account in a book written in 1993 by a former senior officer of SOA, LtCol G. B. Courtney, and this account seems to draw on some of the declassified documents noted above.¹⁴

At the website of the Australian Commando Association, there is an interview with the STARFISH party leader Lt Laurie Black, in which he discusses the operation in some detail. This interview took place at an unspecified time before 1996.¹⁵ There is a similar 20 May 2003 interview with Black at the website of the Australians at War Film Archive at the University of New South Wales. In this interview he told his life story, including Operation STARFISH.¹⁶

There is also a 2015 *Indonesia Expat* magazine article on the "untold story" of the "Australian commandos" on Lombok.¹⁷ (The story has been frequently, but perhaps not widely, told and the STARFISH party were of course not commandos.)

It is not the purpose of this article to re-tell the story of STARFISH, but in essence what happened, according to the bare-bones summary in the SOA Official History¹⁸, was:

The STARFISH party consisted of four members: NX105873 Lt Lawrence S. Black (party leader); NX73953 Lt Malcolm V. Gillies, VB328786 Lt James C. Crofton-Moss (British Army, signaller)¹⁹ and QX16135 Sgt Alex V. HOFFIE. Initially it had been planned to include two "natives" (Indonesians,

already recruited and trained in Australia), but none were available.²⁰

The operation was to be in two phases: Phase 1 - the reconnaissance; and Phase 2 - depending on the result of the reconnaissance, the first group would receive a second group and jointly carry out a demolition raid on the enemy coastal defence batteries.^{21,22} Phase 2 never went ahead.

The party left Fremantle aboard the US submarine USS ROCK on 6 March 1945.

The plan had been to land the party at Pengantap Bay on the south coast of Lombok, about 35 km SE of the target area, which was near Pandanan Point on the SW tip of Lombok. While en route to Lombok (i.e. before departing Perth), it was learned from aerial photographs that the going between the landing point and the target would be "exceedingly difficult" and there was an obstacle on that route in the form of a wide cultivated valley, which would have channelled the party into a narrow coastal strip to pass it. It was therefore decided to land the party further to the west, closer to the target.

A preliminary landing was made on 14 March 1945, near Cape Sara, at the western end of Pengantap Bay to establish a cache of emergency supplies, in case the party had to withdraw to the east. The party re-embarked on the submarine that night.

The second landing was made on 16 March 1945, further westward on the south coast about 12 km SE of the target area. A base camp was established and after some local reconnaissance an advanced camp was established about 9 km SE of the target area.

Reconnaissance around that advanced camp established that another possible coast defence site at Cape Batugendang, south of the main target area at Cape Pandanan, had no defences. Around this time, the power pack on their radio burned out so the party requested a supply drop in the vicinity

¹⁰NAA 235188

¹¹NAA A3269, O8/A (Item 235327) *Special Operations Australia Vol II (Operations)*. There is also a published version of this at Brown, C.A., *The Official History of Special Operations - Australia, Vol 2 Operations*, (SOA Books, 2011)

¹²SRD Projects Summary September 1945

¹³*Operations of the Allied Intelligence Bureau, GHQ SWPA, Volume IV, Intelligence Series, G-2, GHQ Far East Command, 1948, p. 108.*

¹⁴Courtney, pp. 237-242

¹⁵16. Lt L Black, MID 'The History of Australian Special Warfare', Australian Commando Association website, <<https://www.commando.org.au/items-4>> (ACA Interview)

¹⁶<<https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/183-lawrence-black>> (At War Interview)

¹⁷Milne, Rosie, "Operation Starfish: The Untold Story of Australian Commandos in Lombok, 1945" in *Indonesia Expat*, 20 April 2015, <<https://indonesiaexpat.id/travel/history-culture/operation-starfish-the-untold-story-of-australian-commandos-in-lombok-1945/>>

¹⁸NAA 235327, digital pp. 171-173

¹⁹Crofton-Moss was a late replacement to the party, probably because of his signal's skills and his knowledge of Malay, due to his background as a planter in Malaya before the war. ACA Interview, 08:45

²⁰As per NAA 235118, digital p. 66, a conference was held at Group D at LMS, Darwin ca. 4 Feb 1945 at which it was noted that the (Dutch) Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS) had stated "no repeat no suitable natives available." The party leader, Black, however believed the operation was still feasible with just the 3 Australian and 1 British members. NEFIS was another component part of the AIB and SOA would have looked to them to provide Indonesian personnel to support this SOA mission.

²¹Black noted that for security reasons, his party was not told of Phase 2. ACA Interview, 07:30.

²²In the Outline Plan at NAA 235188, digital p. 132, STARFISH party's role in a possible Phase 2 is described as "acting as a Reception Party and guides to a Raiding Party if air bombing cannot achieve the result." In SOE file HS1-241 from The National Archive (UK), in (SOA) "Special Raiding Section, Report No. 10 of 7 Feb 1945", it was noted that for Phase 2, two officers and 10 ORs were being trained at SOAs Mount Martha Research School (MMRS) in Victoria for insertion in mid-March 1945 to "demolish coastal batteries and radar installations on LOMBOK island."



of their advanced camp, a drop which duly occurred by means of a RAAF Liberator flown out of the Northern Territory, on the morning of 14 April 1945.

On 18 Apr 1945, Black and Hoffie began a reconnaissance towards the main target area but were forced back by the difficult terrain on 21 April 1945, perhaps less than 3 km short of the target. In the meantime, on 19 April 1945, Crofton-Moss and Gillies had become separated while moving between the advanced camp and the base camp. Crofton-Moss was never seen again. At the time he was carrying a copy of the party's cyphers and thereafter the party had to use the Emergency Cypher.

On the morning of 24 April 1945, a Japanese force of around 20 men attacked the three remaining party members at their advanced camp. The party members split up, but only Black and Hoffie made it to the RV at the base camp. They waited, but when Gillies did not turn up, they made their way by rubber boat to the area of cache established earlier near Cape Sara, where they recovered the spare wireless and food. (This move involved a sea transit of around 15 km.) They then arranged an extraction by Catalina seaplane on the morning of 2 May 1945.

Finally, it was noted that in late July 1945 an SOA prisoner held by the Japanese in Portuguese Timor was shown a photograph of Black and Hoffie. It was suspected that this photo had been developed from a film in a camera abandoned by the STARFISH party when the Japanese attacked their advanced camp on 24 April 1945.

The locations

Overview

The key locations for STARFISH are as below:



Figure 4 - A map showing the key locations – landing sites, camps, furthest point of reconnaissance, target, withdrawal route and extraction. (Google Maps)

First landing by submarine – cache site

The submarine arrived off the original landing site on the evening of 14 March 1945 and that evening and the next day a periscope reconnaissance was conducted. For the landing that night, the party was off-loaded from the submarine around 2300 hrs about 2 km ESE of Cape Sara, proceeded by rubber boat,

before cutting the motor and paddling the last approximately 700 m. The cache was established (comprising about 1/3 of their total stores, together with a spare radio) in pig-holes in the ground, which were covered over by scrub. Subsequently it was learned that locals had discovered the cache, but had not disturbed it.

It took about an hour to lay the cache. Unfortunately during the insertion the motor and their short range radio for communications with the submarine had become swamped and would not function. Over the next 2 hours the party therefore paddled 6 km out to sea for an RV with the submarine at 0300 hrs on 15 March.²³

Six weeks later, on 25 April the two surviving members of the party returned to this cache to retrieve some stores in their rush to the extraction point.



Figure 5 - Area of cache site. Cape Sara on the left. Looking south (Author)

Second landing

At about 2000 hrs on 16 March 1945, the party disembarked from the submarine a little over 3 km south from what they called "Cape Black" (Cape Mermadi Mekaki Indah). The party proceeded under outboard motor power to a point just west of Cape Black, intending to make their way as much as 10 km west along the coast before landing. When they cut the motor about 800 m off the cape, a strong current took them rapidly to the west obliging them to make landfall much sooner than expected at a point about 1.5 km northwest of the cape around 2350 hrs that night. The shore was rugged and backed by cliffs and although landing through the surf was difficult, they made it ashore with all their stores intact. They located a cave about 4 m above the sea level and stored all their stores and boat there for the night. Contrary to prior orders, the party did not destroy the rubber boat after landing here.²⁴

On 17 March 1945, the party found close to their original landing point and temporary cave shelter a

²³Operation Report: "STARFISH OPERATION PHASE 1 at NAA 235188, p 18

²⁴ACA Interview 17:30



narrow shelf of level ground about 17 m above the water level. Beyond the shelf, the land rose steeply to a ridge about 270 m in height. Leaving the rubber boat and accessories in the cave, they then transported all their stores to the shelf where they remained for 3 or 4 days.

Comms were established with Australia on 17 March 1945 from a crest near the top of the surrounding ridge.²⁵



Figure 6 - Second landing site on the seaward side of "Cape Black" (centre). Looking southwest. (Author)



Figure 7 - A cave, although much close to the water line, perhaps similar to the one used, above the second landing site and below the base camp. The actual cave was used to cache stores and the inflatable/motor. (Google Maps)

Base camp

Around 20/21 March 1945, the party moved their base camp to a position on top of the ridge above the landing site. A water supply was located in a small stream about 400 m from the top of the ridge.

Over the course of the operation, the party visited the base camp a number of times to access stores cached there.

It was from the cave cache near this base camp on 24 April 1945 that the two surviving members used the inflatable craft to set off for their eventual extraction.



Figure 8 - Locations of second landing, cave, ledge and base camp. Looking north. (Google Earth)

Advanced camp

On 21 March 1945, the whole party set off for a reconnaissance to the west towards the target area. They found a location which they called "Hoffie Bay", and which was suitable for the reception of the planned reinforcement party in phase 2 of the operation. A good DZ was found in one of the valleys running northeast from the bay and a resupply airdrop was made there on 14 April 1945.

By this stage of the war the AIB had its own dedicated RAAF B-24 Liberator aircraft (RAAF 200 Flight) for insertions and resupply in the field. 200 Flight had only been formed in February 1945²⁷ and demands on the Flight were heavy. Group D therefore arranged some stores dropping training with Liberators of 82 Wing RAAF, in case 200 Flight was not available when needed. As it transpired, 200 Flight would not be available for the stores resupply drop until 19 April 1945, five days after STARFISH's rations would have run out. Group D then reverted to the fallback of using 82 Wing to do the stores drop on 14 April 1945.²⁸

There were numerous meetings with local inhabitants after the airdrop on 14 April up until 20 April in the vicinity of the advanced camp.²⁹

It was during a time when Black and Hoffie were conducting a reconnaissance patrol towards the target area that on 19 April 1945 Gillies and Crofton-Moss became separated while moving between the advanced camp and the base camp. Despite attempts by the remaining three-party members to find him, Crofton-Moss was never seen again. Against orders, Crofton-Moss was not carrying a pistol or compass and had the party's cyphers with him.³⁰

A Japanese force attacked the advanced camp at 0815 hrs on 24 April 1945 and the three remaining members (Black, Hoffie and Gillies) quickly made their way

²⁵NAA 235188, pp. 18, 19

²⁶NAA 235188, p. 19

²⁷RAAF 200 Flight was established in February 1945 and consisted of six, later eight, B-24 Liberators. It was based in Leyburn, Queensland. Its first operation was the parachute insertion of SOA's SEMUT I party on 25 March 1945 in Sarawak. On their return from that mission, they lost an aircraft, including the Flight's CO. See NAA 235327, digital p. 319.

²⁸NAA 235188, digital p. 25

²⁹NAA 235188, digital pp. 20,21

³⁰NAA 235188, digital p 21



independently to the RV at the base camp. Gillies however never arrived at the RV and was never seen again.



Figure 10 - Looking west towards "Hoffie Bay". The advanced camp was in the hills on the left. The DZ was in one of the valleys leading away from the bay on the left also. (Google Maps)

The target area

The party never actually got to the target area. Black and Hoffie carried out a reconnaissance from the advanced camp towards that objective in the period 18-21 April. They got as far as perhaps a little under 3 km south of the target area. They had to turn back however because the steep terrain would have slowed their progress such that they would have run out of rations. They returned to the advanced camp only to discover that in the meantime Crofton-Moss had gone missing (see above). They were never to have another chance to get to the target. See Attachment 'A' for a sketch map.³¹



Figure 11 - The target area and the probable furthest point of reconnaissance at the steep cliffs about 3 km south of the target. (Google Earth)

Final landing point

After the Japanese attack on the advanced camp on 24 April 1945, Black and Hoffie waited in vain for Gillies

until last light that day at the base camp RV. They then set off by themselves in a rubber boat with some stores, departing around 1900 hrs. They rowed about 750 m out to sea, started the outboard motor and made their way about 15 km east around the coast to Pengantap Bay (where the cache had been set on the first landing on 14 March). On the sea transit back to the area of their extraction point the inflatable motor proved difficult to refuel and eventually ran out of fuel.³² At around 0400 hrs they arrived about 750 m west of Cape Kayu Bele (near present day Nambung Beach). They sank the rubber boat outside the reef and then made their way ashore, where they found a concealed spot and slept.

When they awoke at 0600 on 25 April (Anzac Day 1945) they found about 20 natives around the from the nearby village. "On learning that the party was British"³³, the natives led them to a hiding place and helped them evade a Japanese patrol which was in their vicinity until around 1200 hrs. The natives gave the party some food and later that day eight of them accompanied the party to the cache site, which was about 4 km to their west.

At a meeting on 27 April the locals told the party that Japanese forces were in the area searching for the Australians. The Japanese "had already killed some natives ... in order to obtain information" (about the Australians).³⁴

On 30 April a group of locals crept up on the party, but when discovered by the Australians, made off. This prompted the party to equipment, food and water for the extraction, which they had arranged for the morning of 2 May incapacitate their radio and set off with minimum.



Figure 12 - From Cape Kayu Bele looking west towards cache site Pengantap Bay, approximate location circled. The final landing site was within a few hundred meters of the point from this photograph was taken. (Google Maps)

³¹NAA 235188, digital pp. 20, 21

³²ACA Interview, 29:00

³³NAA 235188, digital pp. 22

³⁴NAA 235188, digital pp. 22, 23





Figure 13 - Possibly within meters of the final landing site looking east towards Cape Kayu Bele. (Author)

Extraction point

At 0930 on 30 April 1945, the party confirmed by radio with LMS that the Catalina seaplane extraction was set for the morning of 2 May. That night they camped on a ridge near Cape Kayu Bele. Late on the afternoon of 1 May 1945, a group of locals passed near their hide, although in another account this may have been a Japanese patrol.³⁵ At 1900 hrs they moved to the beach to search for a suitable place to lay out signal fires and panels. At 0430 hrs on 2 May they began setting up fires on the beach.

Because they had already destroyed their communications equipment and therefore did not get any subsequent messages from Group D, they were not aware that an Allied Liberator aircraft was flying cover for the Catalina pickup. The party on the ground thought this second aircraft was an enemy aircraft and twice extinguished the signal fires set for the Catalina. Finally they realised the second aircraft was a friendly and lit their fires a third time for a successful pickup by the Catalina.³⁶

The seaplane used for the extraction was from the RAAF 76 (Catalina) Wing. The records consulted do not mention the origin of the Liberator used to provide top cover for the Catalina, so the Liberator could well have been from RAAF 82 Wing again.³⁷

For the pickup, three SOA members from Group D at LMS (Darwin) had volunteered to accompany the extraction flight and act as a ferry party to pick up the party and bring them to the Catalina.³⁸ Prior to landing for pickup of the party, the Catalina dropped 2 rubber dinghies for the STARFISH party to use to make their way to the ferry party waiting just outside the reef. Unfortunately the STARFISH party never got this

message nor did they see the stores drop.³⁹ The two STARFISH party members therefore swam out 300 m from the beach over the reef to meet the ferry party, whose craft had capsized in the surf. Working together, the ferry party and the shore party righted the craft and made their way back to the waiting Catalina.⁴⁰

According to Courtney's account, the party's extraction occurred under fire from a Japanese patrol on the beach – and the Catalina (after taking off from the water) and the Liberator subsequently opened fire on the Japanese.⁴¹ This is at odds with the after action report, which makes no mention of any Japanese presence at the extraction.^{42,43} Similarly, Black in his interviews pre 1996 and in 2003 made no mention of an extraction under fire.^{44,45}

Various contingency plans which were developed if the party was not able to be picked up by the Catalina or the ferry party became marooned ashore – these included dropping extra stores, rubber boats and instructions for a later pickup by submarine.⁴⁶



Figure 14 - From Cape Kayu Bele looking east to extraction point and the island of Gili Nusa which, in the event of failure of the Catalina pickup, the party would use as a safe location pending the submarine pickup. (Google Maps)



Figure 15 - Looking west from Selong Belanak today towards the extraction point (Google Maps)

³⁵The after-action report says "natives" (NAA 235188, digital p. 23). Black's account, if this is the same incident, says a "Japanese patrol" (ACA Interview 37:50).

³⁶NAA 235188, digital p. 24

³⁷NAA 235188, digital pp. 25, 26

³⁸NAA 235188, digital p. 26

³⁹NAA 235188, digital p. 26

⁴⁰NAA 235188, digital p. 23

⁴¹Courtney, p. 242

⁴²See NAA 235188, digital pp. 23, 24, for an account of the extraction.

⁴³At SOE file HS1-253 on p. 4 of an undated, unsigned 4-page report on STARFISH, is noted "people were noticed grouped on the beach, presumably the Japanese pursuers."

⁴⁴ACA Interview, 41:20

⁴⁵See At War Interview Tape 5, 24:00 to 31:00, for Black's account of the extraction. Although he said the Catalina pilot wanted to strafe the beach, he made no mention of any Japanese in the immediate vicinity.

⁴⁶NAA 235188, digital pp. 26, 27



Postscript

On arrival back in Darwin on 2 May 1945, Black and Hoffie suggested there was a possibility that Crofton-Moss and Gillies might still be alive and could make their way to a cached radio and rubber dinghy. Accordingly the alternate submarine RV was retained for a day or two, before being cancelled. In mid-May 1945 another story reached SOA that a survivor may be present in the area. On further investigation, that information appeared to refer to the earlier movements of Black and Hoffie, who had already been extracted.⁴⁷

The SOA Official History Vol 1 (Organisation) of 1946 noted both Crofton-Moss ("Brit Army Gen list")⁴⁸ and Gillies ("AMF – Z Special Unit")⁴⁹ as "Missing believed killed".

After the war, interrogation of surrendered Japanese staff officers who had been stationed in Lombok, reveals that they remembered having heard of STARFISH's insertion and pursuit. They said that "as many of their garrison as possible were utilised in the chase."⁵⁰ Speaking in 2003, Black said both Crofton-Moss and Gillies had been captured by the Japanese and later beheaded in Mataram (the capital of Lombok). After the war, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission found their beheaded bodies buried at Mataram^{51,52} and the bodies were subsequently re-buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Ambon War Cemetery in Maluku, Indonesia.^{53,54,55}

Black recovered quickly from the ordeal, while Hoffie, who had fallen ill during the operation, on return to Australia was hospitalised for 6 months.⁵⁶ Alex Hoffie died in 1996 and Lawrie Black died in 2009.⁵⁷

Conclusions

We can draw a number of still relevant conclusions from STARFISH.

This SOA operation was launched after conventional means – air strikes and aerial photography – had been inconclusive. It therefore sought to meet an

otherwise unachievable aim and was undertaken to meet specific and important IREQs of CTF 71.

No plan survives contact with the enemy (or nature) – and almost everything that could have gone wrong did:

- The sea insertion and extraction aspects were fraught – on the initial insertion the motor and radio communications were swamped going in and the party had to paddle their way out to sea to RV with the submarine again, relying on the submarine to find them; the second insertion almost foundered on rocks in a strong current; on the sea transit back to the area of their extraction point the inflatable motor proved difficult to refuel and eventually ran out of fuel⁵⁸; and on the extraction itself, the ferry party's craft capsized;
- One member simply disappeared after a disagreement with his colleague about which route to take – he was carrying cyphers, was inexplicably unarmed and was captured by the enemy.
- The party was surprised by a superior enemy force in their advanced camp and in the confusion another party member was captured.
- Because they had destroyed their communications equipment just before the extraction, they were not aware that a second Allied aircraft was flying cover for the Catalina pickup. Initially they thought this second aircraft was an enemy. Had they not fortuitously at the last moment recognised the second aircraft as an Allied plane though, they might not have been picked up; and
- From the time of the Japanese attack on their advanced camp on 24 April the party had progressively less equipment. By the time of their extraction on 2 May 1945 all they had essentially was four hand grenades, one pistol, fire lighting accessories, probably a compass and the clothes they stood in.⁵⁹

Manifestly communications were vital for mission success and survival and, for the most part, communications worked reasonably well between the field and Darwin – 21 messages were received by Darwin and twenty by STARFISH. There was signals expertise within the team and the problematic radio battery pack was able to be kept working long enough to be replaced in the air drop on 14 April. From 19 April on however, communications from the field degraded significantly – the main cypher key was compromised with Crofton-Moss' disappearance/capture that day necessitating the use of a memorised emergency cypher, which had also to be assumed to be known to

⁴⁷NAA 235118 digital pp. 104, 27

⁴⁸NAA A3269, O7/A (Item 235324) *Special Operations Australia Vol 1 (Organisation)*, digital p. 45. There is also a published version of this at Brown, C.A., *The Official History of Special Operations - Australia, Vol 1 Organisation*, (SOA Books, 2011)

⁴⁹NAA 235324, digital p. 46

⁵⁰SOE file HS1-253, a report of 26 Nov 1945 entitled "re Personnel Missing on SRD operations in the Now Timorforce Area of Control."

⁵¹At War Interview Tape 6, 23:00 to 25:00

⁵²SOE file HS1-253 on p. 4 of an undated, unsigned 4-page report on STARFISH

⁵³<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1709175>

⁵⁴Milne, op cit

⁵⁵See the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website - <<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/4007112/-james-charles-crofton-moss/>> and <<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/4007308/malcolm-vicars-gillies/>>

⁵⁶ACA Interview 44:20. Black said that Hoffie had fallen ill with Blackwater Fever.

⁵⁷Milne, op cit

⁵⁸ACA Interview 29:00

⁵⁹ACA Interview 36:10



the enemy⁶⁰; and just prior to the final rush to the extraction point, the party resorted to plain language transmission and then destroyed their communications equipment.⁶¹ This meant that the party missed later messages about the presence of a second Allied aircraft to cover the extraction and about rubber boats being dropped to them for the extraction. Only through good luck and determination did the party overcome these two last minute obstacles.

All the party's stores were lost – including radios, signals plans, cyphers and one-time pads.⁶² It is not known exactly how much equipment was actually taken on the operation, but the Outline Plan stores list (for a 6-man party, as originally envisaged) includes a list of equipment and stores – boat, motor, radios, weapons, med kits, explosives, comforts (tobacco, cigarette papers and chewing gum), fuel, clothing, shovels and binoculars etc totalling almost 1600 kg.⁶³ By 29 April, they were unable to read messages at night, because they had no torches.⁶⁴

The successful extraction of the remaining half of the party seems to have due to good leadership and careful planning on the part of the party leader (Black) and the ability of SOA to organise aerial resupply and extraction. Faced with new information prior to landing, Black, in consultation with the submarine captain, had decided on a new insertion point much closer to the target; and they fortuitously laid a precautionary cache of supplies near the original insertion point in case they had to escape in that direction; they (partly) successfully used an RV procedure after their advanced camp was attacked; and if they had followed orders and destroyed their rubber boat after they had made their second landing, they would not have been able to affect their eventual extraction.⁶⁵ As part of its planning before the operation, HQ had developed an Emergency Procedure in the case of lost contact (see Attachment 'A'). As planning for the final extraction unfolded, HQ also developed a series of fallbacks in case the planned Catalina extraction did not work and/or the ferry party became marooned ashore. Fortunately, these contingency arrangements were never put to the test.

Two questions must also be asked. The first is whether there ever was a realistic chance of success:

- The party had no detailed prior knowledge of the area and only one of them spoke passable Malay⁶⁶ (which was a trade language known to some of the local inhabitants, whose first language was Sasak). The party were discovered

by the local population in two areas. Although the locals were supportive enough – they helped porter stores, they acted as guides on a few occasions, accommodated and entertained them and on one occasion at least forewarned them of a Japanese patrol – this local support was not unconditional. In the period leading up to the extraction, Japanese executed locals in an attempt to learn the whereabouts of the party. When the Japanese applied pressure, the party could therefore not expect continued local support and just before the extraction the suspicious approach of locals to the party's temporary hide provoked the party into destroying their communications equipment and heading quickly for the extraction point. According to the September 1945 summary of SOA operations: "information indicates that the enemy saw first stores drop which took place by day. Thereafter the party were kept on the run. An example of the impossibility of working a white party in native territory without local knowledge or assistance".⁶⁷

- Even basic intelligence was not available during the pre-operation planning phase. It was only while the party was en route that aerial photographs were received which necessitated a fortuitous change of plan to land the party much further westward, closer to their target area. The difficulty of landing in the area and movement in that area appears to have been underestimated. In the early planning documents, extraction points were noted on the south and north east coast of the island. Extraction Point A on the south coast was about 30 km further east from where they were actually picked up and, judging by how the party fared getting to the much closer actual extraction point, it would have been highly doubtful they would have gotten to Extraction Point A. Extraction Point B on the northeast coast of the island would have been even more unlikely (it was about 80 km northeast of their actual extraction point and access to it would have necessitated passage through populated areas). Getting to the Final Emergency RV on the north coast (about the same distance, but on the other side of an extensive populated area and a volcanic mountain range) would, we suggest, have been impossible.⁶⁸

The second question that needs to be addressed is whether the operation was worth the effort. In regard to intelligence that was actually produced by the operation:

⁶⁰NAA 235188, digital p. 28

⁶¹ACA Interview 37:25

⁶²NAA 235118, digital p. 28

⁶³NAA 235118, digital p. 145

⁶⁴NAA 235188, digital p. 23

⁶⁵ACA Interview 17:30

⁶⁶Lt Crofton-Moss, who went missing on 19 April 1945, almost 2 weeks before the extraction.

⁶⁷SRD Projects Summary September 1945, p. 100

⁶⁸See NAA 235188, digital p. 155 for a map showing these points.



- As a result of the debrief of the two surviving party members in Darwin, a 7-page report dated 28 May 1945 was produced containing incidental information gleaned during their time there – covering enemy strengths, disposition and activity; geographical information; weather; and social/political/economic observations;⁶⁹
- On file there are also one report (dated 11 May 1945) preliminary to the fuller debrief and at least five other reports produced during the party's time ashore, which were distributed by AIB HQ to relevant customers as AIB product, attributed to "SRD Project - STARFISH". See Attachment 'A' for an example of such a report.
- Except for providing negative information about the absence of coastal defence guns north of Cape Batugendang,⁷⁰ CTF 71's Intelligence Requirements (IREQ) were barely answered. With an eye to the eventual Dutch reoccupation of the NEI, NEFIS were however keenly interested in social/political/economic intelligence. Having said that, this was a remote corner of a remote island, and the Dutch were already getting similar information from those parts of the NEI already reoccupied and from there and other AIB listening posts in the still Japanese-occupied eastern parts of the NEI. The prize of social/political/economic intelligence on what was happening in the main island of Java still eluded the Dutch and it is hard to imagine that any information obtained, or observations made by the party were of any real use; and
- Perhaps CTF 71 had learned to live with what had presumably become the much-reduced threat posed by the coastal defence guns on the southern entrance to the Lombok Strait, and in any case the war would be over in a few months' time. Notwithstanding the hardships faced by the party; their endurance; and their bravery, the mission was hardly successful – and half the members perished.

Geography does not change and in the event of any future major conflict in South Asia, the Lombok Strait will remain a key sea line of communication. Future missions to neutralise a threat there or to dominate the strait may, in the first instance at least, be carried out by more modern technical means. This does not of course rule out the fall-back of reconnaissance (or a strike by land-based forces) in probably a similar manner as carried out by STARFISH.

⁶⁹NAA 235188, digital pp. 2-9

⁷⁰See Attachment 'A'

⁷¹NAA 235188, digital p. 158

⁷²NAA 235188, digital p. 154

⁷³NAA 235327, digital p. 108

Attachment 'A' – Operational Records

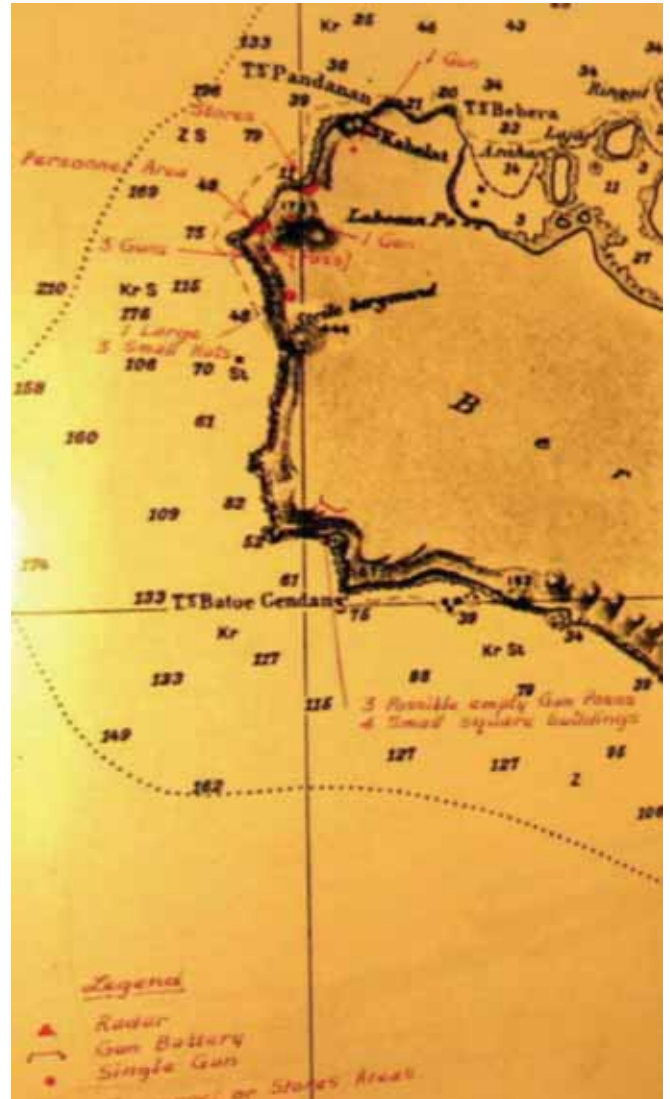
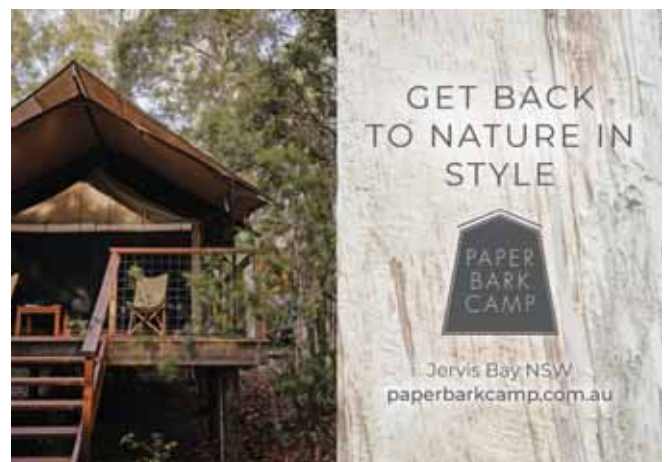


Figure 16 - A map showing the 3 possible coast defence guns north of Cape Batugendang; the 3 guns at the main target area; one gun just northeast of the 3 guns; and another single gun about 5 km north east of the that area. The reconnaissance probably only got as far as the point marked "steile bergwand" (Dutch for "steep cliff") marked just south of the main target.

From the STARFISH Outline Plan.⁷¹



⁷¹NAA 235188, digital p. 158



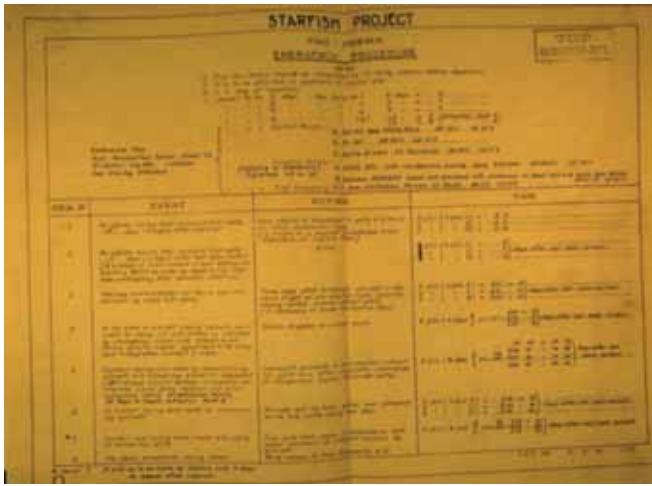


Figure 17 - The original STARFISH Emergency Procedure, as per the Outline Plan.⁷² SOA had slowly learned hard lessons over the preceding 2 ½ years. In particular, muddling over the insertion – and the eventual death/capture - of the ADDER party in Portuguese Timor in August 1944 led SOA to develop a “Standard Emergency Plan”.⁷³

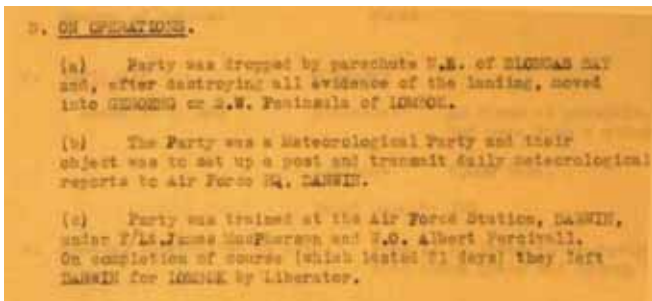


Figure 18 - Details of the ‘meteorological party’ cover story in case of capture.⁷⁴ Black later noted that if the party had been captured, it would have been difficult – according to the cover story - to explain why they were carrying explosives.⁷⁵

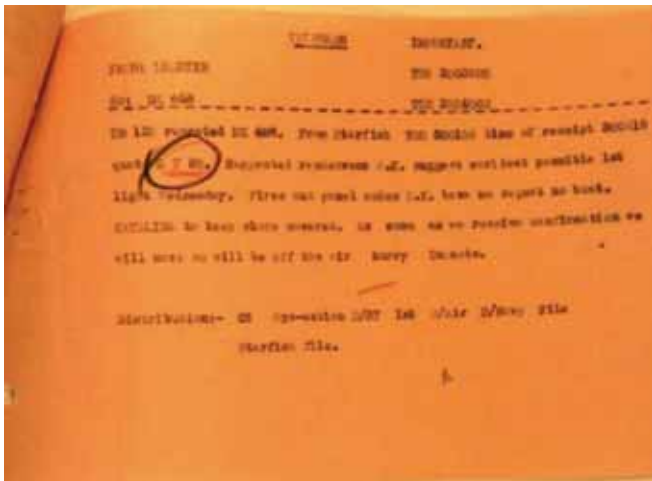


Figure 19 - One of the last messages received from STARFISH, relayed from the SOA radio station at Leanyer, seeking extraction soonest. Note last word - “hurry”.⁷⁶

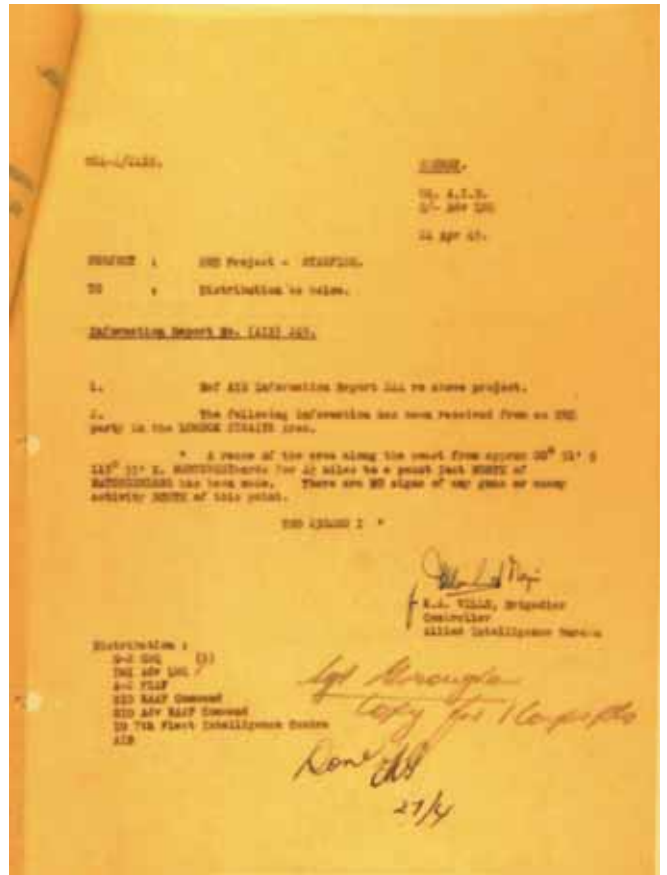


Figure 20 - This was one “AIB Information Report”, based on messages sent by the STARFISH party while it was still in the field. It did at least provide some negative information about coastal defence guns not being present near Cape Batugendang.⁷⁷

Attachment ‘B’ - The STARFISH Party



Figure 21 - LEFT: Lt Lawrence Sydney Black⁷⁸, MIDDLE: Lt Malcolm Vicars Gillies⁷⁹, RIGHT: Sgt Alexander Victor Hoffie⁸⁰. Photograph of Lt James Charles Clifton-Moss (British Army) not available. According to Lt Black in 2003: “We were all issued with cyanide tablets; they were enclosed in a rubber thing, the idea was if you got caught, you put it in your mouth and you bit on it and once you bit on it you released the cyanide tablet inside the rubber pouch and that was it, but as far as I’m concerned I know of nobody that actually took the cyanide. The first thing we did with ours was to toss it away because we reckon while there’s life, there’s hope”.⁸¹

⁷²NAA 235188, digital p. 154

⁷³NAA 235327, digital p. 108

⁷⁴NAA 235188, digital p. 143

⁷⁵ACA interview, 14:00

⁷⁶NAA 235188, digital p. 53

⁷⁷NAA 235188, digital p. 13

⁷⁸<https://www.grahamblackopal.com/operation-starfish-lombok-indonesia-ww2/>

⁷⁹<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C993551>

⁸⁰NAA B883, QX16135 (Item 4491316), p. 59, Hoffie’s service

⁸¹At War Interview 13:00 to 14:00, Tape 8



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THE CONDUCT OF OPERATION JAYWICK - THE RAID ON SINGAPORE HARBOUR

By Doug Knight

There have been many articles and publications written since the early 1950's on the conduct of Operation JAYWICK the results were achieved. In this final part we look at a re-evaluation of the number of ships sunk and accurately identify those damaged and sunk and the effects that this raid had on the population of Singapore. Ian Lai of the military studies program at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore reckons that Operation JAYWICK was a prime example of asymmetric warfare, decades before the term was coined. Alluding to reports of small unit raids conducted by Ukrainian special forces against various Russian targets, Mr Lai said "these raids have a symbolic effect on top of their operational one and help to keep the adversary on their toes by reminding them that there is nowhere 'safe'".

Mr Lee conceded that the JAYWICK raid did not have a decisive impact-most of the damage ships were repaired and put back into service by the Japanese in a matter of weeks.

However the psychological effect was far greater, given that the harbour was considered a secure stronghold well out of reach of the allies. "This coupled with the fact that they never discovered how the raid was undertaken, meant that for the remainder of the war valuable time and manpower was diverted to securing and guarding the port rather than fighting elsewhere"¹.

But the raid also resulted in unintended consequences for the population of Singapore. After the raiders returned to Australia a decision was made by the Headquarters, South East Asia Command (SEAC) and Australian authorities not to make public the success of Operation JAYWICK as it was planned to do similar types of operations in the future in both SEAC and the South-west Pacific Area.

The Japanese were convinced that prisoners interned at Changi prison were responsible for the sabotage and Japanese military police raided the cells and interrogated 57 prisoners on 10 October. Fifteen of them were tortured to death in what became known as the Double Tenth incident. It was not only military personnel suspected many Singaporean nationals were subjected to torture and death.

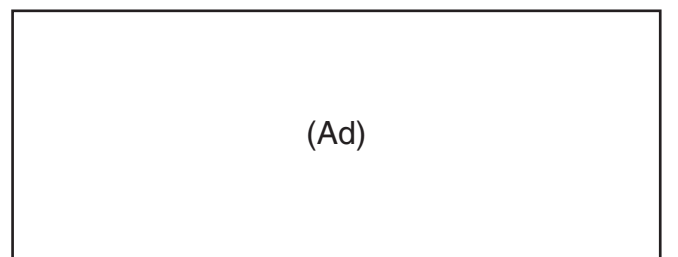
On 18 March 1946, 21 Japanese soldiers and interpreters were put on trial for the torture and murder of civilians in a war crimes trial known as the Double Tenth trial².

Special Operations Australia (SOA) put a lot of effort – personnel, planning, technical development, funds – into developing a sea-borne raiding capability and the success of JAYWICK vindicated that effort. Under POLITICIAN (May 1944 to June 1945) pairs of SOA operatives accompanied 11 US submarine war patrols in the South China Sea, with the aim of attacking ships using limpet mines in places inaccessible to submarines, interrogations of crews of intercepted vessels and reconnaissance ashore.

At least three other major raids were attempted with mixed results:

- A potential predecessor raid on Rabaul harbour (SCORPION) was cancelled in the preparation stage in early/mid 1943; There was a 'proof of concept' exercise raid conducted by Captain Carse on 19 June 1943 (See Commando Edition 9 2022 page 23).
- HAWK, the air-insertion of a Folboat party for a raid on Babo in Dutch West New Guinea in March 1944, was aborted when one of the two transport planes developed engine trouble and had to turn back. The second transport plane was lost for unknown reasons, with all hands on board perishing. No further attempt was made to mount HAWK; and
- the more complex and technically challenging RIMAU (the planned re-run of JAYWICK on the same target area in September-October 1944) was compromised in the target area and had to be aborted, with the loss of all its members.

Apart from the relatively minor achievements of SCORPION however, JAYWICK was the only major raid carried out successfully. *(Continued next page)*



¹Naval specialist Stirling Smith of the Australian National Maritime Museum. BBC News 26 September 2023.

²For further details see <https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/article-detail?cmsuuid=9d5f7c14-bde9-414c-803f-59dc16487dab>



Operation JAYWICK: A Reassessment of Results

By Peter Cundall 2012³

Note. Some tabulated data on the 45 ships in Singapore Harbour has been removed from this article.



Operation JAYWICK by Dennis Adams one of a series of paintings commissioned by the Australian War Memorial.

Preserved in Sydney harbour today, as part of the Australian National Maritime Museum vessel collection⁴, is a small former Japanese fish carrier that has in recent years become a symbol of military pride within Australia. Renamed KRAIT the vessel was used by a diverse group of British and Australian members of Special Operations Australia (SOA, known by the cover name Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD), to carry out the mission essentially in the interests of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) in the Far East. Singapore was within the operational area of the British-led South East Asian command (SEAC). The mission was carried out with significant support from the RAN to attack and sink several Japanese merchant ships at anchor off Singapore on the night of 26/27 September 1943, a raid known as Operation JAYWICK.

³http://www.combinedfleet.com/Cundall_Jaywick.htm

⁴The ship is owned by the Australian War Memorial and is moored at the Australian Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour, Sydney.

But although the raid was pronounced successful at the time, though kept secret in order to confuse and demoralize the enemy, the total extent of the damage done by JAYWICK has remained shrouded in mystery, even with post war analysis of Japanese records. This article seeks to determine how many vessels were probably sunk and their likely identities.

Overview of the Raid

A detailed overview of the background and planning as well as the key personalities is outside the scope of this study and has already been covered in detail by several books⁵. In summary KRAIT left Exmouth Gulf, WA on 2 September 1943 and disguised as a Japanese fishing boat, passed through the Lombok Strait and on to Panjang Island in the Riau Archipelago, where a party of six men in three canoes⁶ were landed on 17 September. These three 2 man canoes then paddled in stages to islands south of Singapore. After an attack from Pulau Dongas on the night of 24/25 September failed owing to tides, the canoeists shifted to Pulau Subar, approximately 4 miles west of Pulau Sambu, the DEI oil terminal near Singapore, and launched a successful attack on the night of 26/27 September with the canoes returning to Pompong Island where they met up with KRAIT and returned to Australia.

Claimed Results

The party leader Major Ivan Lyon, in conjunction with the other raid participants, prepared a detailed report upon return⁷ and it is this document that has formed the basis of sinking and damage claims ever since. The following taken from the report summarises the results:

"No.1 Canoe: Major Lyon/AB Huston

Failed to locate blacked out shipping in the area south of Pasir Panjang. On the return successfully attacked the tanker SINKOKU MARU (sic)⁸, 10000 tons, in the Examination Anchorage.

⁵Notably "Deadly Secrets: The Singapore Raids 1942-45" by Lynette Ramsay Silver (Milner 2010), "Return of the Tiger", Brian Connell (Evans 1965), "Krait, The Fishing Boat that Went to War" by Lynette Ramsay Silver & Major Tom Hall" and "The Heroes" by Ronald McKie (Harper Collins 1960). The latter although claiming to be factual is semi fictionalized. Possibly due to Official Records not being available until post 1975 due to security restrictions.

⁶The canoes are sometimes referred to as Folboats (short for folding boats).

⁷Operation JAYWICK, 25 October 1943, Melbourne held in National Archives of Australia A 3269 E2/A and E2/E

⁸The name is presented in Kokutai spelling. Generally referred to by Romanji (Romanised) spelling as SHINKOKU MARU. All other ship names are shown with Romanised spelling. All tons shown are gross tonnages.



The tanker was burning fiercely at dawn [27 September] – at 1800 hours the fire appeared to be under control.

No.2 Canoe: Lieut. Davidson/AB Falls

Entered Keppel Harbour through the boom but did not locate suitable targets on the East and Main Wharves. Subsequently launched successful attacks on two 3 island type (sic) and one engine aft freighter averaging 5000 tons at anchor in the Western end of Singapore roads.

No observed results.

No.3 Canoe: Lieut. Page/ AB Jones

Successfully attacked a 4000 ton 3 island freighter at Bukum Wharf, a similar vessel at a buoy off Bukum and a 4000 tonner of the engines aft type in the Examination Anchorage.

At 1430 the 3 island freighter off Bukum was seen to have sunk by the stern and be lying with her bows clear of the water."

Identification of shipping prior to the attack was made from Pulau Dongas and Pulau Subar using a powerful telescope and referring to ONI-208J Japanese Merchant Ship Recognition Manual. A combination of this and observation during the attack allowed the following to be tentatively identified:

Ship Attacker	Target ID	Est. gross tonnage	Configuration	
1	Lyon/Huston	Shinkoku Maru	10020	Engines aft tanker
2	Davidson/Falls	unidentified	5000	3 island cargo
3	Davidson/Falls	Taisho Maru	4815	Engines aft cargo
4	Davidson/Falls	unidentified	5000	Engines aft cargo
5	Page/Jones	Tone Maru class	3802	3 island cargo
6	Page/Jones	Nasusan Maru class	4395	Engines aft cargo
7	Page/Jones	Yamagata Maru class	3810	3 island cargo
		Total	36842	

Taken from the same report, the detailed description of each ships appearance is as follows (refer first column above for requisite ship number):

Ship 1: Tanker, cruiser stern, raked bow, upright squat funnel, dull grey colour with blue and white camouflaged bridge, no guns seen, 2 masts, aft one forward of funnel, kingposts abaft bridge.

Ship 2: Cargo ship, 3 island, cruiser stern, straight bow, split structure amidships, heavily laden apparently ready to depart.

Ship 3: Cargo ship, engines aft, cruiser stern, straight bow, large bridge, 3 kingposts, 2 with masts on top, grey colour overall with lighter grey band on funnel, ventilators abaft funnel, modern appearance, heavily laden.

Ship 4: Cargo ship, engines aft, cruiser stern, raked bow, possible 2 decks, unclear if kingposts, in ballast, identity not matching any ship in ONI 208J.

Ship 5: Cargo ship, 3 island, straight bow, counter stern, tall thin funnel, in ballast, blacked out. (Alongside wharf at Bukum).

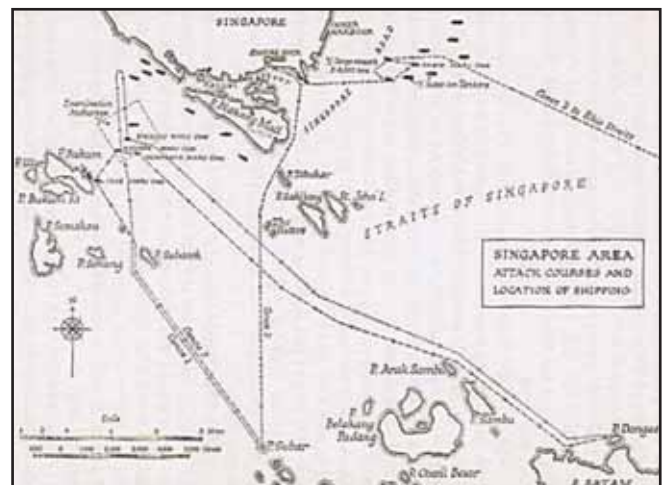
Ship 6: Cargo Ship, Engines aft, raked bow, stern unseen, 3 kingposts, grey/black hull, medium size squat funnel.

Ship 7: Cargo ship 3 island, straight bow, counter stern.

Note that the number of engine aft cargo ships claimed sunk by Davidson/Falls (2 vessels) differs from the number shown in the summary above (1 vessel). Also note that the description of cargo ships isn't necessarily correct as will be explored further.

Four of the raiding party (Canoes 1 and 3) retired to Pulau Dongas after the attack (Canoe 2 retired to north-eastern Batam Island) from where they heard from 5am on the 27th a total of seven explosions. Davidson and Falls in Canoe No.2 who were further east heard a total of 6 explosions.

A diagram showing the attack is as follows:



Singapore in 1943

At the time of the raid Singapore was a very different port to its peacetime operations. Private commercial sea-trade had largely ceased with the city subordinated to the Japanese war effort. As a major arterial hub large quantities of war supplies were brought in for on-shipment, primarily to Burma. Major exports included bauxite - from nearby Bintan Island in what is now Indonesia, and Batu Pahat in what is now Malaysia - that was shipped to Japan primarily to be turned into aluminum for aircraft production. Tin, rubber, lead, looted consumer durables and scrap also constituted significant exports to Japan at this time.

The biggest export however was oil and this was undertaken from an island off Singapore (Pulau Bukum). The Imperial Japanese Army controlled refineries in Sumatra at Palembang and oil ports at



Medan (Belawan) and Pangkalan Susu supplied oil to Pulau Bukum's storage tanks from where it was loaded onto tankers sailing to Japan. Draft restriction and a shortage of storage meant there was a constant shuttle of mostly smaller tankers in particular between Palembang and Pulau Bukum. Many of the ships used were former Allied vessels captured by Japan in its drive south in 1942 and repaired and restored to service.

As well as Pulau Bukum, the port of Singapore at the time consisted of Keppel Harbour and the Inner Harbour, the former of which was the main working docks. Ships anchored in the examination anchorage between the islands of Pulau Blakang Mati (today's Sentosa Island) and Pulau Bukum or further west off Pasir Panjang or more commonly further east in Singapore roadstead.

How Many Ships Successfully Attacked?

At the time of JAYWICK through successful code-breaking, the Allies had extensive access to Japanese radio traffic particularly in the Singapore/Malaya area where reception allowed a higher degree of interception. Further as they advanced the Allies captured a number of critical documents. Most of these cast doubt as to the saboteurs claim of seven ships sunk or damaged:

"On 27 September at Singapore Harbour six 2000-5000 class ships including 3 tankers were damaged by saboteurs." (Captured Document⁹)

"Holes about 2 metres wide running from the engine room to the stern about the waterline were blown in the sides of 6 transports in Singapore Harbour early in the morning of 27 September.

Cause: The chief criminals were two Malaysians. For carrying out the explosions of the transports they were guaranteed a means of livelihood after the English Army reoccupied Malay (sic). The Malaysians were taught to tie the explosives to the gangway ladders or to place them in the waterways of the deck scuppers". (Captured Document)

"4 ships in the harbour at Singapore were blown up by Malaysians led by Caucasians." (Captured Document)

"In Singapore on the morning of 27 September six ships of 2000-5000 tons (three tankers among them) were sunk by bombs due to a clever plan by Malaysians working under the supervision of Caucasians working behind the scenes" (Captured Document 12985)

"Singapore shipping espionage has been carried out by natives under European instruction...an enemy espionage affair developed early in the morning of September 27, 1943 at Singapore. It was commanded

by Europeans hiding in the neighbourhood of Palai in Johore. It was carried out by Malayan criminals through a Malayan village chief and the party was composed of 10 or more persons, all of them Malaysians. As a result of the raid, seven ships were sunk by bombs due to a clever plan." (Quoted in "Return of the Tiger" by Brian Connell, p83 based on a captured document not sighted by author)

"At dawn on 27th KIZAN MARU and 2000 ton HAKUSAN MARU exploded and sank at Singapore" (radio message 291258 partial intercept only)

"Early on the morning of the 27th five "A" class ships blew up in Singapore Harbour, two ships sank" (part message JN25J/9135 from Staff Officer No.1 Southern Expeditionary Force¹⁰).

The only source that lists seven ships sunk is secondary and the original source has not been sighted. If one excludes the two radio messages that deal with aspects only, of the five captured documents, three claim 6 ships sunk, one 4 ships sunk and the secondary source 7 ships. It seems probable, though not definite therefore that six ships were sunk, which incidentally accords with Davidson/Falls recollection of the number of explosions. Based on the detailed vessel descriptions he provided, Davidson appears as the keenest observer of the party, but as noted his canoe was furthest away at the time of the explosions, and so this in itself is far from conclusive.

What is however apparent is that the Japanese had no idea as to the cause of the attack and the suspicion that local guerrillas were responsible eventually culminated in a wholesale purge of suspected persons in Singapore - the infamous Double Tenth Massacre (10 October 1943).

Identities of Ships Attacked

At the time of the attack 45 vessels were known to be in port at Singapore as follows, and another (Tatsuwa Maru) shown as in port, but suspect¹¹:

Postwar Japanese records¹² shed light on three of the ships attacked and sunk as follows:

(Shown as name, date of build, gross tonnage, owner, former name and flag if captured, vessel type.)

⁹This and the next two documents are taken from a summary of Allied claims and Enemy Confirmation of Damage to Enemy Ships PSIS200-1 December 11 1944, RG 38 collection NARA.

¹⁰This radio intercept only refers to A class (= Army operated) vessels and so is not necessarily the total number of ships sunk in the raid. In the addition to Army there was B = Navy and C = Civilian vessels potentially affected. (Navy) and SRR (Army) series, some JACAR records and various other sources. The list should not be seen as all inclusive, and it is likely that some additional vessels, particularly civilian operated were in the port at the time.

¹¹The sources for this and subsequent entries are primarily TROMs published on www.geocities.jp/tokusetsukansen/index., allied decrypts in particular the SRN. The full list of ships has been deleted from this version to facilitate ease of reading and is available on line.

¹²Taken from Senji Sempaku Shi by Shinshichiro Komamiya (privately published 1991) as the most detailed account but this is confirmed by various other published accounts that list all three vessels but not others.





PAULA later captured and renamed ARARE MARU.

ARARE MARU 27 2770 Daito Kisen ex PAULA (Du) (Tanker)

27/9/43 mined and sunk in Shonan (Singapore). One crewman was killed. Configuration: MMF¹³, trunk deck, much lower funnel than photo than shown in ONI-208J, counter stern Notes: Salvaged and resumed Sumatra-Singapore oil feeder service very shortly after and in November 1945 returned to Dutch owners. The ship was renamed NANJO MARU later in the war although whether this was as a result of salvage or simply transfer is unclear.



TOYOSAKI MARU. HAKUSAN MARU was a sister ship.

HAKUSAN MARU 20 2197 Tomoe Gumi Kisen

27/9/43 anchored Pulau Bukum (about 10km SW of Singapore Port) when sunk in explosion caused by magnetic mines. Configuration: MFM, 3 island, counter stern.



MONTEZUMA later KIZAN MARU.

KIZAN MARU 18 5077 Miyachi Kisen

27/9/43 anchored off Pulau Bukum with a bearing SW of Pasir Panjang in Shonan (Singapore) Port when 7 magnetic mines placed on hull exploded and sank the ship. One crewman was killed. Configuration: MFM (small derricks amidships), 3 island, counter stern.

Note: The reference to 7 is interesting as each canoe only carried 9 mines (officially 8) with 3 for each ship. Salvage was attempted but these attempts were finally abandoned in July 1944 and the ship was broken up.

Given that the appearance of all of these ships, and the location of two of them is known it is apparent that HAKUSAN MARU is the TONE MARU type sunk at Bukum wharf (Target 5) and the KIZAN MARU is the YAMAGATA MARU type (Target 7) anchored off Pulau Bukum both sunk by Page/Jones. (Although it should be noted that the KIZAN MARU had a fairly prominent break amidships with a hatch for No.3 hold that neither the TONE MARU or YAMAGATA MARU types do). It is probable that the ARARE MARU was Target No.4 sunk by Davidson/Falls and unidentified in ONI-208J. In fact, ARARE MARU under her former Dutch name of PAULA does appear on page 281 of ONI-208J but the drawing and photo (of URDANETA) an alleged sister ship is wrong. PAULA, although dimensionally the same as URDANETA, had two masts not one, a larger bridge, a shorter stumpier funnel and a raked bow, as well as a trunk deck (the two decks that Davidson identifies?).

To tentatively identify the remaining ships it has been necessary to rely on intercepted radio traffic and/or tabulated records of movement. The records of Dai San Sempaku Yuso Shireibu, the third shipping area group headquartered in Singapore is missing, and these were probably destroyed in the period between the general surrender on 15 August 1945 and local surrender and re-occupation on 12 September 1945. No "smoking gun" document or decrypted radio signal has been found but it is possible to determine based on radio traffic reports of vessels under repair post 27 September and the movement records to tentatively identify three other ships that were only damaged:

(Continued next page)

¹³These characters refer to an identification system for merchant ships. Read from left to right they show the features of the ship in the order they occur with M=mast, F = funnel, K = kingpost C = crane etc. The system has its faults as for example a kingpost with a mast on its centre line is shown as M.





SOLEN later captured and renamed SHOSEI MARU.

SHOSEI MARU 22 5698 ex SOLEN (Br) (tanker)

While not shown in any sources as sunk the ship made no further movements from arrival Singapore 23 September to departure 17 December 1943. This strongly implies the ship was repairing damage. Radio signals show the ship as under repair in at least 5 such signals from 6 October 1943 to 12 November 1943. Further the records of movement show the ship arrived from Palembang 23 September but did not depart Singapore for Palembang until 17 December (arrived there 18 December 1943). Configuration: MMF, counter stern, 3 island with engines aft. This seems the likeliest candidate for the misidentified SHINKOKU MARU (Target 1) though see additional comments below.



A further view of SOLEN later SHOSEI MARU at Cape Town.

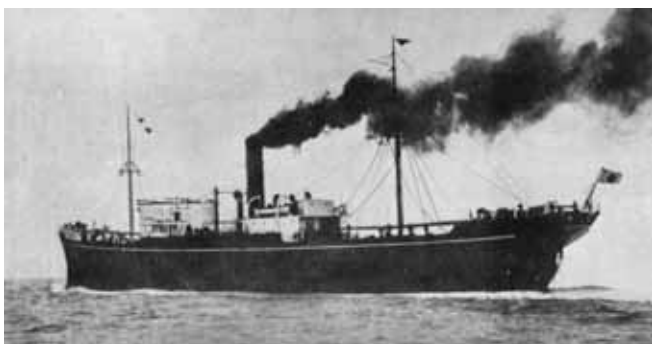


Photo of OYO MARU a sister of NICHIREN MARU.

NICHIREN MARU 20 5460

Intercepted radio signals show the ship under repair in at least 5 signals between 6 October 1943 and 1 November 1943. The ship is known to have arrived

Singapore 20 September 1943 and then no reported movements until she departed Singapore in convoy No.635 (part 2) on 11 November 1943.¹⁴ Configuration: MFM (small derricks amidships), 3 island, counter stern.



NASUSAN MARU¹⁵

NASUSAN MARU 31 4399 (converted tanker).

The ship is believed to have spent the period from 12 July 1943 to 30 January 1944 as a feeder ship on the oil run between Shonan and Palembang. Because the ship was derequisitioned by the IJN (Navy) on 17 September little information on movements are available although a radio signal reports the ship departing Palembang on 16 November. The ship is presumed damaged only because of the absence of radio traffic (noting though that this is certainly not conclusive evidence) and her unusual appearance permitting the positive identification of her by the saboteurs. Configuration: MKMF with 3 sets of kingposts and engines aft, counter stern. 3 island.

It is very likely that NICHIREN MARU was Target 2 (Davidson/Falls first target) and that NASUSAN MARU was Target 6. This leaves Targets 1 and 3 unaccounted for. It should be noted that SHOSEI MARU bears only a vague resemblance to the descriptions provided for both targets. The ship had a counter stern and straight bow. It is considered that on the basis of the ship being identified as a tanker and the masts being reported in the correct position that the ship fits Target 1 better.

The identity of Target 3 remains unconfirmed. The TAISHO MARU (38, 4815), that she was provisionally identified as, was in Japan at the time. The design of the ship with 3 kingposts was unusual and the fact that NASUSAN MARU fits this description almost tempts one to speculate if the ship moved anchorages and was attacked twice. The timings suggest otherwise-although it is slightly unclear in which order Page/Jones attacked their ships. The summary of the report indicates HAKUSAN MARU (Target 5), KIZAN MARU (Target 7) and NASUSAN MARU (Target 6) in that order. The detailed information on each ship attacked and signed separate statements by Lieut. Page and AB Jones indicate the order was Targets 5, 6, and 7. Assuming the latter is correct, the earliest the NASUSAN MARU could have been attacked by Page/Jones is about 11.30pm while 12.30am was the latest the same ship could have been attacked by Davidson/Falls.

¹⁴Photo provided by Gilbert Casse.

¹⁵Photo credit AWM and Mitsui Line.



It is also possible that Davidson was somewhat wrong in his identification. The detailed description he provided suggests a modern new ship. The Japanese standard design 1D fits closely though it normally only had 1 set of kingposts (abaft the bridge) not 3 sets and had a tall funnel. There were however construction variations and it is possible that the ship sighted was one of these variations. KOTOKU MARU (43, 1943) and NICHINAN MARU (43, 1945) were both 1D converted tankers known to be in the Singapore area at the time, although the former was definitely known to have 1 set of Kingposts only, and the latter may have arrived only after the raid. Both clearly escaped damage as they are shown to still be in service shortly after. A third converted tanker NIKKAKU MARU (43, 1937) was apparently civilian operated and little traffic or information is available. The ship was known to be at Singapore 20th September and next appears in traffic 28th October. But even if it was one of these vessels the likelihood is the attack didn't cause damage. Possibly the magnets failed to grip and the charges fell off, or the detonator/s failed.

A final possibility is that NASUSAN MARU was Target 3 and the unknown ship Target 6. The same comments as above apply.

Summary of Results

The actual outcome based on the partly unconfirmed identifications can be summarised thus:

Ship	Attacker	Target ID	Gross tonnage	Configuration	Outcome
1	Lyon/Huston	Shosei Maru ?	5698	Engines aft tanker	Damaged
2	Davidson/Falls	Nichiren Maru ?	5460	3 island cargo	Damaged
3	Davidson/Falls	Attack failed ?	0	Engines aft cargo	NA
4	Davidson/Falls	Arare Maru	2770	Engines aft tanker	Sunk/salved
5	Page/Jones	Hakusan Maru	2197	3 island cargo	Sunk
6	Page/Jones	Nasusan Maru ?	4399	Engines aft tanker	Damaged
7	Page/Jones	Kizan Maru	5071	3 island cargo	Sunk
	<i>Total</i>		<i>25595</i>		

Of the 6 ships believed attacked, 5 of them were Army operated (and thus accords with JN25J/9135 radio message). The sixth, NASUSAN MARU had been derequisitioned by the Navy on 17th September and was believed to be in civilian use.

Of note is the fact that 3 of the ships sunk were tankers. A fourth, the HAKUSAN MARU was probably also being used as a tanker (likely through neoprene sealing of holds) as the ship's most recent voyage had been from Pangkalan Susu to Singapore. The fact that the ship was at the Pulau Bukum wharf when sunk also suggests this.

Materially the raid was less damaging than originally estimated. Nevertheless, any shipping loss was serious to the Japanese whose construction program struggled to keep pace with sinkings, and finally failed to do so in 1944. The loss of tankers even for a brief time would have been keenly felt. More important was the effects on morale, with the sinkings providing a boost to the Singaporean populace and

potentially raising hopes and reinforcing beliefs that the Allies would eventually triumph¹⁶. Ironically this may have made the success of RIMAU even harder, if JAYWICK's success in fact led to tightened jap security in the Singapore sea approaches area.

SOA put a lot of effort – personnel, planning, technical development, funds – into developing a sea-borne raiding capability and the success of JAYWICK vindicated that effort. Under POLITICIAN (May 1944 to June 1945) pairs of SOA operatives accompanied 11 US submarine war patrols in the South China Sea, with the aim of attacking ships using limpet mines in places inaccessible to submarines, interrogations of crews of intercepted vessels and reconnaissances ashore.

At least three other major raids were attempted with mixed results:

- A potential predecessor raid on Rabaul harbour (SCORPION) was cancelled in the preparation stage in early/mid 1943;
- HAWK, the air-insertion of a folboat party for a raid on Babo in Dutch West New Guineain March 1944, was aborted when one the two transport planes developed engine trouble and had to turn back. The second transport plane was lost for unknown reasons, with all hands on board perishing. No further attempt was made to mount HAWK; and
- the more complex and technically challenging RIMAU (the planned re-run of JAYWICK on the same target in September-October 1944) was compromised in the target area and had to be aborted, with the loss of all its members;

Apart from the relatively minor achievements of SCORPION however, JAYWICK was the only major raid carried out successfully.

(Continued next page)



¹⁶The success of JAYWICK was not published in Australia until after the war had ended.



The following is the story of Elizabeth Choy, one of many Singaporean citizens caught up in the 'blowback' from Operation JAYWICK and her involvement in the 'Double Tenth' incident. Elizabeth's story is just one of many of those caught up in the Japanese retribution for JAYWICK.

The Double Tenth

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Author: Ron Taylor

In 1943, a Special Branch of the Kempeitai¹⁷ under Lieutenant Colonel Haruzo Sumida was charged with finding the culprits responsible for acts of sabotage in Singapore, mainly the cutting of telephone lines and the burning of warehouses. Sumida strongly suspected that the saboteurs were being organised by internees in Changi Prison, and made preparations for a raid on the prison to catch the ringleaders. Sumida's chief suspect was British barrister Rob Heeley Scott, a prominent Foreign Office employee who had previously been detained for his anti-Japanese propaganda, released by the Kempeitai, and then later sent to Changi Prison.

However, neither Scott nor anyone else in Changi was involved in the sabotage, or with the raid that led to serious repercussions on 10 October – The Double Tenth. On 28 September, Scott received a message from one of his contacts in the city, telling him that on the previous morning six Japanese ships had been blown up in Singapore Harbour (now Keppel Harbour). This was the first major sabotage since the Japanese had captured the island. The loss of ships in such an important place was an enormous blow to Japanese prestige. Scott and his fellow internees supposed that the saboteurs must have been Chinese guerrillas who had slipped across the straits from their base in Malaya. Sumida, however, believed that Scott and his associates had planned the operation from Changi Prison.

The attack on Singapore Harbour was codenamed Operation JAYWICK, the brand name of a popular lavatory deodoriser, and had nothing to do with guerrillas or fifth columnists. It had been carried out by Major Ivan Lyon, A British Special Operations Executive Office attached to Special Operations Australia (SOA), with a group of Anglo-Australian operatives who had sailed from Western Australia to Singapore in an old Japanese fishing boat, the M.V.KRAIT, named after a particularly vicious Malayan snake.

Once within striking distance of the harbour, the operatives took to Folboats (folding canoes), and

paddled into the docks under cover of night. Using limpet mines, they sank six Japanese ships of 2,000–5,000 tons, including several tankers, and then slipped away to their rendezvous with the KRAIT, finally returning successfully to Australia. (The M.V.KRAIT is now preserved and on display at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney), Australia.



The Choy's on their wedding day on August 16, 1941.
Photo used with the kind permission of the family.

The Japanese could not conceive that a force could penetrate their lines of defence and have the audacity to attack their shipping. Then seven days after the Double Tenth, Bishop John Wilson of St Andrew's Cathedral was taken to the YMCA, and placed in the cell next to Elizabeth. He was severely beaten for three days before the Japanese accepted that he was not one of the ringleaders in their imagined conspiracy. One night Elizabeth saw Rob Scott, by then badly disfigured as a result of the beatings and water tortures that he had been subjected to. At the end of one session Scott was told that he had been sentenced to death, and was forced to write a farewell letter to his wife. He was later sentenced to six years' imprisonment in Outram Road Prison¹⁸ instead, the site where convicted sepoys mutineers had been detained and executed by the British Army in 1915.

¹⁷Japanese military police.

¹⁸This was a notoriously hard prison for Allied POWs and many were to lose their lives whilst being incarcerated and tortured.



Elizabeth was held in the YMCA for nearly 200 days, during which time the Kempeitai meticulously followed up every point in her story, cross-examining people she said she had helped. After a huge dossier of interviews had been compiled, the Japanese concluded that she was telling the truth and set her free.

Khun Heng, however, was sentenced to 12 years in Outram Road Prison. People avoided Elizabeth following her release, too terrified to speak to her. Fifteen internees died in the Kempeitai's cells during the Double Tenth inquisition. The suffering spread to the entire civilian population of Changi Prison; rations were cut, and games, concerts, plays and school lessons were forbidden for months.

Elizabeth wrote of her days in Changi.

"I was put into a cell only 10 by 12 feet (4m by 5m) big. There were more than 20 people crammed inside. Packed like sardines, we knelt from morning till night. Some of us suffered serious sores on our knees.

I was the only female among them. Inside the cell was a tap and underneath it, a hole meant for toilet purposes. There was no privacy to speak of -- our daily business was conducted there in full view of everyone.

The stench coming from our perspiration, human waste and stagnant water fouled up the small cell and was suffocating.

We had to crawl out through a small trap door at the side for interrogation. Our captors beat us up, subjected us to electric shocks and pumped us up with water as part of the interrogation routine. The feeling of having one's belly pumped full of water and then seeing the water gushing out of the body was hardly bearable.

When my interrogators could not get any information out of me, they dragged my husband from Outram Prison, tied him up and made him kneel beside me. Then, in his full view, they stripped me to the waist and applied electric currents to me. The electric shocks sent my whole body into spasms. My tears and mucus flowed uncontrollably.

Even now, anything with electricity, like microwave ovens and the television, puts me off. I cannot describe the pain, but it must have been thousands of times worse for my husband who had to see me being tortured.

I was detained in the centre for more than 200 days. I wore the same outfit for that period of time. Getting a decent shower was wishful thinking; we considered ourselves very lucky to have a little water to wash our faces.

Our daily meals were shoved to us through the trap door. Ravenous, everyone would eat up the last grain of rice. The portions were pathetic.

My waist shrank to 18 inches (45 cm) from 25 inches.

Outside the cell, badly tortured prisoners lied in the corridor. They howled in pain. The cries of the dying would pierce our ears and hearts. It was most distressing.

Worse were the interrogation sessions.

Monai Tadamori, a Warrant Officer with the Kempeitai, would come chat with the prisoners as and when he felt like it. Just when you least expected it, he would deliver a few hard slaps on your face. The impact would leave you with giddy spells and feeling absolutely helpless.

I was finally released after more than 200 days in the cell. Not having seen sunlight during my imprisonment, my eyes could hardly open as I stood directly under the sun. My mind was a complete blank. The clothes that I had been wearing for 200 days smelt foul. My body ached from my injuries. For a long while, I felt I had just returned from death."

After the war, on 18 March 1946, the Double Tenth War Crimes Trial was held in the Supreme Court Building, before a Military Court presided over by Lieutenant Colonel S. C. Silkin. Twenty-one Kempeitai were accused of torturing 57 internees, resulting in the deaths of 15. On 15 April 1946, after a hearing lasting 21 days, Sumida was one of eight sentenced to death by hanging. Three others received life imprisonment, one a sentence of fifteen years, and two were given prison terms of eight years. Seven were acquitted.



In recognition of her valour and wartime effort during the Japanese occupation, Elizabeth Choy was awarded in London the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1946.

Source: Google docs

Elizabeth Choy's husband Choy Khun Heng never recovered from the treatment he received from the Kempeitai, he died in 1985. *(Continued next page)*

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Elizabeth Choy in 1989, wearing her medals. She had been invited to dine on board the royal yacht, the Britannia, with Prince Philip and Queen Elizabeth II who were in Singapore on a state visit. She was advised to wear all the medals that had been awarded to her.
Photo used with the kind permission of the family.

Elizabeth served as a member of the Legislative Council during the early 1950s before returning to teaching at St. Andrews School. She died from pancreatic cancer on September 14th 2006 aged 95.

Postscript. For further reading on this amazing lady and her interesting life see <http://choyer-choyer.blogspot.com/2008/08/> and <https://badasstours.nl/elizabeth-choy-answers-not-broken-but-maybe-not-healed/>

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SAVING JOHN F. KENNEDY

PT 109 and the Australian Coastwatchers

From the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

Lieutenant John F. Kennedy's encounter with a Japanese destroyer on the night of August 1, 1943, may be the most famous small-craft engagement in naval history, and it was an unmitigated disaster. At a later date, when asked to explain how he had come to be a hero, Kennedy replied laconically, "It was involuntary. They sank my boat."

In Blakett Strait, south of Kolombangara in the Solomon Islands, the starless, moonless night of August 1, 1943, was profoundly dark. Inky blackness like this could have a disorienting effect, even on experienced sailors. PT-109 stood at her station, one of fifteen PT boats ("Patrol Torpedo" boats) that had set out to engage, damage, and maybe even turn back the well-known "Tokyo Express." US forces gave that name to the Japanese navy's more or less regular supply convoy to soldiers fighting the advance of US forces in the islands farther south. PT 109 was one of the boats left behind. Lieutenant Kennedy rendezvoused his boat with two others, PT 162 and PT 169. The three boats spread out to make a picket line across the Strait. At about 2:30 in the morning, a shape loomed out of the darkness three hundred yards off PT 109's starboard bow. The young lieutenant and his crew first believed it to be another PT boat. When it became apparent that it was one of the Japanese destroyers, Kennedy attempted to turn to starboard to bring his torpedoes to bear. But there was not enough time.

The destroyer, later identified as the *Amagiri*, struck PT 109 just forward of the forward starboard torpedo tube, ripping away the starboard aft side of the boat. The impact tossed Kennedy around the cockpit. Most of the crew were knocked into the water. The one-man below decks, engineer Patrick McMahan, miraculously escaped, although he was badly burned by exploding fuel.

When the patrol actually did come in contact with the Tokyo Express—three Japanese destroyers acting as transports with a fourth serving as escort—the

encounter did not go well. Thirty torpedoes were fired without damaging the Japanese ships. No US vessels suffered hits or casualties. Boats that had used up their complement of torpedoes were ordered home. The few that still had torpedoes, remained in the strait for another try.

Meanwhile, an Australian coast watcher had sent local scouts to look for survivors from PT-109. Many native islanders harboured deep enmity toward the Japanese and assisted the Allies by acting as guides, supporting rescue efforts and monitoring enemy movement.

Mr. Kumana and another scout, Biuku Gasa, first spotted Kennedy and another US serviceman on Aug. 5 on Naru Island, where the two Americans had gone in search of food, water and aid. The islanders mistook Kennedy and his fellow sailor for Japanese and fled.

"We ran to the canoe," Mr. Kumana said in an oral history cited by National Geographic, "and paddled to Olasana." There, they found the remaining members of Kennedy's crew.

"Some of them cried, and some of them came and shook our hands," Mr. Kumana recalled. Kennedy arrived later and embraced the natives, Gasa said.

With few tools to record a message, Kennedy was delighted when Gasa suggested that he carve a note in a coconut. Mr. Kumana picked one from a tree.

Mr. Kumana and Gasa made a nearly 40-mile journey by canoe to an Allied outpost and delivered Kennedy's carved message. The two scouts then assisted in the rescue mission that brought the crew to safety on August 8th.

(Kennedy kept his engraved coconut and used it in the Oval Office as a paperweight. He had invited the two islanders to his inauguration, according to accounts, but they were unable to make the trip.)

Kennedy decided to take the canoe back to Olasana; he stopped long enough to gather the candy and the water to bring to the other men, leaving Ross to rest until the next morning. Arriving at Olasana, Kennedy discovered that the two men he and Ross had seen at Naru had made contact with the rest of the crew. The two men, Biuku Gasa and Eroni Kumana, were islander scouts for the Allies. Their hasty departure from Naru had left them tired and thirsty, and they had stopped for coconuts at Olasana, where Thom had been.

Caroline Kennedy thanks the Coastwatchers

On 22 July, 2022, US Ambassador Caroline Kennedy and General Mark Milley, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, met with two Australian veteran Coastwatchers and their family members at the



John F. Kennedy, far right, and crewmen of PT - 109 in the Solomon Islands.

Photo: John F. Kennedy Library.



Australian War Memorial. The Ambassador reaffirmed the strength of the US - Australia alliance and expressed her gratitude for the service and sacrifice of Australians during World War II, highlighting the Coastwatchers, who played a critical role in rescuing President John F. Kennedy after his patrol torpedo boat was destroyed.

Ambassador Kennedy met Ms. Eve Ash, daughter of Australian World War II veteran Mr. Ronald (Dixie) George Lee, and Mr. Tom Burrowes, son of veteran Mr. James Burrowes OAM, at the Australian War Memorial. Mr. Lee and Mr. Burrowes joined the meeting virtually from the US Consulate in Melbourne.

In their meeting, Ambassador Kennedy said "It was a great honour to meet two Australian Coastwatchers, who played an essential role in keeping the region secure during World War II. I owe personal gratitude to an Australian Coastwatcher and two Solomon Islander scouts who saved my father's life. These men represent the best of their generation and are an amazing example of the bonds of the US-Australia alliance."

General Mark Milley said, "I was deeply honoured to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony with Ambassador Kennedy and meet a few Australian Coastwatchers. The US - Australia alliance remains just as strong as when we fought side-by-side more than 70 years ago. The World War II generation of Americans and Australians bequeathed us a set of freedoms, and we have an obligation today to uphold their sacrifices".

Australian World War II veteran Mr. Ronald (Dixie) George Lee, via Zoom from the US Consulate in Melbourne, said, "The event was a very special and personal acknowledgement by Ambassador Kennedy and the US government of the role we had as Aussie Coastwatchers eight decades ago. I am proud at 98 to meet Her Excellency and share Coastwatcher stories. The time I spent in the Solomons and other locations as a Coastwatcher is as vivid today as it was then. It has been an honour to participate in this memorial event".

'Dixie' Lee's comrade, Australian World War II veteran Mr. James Burrowes OAM, said, "It was an amazing experience to meet with Ambassador Caroline Kennedy and extremely pleasing to speak with her during the commemorative wreath-laying. As a Coastwatcher, I have long been aware of the role



Ronald (Dixie) Lee, left, and Jim Burrowes examine the replica coconut shells that carried John F. Kennedy's message.
Photo: John F. Kennedy Library.

played by the Australian and Solomon Islander Coastwatchers Reg Evans, Biuku Gasa and Eroni Kumana in rescuing then Lieutenant John F. Kennedy and his crew after their Patrol Torpedo Boat was cut in two by a Japanese destroyer. So I was honoured to receive the Ambassador's kind acknowledgement of our coast watching role in the war and recognition of our rescue of the future President".

Dixie Lee's daughter, Eve Ash, said, "Our wonderful new US Ambassador Caroline Kennedy has shone a very personal light on the special role of Australian Coastwatchers in World War II. I was privileged to meet her and General Milley and to lay a wreath on behalf of my father, one of the last surviving Coastwatchers. The tour of the Australian War Memorial was very moving. No doubt Ambassador Kennedy will strengthen and bring warmth to the close bond between our two countries".

Tom Burrowes, present with Eve Ash at the Australian War Memorial, said, "I am truly humbled to represent my Coastwatcher father Jim Burrowes on this specific commemoration to the Coastwatchers with our US allies and with such a personal connection. The bravery and sacrifice of the Coastwatchers is inspiring to the next two generations of Australians who have enjoyed relative peace and prosperity. We express our deep gratitude and indeed, 'I dips me lid'! And Lest We Forget."

Ambassador Kennedy presented Ms. Ash (on behalf of Dixie Lee) and Mr. Burrowes with replicas of the coconut shell that President Kennedy used to send a rescue message following the destruction of his patrol torpedo boat, PT-109.

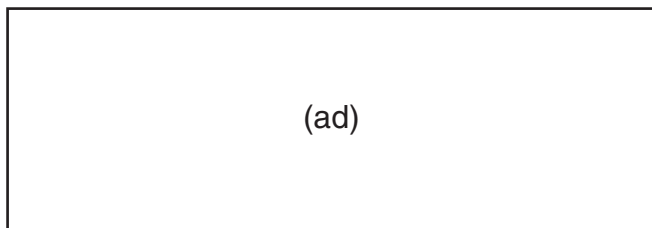
Ambassador Kennedy, General Milley, Ms. Ash, and Mr. Burrowes then participated in the Last Post Ceremony and laid a wreath at the Pool of Reflection.



A replica of the coconut shell that President Kennedy used to send a rescue message. The engraved message reads, "ON NAURO ISL COMMANDER . . . NATIVE KNOWS POS'IT . . . HE CAN PILOT . . . 11 ALIVE NEED SMALL BOAT . . . KENNEDY".

Photo: John F. Kennedy Library.

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Around the Units



Headquarters Special Operations Command

Special Operations Commander for Australia, Major General Paul Kenny, DSC, AM, DSM, welcomed our partners from Malaysia Army (Tentera Darat Malaysia) special operations to Campbell Barracks in Perth recently.



Major General Kenny (left) met with Major General Mohd Adi Ridzwan (right), Commander of 21st Special Service Group, to discuss ongoing bilateral and multilateral training opportunities.
Source: Defence

Major General Adi also visited 21st Special Service Group and the Special Air Service Regiment special operations force personnel training side-by-side on Exercise Dusk Tiger 2023.

Australia and Malaysia have a long-standing defence relationship based on shared interests in promoting regional security cooperation and a rules-based regional order. Australia and Malaysia, along with New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom, are partners in the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

Our main Australian Army Special Operations Command has a strong bilateral relationships with Malaysian Armed Forces special operations forces, conducting several annual exercises.

SOCOMD and the Malaysian Armed Forces personnel use the Tiger, Jerung and Dagger Ababil

series of exercises to enhance interoperability, share skills and build understanding.



1st Commando Regiment

Special-ops students immerse in language lessons

by Mike Hughes

Two Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) soldiers flew into Sydney to bolster the depth of ADF School of Special Operations (ADFSSO) instructors.



An Australian Army special operations force soldier studies Tok Pisin during language training at the ADF School of Special Operations at Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney.
Photo by Corporal Dustin Anderson.

The two PNGDF instructors, from the Long-Range Reconnaissance Unit (LRRU), are teaching the Tok Pisin language to Australian Army special warfare operators from 1st Commando Regiment. The 16-week course includes a two-week immersion training phase in PNG.

PNGDF soldier Private 'R' said the special warfare students would travel to Rabaul and possibly Wewak, to practise their new language skills.



A PNGDF soldier assisting with instruction of an Australian Army special operations force soldier studies Tok Pisin during language training at the ADF School of Special Operations at Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney. Photo by Corporal Dustin Anderson.

"They will be expected to engage extensively with the locals as part of the training scenario buying food and supplies, accessing services, learning about the area, navigating," Private 'R' said.

"The in-country phase is meant to challenge them, but we've been really surprised how quickly the students picked up the basics.

"Within four or five weeks they were talking to us and holding conversations."

ADFSSO is continuing a trial it started with the PNGDF last year.

Course manager Sgt 'C' said Special Operations Command had been training alongside the LRRU for years, so it was great to have two experienced instructors helping with Tok Pisin and passing on their extensive knowledge of the country and culture.

"The two LRRU instructors have such a great depth of military knowledge that they've also been able to help tailor the Defence Force School of Languages syllabus to our needs," Sgt "C' said.

"I think everybody can see the benefits already, so we expect this trial to continue."

The LRRU is also keen for it to become a long-term partnership.

"We're keen to continue to provide instructors on a rotational basis for eight to 16 weeks each year," said Captain 'D', Officer Commanding of the LRRU.

"We have a strong and enduring relationship with SOCOMD [Special Operations Command], so we can see the mutual benefits of continuing to enhance that understanding and interoperability."

While Warrant Officer 'R' has travelled to Australia several times in his 24-year PNGDF career, this is the first time for Private 'R'.

"I've worked with 1st and 2nd Commando Regiments and SASR in PNG and I've deployed to the Solomon Islands and New Caledonia during my near-14-year career, but this is my first time in Australia," he said.

"It's a great experience to see Sydney and all the special operations facilities at Holsworthy Barracks.

"But I can't say I enjoyed the cold when we first arrived in August."

The ADF School of Special Operations is part of SOCOMD's 'schoolhouse' training system.



Special Operations Command freefall paratroopers exiting a RAAF C17A Globemaster III.
Source: Defence public relations

The Special Operations Command soldiers jumped as part of Exercise Global Dexterity 2023, which was conducted by Royal Australian Air Force, Royal Air Force and United States Air Force C-17A Globemaster III aircraft to build interoperability and develop tactical airlift and airdrop capabilities.



Special Operations Command static line paratroopers after exiting a RAAF C17A Globemaster III over Nadzab airfield.
Source: Defence public relations

The Nadzab action in World War II began with a parachute drop at the airport (combined with a separate overland force) and was carried out by the US Army's 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment and elements of the Australian Army's 2/4th Field Regiment.

Nadzab was so successful it was seen as the textbook example of airborne operations in WWII.



2nd Commando Regiment

Special operations force soldiers from 2nd Commando Regiment (2 Cdo Regt) and the ADF Parachuting School jumped into Nadzab airport in Papua New Guinea on the weekend to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Nadzab airborne landing in September 1943.



ADF Parachuting School

The Australian Army Red Berets parachute display team from the ADF Parachuting School dropped into the Royal Military College at Duntroon last week to support the 75th birthday celebrations for the Royal Australian Regiment (RAR).





Chief of Army Lieutenant General Simon Stuart, AO, DSC, inspects soldiers on the parade.
Source. Defence Public Relations

A regimental Colour parade was held for all RAR battalions at Duntroon and the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Simon Stuart, AO, DSC, inspected soldiers on the parade.

The Royal Australian Regiment was formed in 1948, consisting of three 'regular' infantry battalions: 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions, to serve in Japan after World War II.



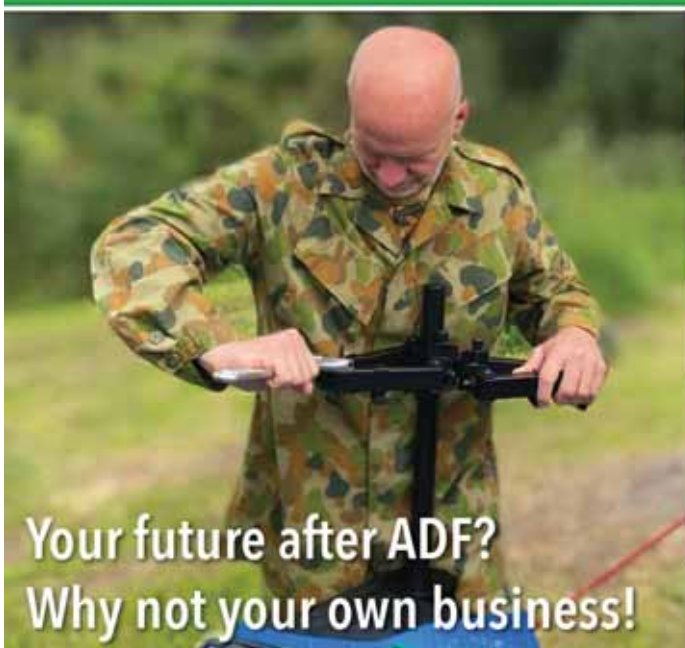
The Red Berets jumped in with an Australian flag and the RAR banner.
Source. Defence Public Relations

More than 680 Australian Army soldiers from the Royal Australian Regiment have died on operations since.

Those operations have included the Korean War, Malayan Emergency, Vietnam War, Somalia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste (East Timor), Solomon Islands, Iraq and Afghanistan.



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DOUBLE DIAMONDS

No 10 November 1952

Edited and photos inserted by Editor

MERRY MAC'S, MARAUDING MOB

By Baldy and Beardett¹

The No. 4 Australian Independent Company (No.4 Indep Coy) formed at Foster, Victoria. in July, 1940, was to be the last of the Independent Companies, However all was not clear sailing, for at the end of the Cadre for officers and N.C.O.'s it was decided not to proceed², and that all personnel should be returned to Reinforcement Depots..

Given the opportunity of remaining together and forming the nucleus of two light tank squadrons for service under British command in Malaya, the spirit that was to typify the work of the Coy. throughout it's history was demonstrated by the unanimous decision to remain together and "give it a go".

The cadre moved to Greta, NSW for intensive armoured training and was due to embark for Malaya in January, 1942. Then came Pearl Harbour and a rapid decision found the No.4 Indep Coy a going concern at Foster with Maj. E. McD. (Mac) Walker as Officer Commanding (OC).

The bombing of Darwin on 19th February, 1942, saw the No.4 Indep Coy not withstanding it's incomplete training, rushed to the Northern Territory and ready to operate as a completely independent unit even down to gas-producer vehicles which, with other war equipment had been gleaned from nowhere in a last minute rush.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P05700.001

Group portrait of members of the No. 4 Australian Independent Company, March 1943.

Source. AWM

In true independent spirit with H.Q. at Catherine, the unit was dispersed from Ivanhoe on the Ord River in the West, to Vanderlin Island at the South of the Gulf of Carpentaria in the East, with reconnaissance, and, should the Japs appear, harrassing as the unit tasks.

Here it was that basic training was completed and long range patrols undertaken which were to prove invaluable experience in other areas and the Signallers. under Lieutant (Later Captain 'Nic' Nicolay and

Sergeant Phil Hopper (later K.I.A. in New Guinea as an officer with 2/2nd Commando Company) attained a high degree of efficiency over long ranges which, apart from being a taste of things to come in Timor and New Guinea, was sufficiently noteworthy as to merit special praise.

A task more fitting to an Independent Company, than the garrison duty carried out in the Territory came to the No.4 Independent Company when the Company was ordered to the assistance of the No.2 Independent Company then valiantly resisting the Japs in Timor This was an even more agreeable assignment as many of the officers and N.C.O.'s had previously been together in cadres.

¹Two former members of No 4 Independent Company.

²This was an Army Headquarters decision however as soon as Pearl Harbor occurred the decision was rescinded.



The advance party of No.4 Independent Company landed, after a scare the day before that sent the corvette H.M.A.S. Kalgoolie running for cover, at Betano, Timor on 15th September, 1942.

Greeted by Major. R. R. (Baldy) Baldwin the advance party moved to "Alas" North of Betano to prepare for the reception of the full company, some ten days later.

At last light on 23rd September H.M.A.S. Voyager approached the Betano beach and disembarkation was quickly under way, and proceeding to plan, when without warning Voyager touched ground and stuck fast bringing to an inglorious end the service of a gallant ship famed for many valiant deeds in war not least of which was her part in the Tobruk 'spud run'.

Next day Voyager's crew, made it hot for Jap bombers accounting for at least one, but the ship was abandoned and her crew, appalled at the thought of becoming commandoes, evacuated.

The task of the unit was twofold, to establish an Observation Post (OP) at Dilli, the Jap H.Q. and to harass the enemy at every opportunity. Thus the disposition of the Coy. became, A platoon (Lieut. C. D. Murphy) on the West of Dilli, B platoon (Capt. Dan. O'Connor) on the East and C platoon (Capt. Alan Thompson) based on Ainaro maintaining the dangerously long line of communication.

No.2 Indep Coy then began to withdraw to reserve positions to obtain such well earned rest as was possible in such circumstances.



Betano, Portuguese Timor. September 1942. The wreck of HMAS Voyager. The Australian commander ordered the destruction of the stranded vessel.
Source. AWM

Both OP's faithfully carried out the tasks allotted, sending back aircraft, ship-ping and troop movement information which due to the lamentable lack of air strength was not able to be used to the best advantage. Lieutenant Harry Flood, West of Dilli through contact with the pro-Australian Portugese at Liquissa reported dispositions and air defences, while on the East, the OP had a direct view of Dilli airfield and covered air movement.

Jap knowledge of the situation of these OP's made them increasingly untenable until by Christmas the Eastern OP had to be regrettably abandoned.

While the Jap was doing his best to make it hot for the OP boys he was not having it all his own way in other areas. Lieut. 'Happy' Hammonds Engineers treked to the North and blasted the coast road putting it out of action for three weeks, and giving to the Air Forces a perfect target for strafing which unfortunately was not accepted, B platoon was busy with ambushes of motor convoys East of Dilli on the same road, and in, the meantime C platoon carried on a private war in the Ainaro valley in support of friendly natives.

About this time NORFORCE³ sent instructions to obtain a prisoner, and so there was great excitement when, after an ambush by Corporal Des. Williams and his subsection accounting for 11 Japs one was reported taken. Friendly natives worked too fast!!?

Supply for the two Company's was becoming progressively more difficult as the Japs began a system-Fatic scorched earth policy and hostile natives became more active.

With the evacuation of a Dutch force some 200 strong (involving the loss of the Corvette H.M.A.S. Armadale) and the later withdrawal of No.2 Independent Company on 16th December, 1942, then No.4 Independent Company, remained alone under command of Lieutenant Colonel Bernie Callinan.

With Jap and hostile native activity becoming rapidly more effective the last Dilli OP. had to be abandoned and the Company dispersed to offer a more unified resistance in the event of an all-out attack.



Captain "Shorty" Hart.
Source. Double Diamonds

³At that time NORFOCE was the title of Northern Territory Command Headquarters.



As casualties could not be effectively handled attacks by the Company were now pressed only in favourable circumstances, and so in spite of the heavy cost to the Jap only four men were killed in action in the four months of this strenuous and extremely mobile campaign.

Comforts and mail were delivered just prior to Christmas, and should the Jap have decided to attack at that time then his best weapon would have been this unaccustomed food.

On the Unit's recovery from the Christmas ordeal it was decided to resume aggressive patrolling, but a signal on the 6th January, 1943, advising that the Coy. would be evacuated on the night of 9-10th January, caused not only a revision of plans, but presented almost insuperable difficulties in the contacting of outlying pat that there rolls so much so that it was not until the night before the evacuation that all were advised.

With the Betano beach occupied by the Jap, the Coy. was concentrated at Quicras and from there boarded H.M.A.S. Arunta for Darwin leaving behind a volunteer force to destroy equipment, etc., which after a torrid 35 days was evacuated by submarine.

The story of Timor would not be complete without mention of those few members who later returned by parachute, and who, with the exception of Lieutenant Stevenson and Rod Dawson, met death or capture⁴.

Returning from leave the Coy. passed through Canungra and on to Wongabel where for a time it became part of 2/7th Cavalry (Commando) Regt. and then under command 9th Div. moved to Milne Bay with Maj. Key. Garvie as Officer Commanding.

On the 4th September, 1943, the Coy., now a Commando Squadron, embarked for Lae little knowing that it was to suffer it's heaviest casualties in one single blow before reaching it's objective. In a few short hectic minutes Jap dive bombers and torpedo bombers evaded the naval and air screen, and pressing home their attack damaged one Landing Ship Tank (LST) with bombs and crippled another, in which the Sqn. lost over thirty killed and many wounded, with a torpedo.

The final landing was uneventful as earlier waves with light opposition had quickly pushed out over a wide perimeter and were moving rapidly West to Lae.

Assigned a protecting role on the flank the Squadron moved West and inland to the Busu River, then North to the Kunda Bridge where a costly and unsuccessful attempt was made by B Troop to cross the flimsy suspension bridge under heavy fire, the ridge being almost destroyed by small arms fire in the action. By the time C Troop was able to affect the crossing at the sawmill the Japs had evacuated and moved back

into the hills. It was made difficult by the impossible supply position to pursue the fleeing enemy and pursuit was abandoned and the Squadron moved to the coast at the mouth of the Burep River.

Meanwhile two Brigades of 9 Division. had moved to Finchafen and had become engaged in heavy fighting. At the end of October the Squadron moved up to take over the Kumawa area prior to the Sattleberg attack.

On the fall of Sattleberg on 22nd November, the unit moved North to Wararuo, on to Uluo, and Werikoo as flank protection, patrolling extensively to the North and West and engaging in a number of minor clashes finally moving into Baguluo before returning to Australia.

After many weary months at Ravenshoe on the Atherton Tablelands hopes of leave were dashed by sudden movement orders for embarkation on the U.S. Army Troop Carrier 'Sea Cat' at Townsville, for Morotai.

Arriving at Morotai after a somewhat slow but uneventful trip the Australian Staging Camp was found to be up to the usual standard . . . no camp. Handed tents, six axes, six spades and 1,000 acres of virgin jungle, two bottles of beer from a teetotal officer produced a Yank bulldozer which cleared the area in three hours.

Then followed extensive study of the intended operation at Sadau, a small island about 500 yds. by 600 yds. within 25 pounder range of the main landing beach at Tarakan. The Sqn. role was to give protection to one battery of 25 pounders⁵ to be put ashore on D Day plus one (D+1) in preparation for, and cover to, the main landing.

Sudden embarkation with only a few hours warning on one L.S.T and one Landing Ship, Infantry (L.C.I) resulted in eight days of floating hedges, in particular on the L.C.I. which had been designed to take considerably less bodies, and then for not more than 48 hours. After five days in Morotai harbour sailing orders were eventually received and the Sqn. sailed in company with a destroyer, a corvette and a rocket ship on the 700 mile trip to Tarakan.

At dawn on the 30th April, 1945, standing off Tarakan the Sqn. watched a supporting destroyer nose right in inviting trouble. When none was forthcoming the L.S.T. and L.C.I. moved past towards Sadau. The destroyer opened fire on Sadau with all guns — and missed. Rocket ships were quickly on the scene and saturated the island as the first wave of barges got away from the L.S.T. After a few quick bursts of Owen fire (total known casualties one monkey) the L.C.I. with the main force aboard moved in to the beach. Fortunately for this group it's task was already accomplished for the nature of the cliffs forced that concentration of troops that machine-gunners dream of.

⁴These men were part of Services Reconnaissance Department Operations LIZARD and LAGARTO.

⁵25 Pound, Field Artillery



Things then moved forward with comparative smoothness, the expected Jap attack failed to materialise and all had a grandstand seat for the main landing by 26 Bde, the following morning.

D+2 saw the Squadron relieved of it's protecting duties and in a reserve position on the flank of 2/23rd Infantry Battalion near Tarakan Hill, a feature dominating the whole of the Oilfield

The Squadron, with Captain Pat. Haig as Company Quartermaster, was ordered to relieve B Coy, 2/23rd Infantry Battalion which had found the task of taking Tarakan Hill too big for one Coy. For the first and only time in it's history we fought as a complete group, and proceeded to what was to be a 'successful attack strictly in accord with infantry tactics.

Following a Naval barrage and Squadron air strike two forward troops were to move on the feature over completely open ground with one troop in reserve. After an unhindered move to the base of the hill the assaulting C Troop came under very heavy and costly fire from tunnels going deep into the bowels of the feature and was pinned hard and fast. Here it was that K. P. (Brolga) O'Regan won his hard earned Military Medal.

The reserve Troop under Carptain 'Shorty' Hart made a swift move round the flank and with a real 'Darby Sand-hill' attack up the side of the almost vertical hill so surprised the Jap that after only sporadic resistance the whole feature was taken.



5 May 1945 Tarakan, Borneo. Captain G.C. HART, Officer Commanding B Troop, 2/4 Commando Squadron, eating a ration pack meal on Tarakan Hill.
Source: AWM.

After occupying another grandstand view for two days the Sqn. moved inland with very wary Troopers

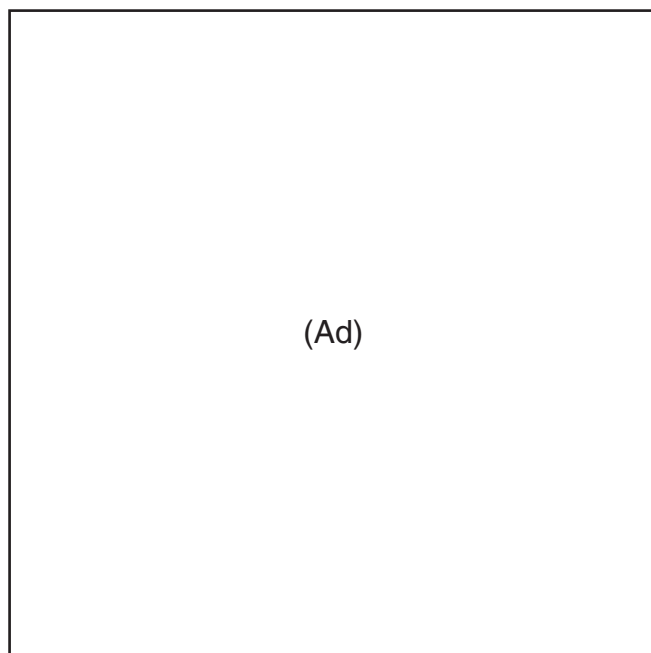
cat walking between buried aerial bomb booby traps towards the island water pumping station, and then on to the inevitable jungle track, this one aptly named 'Snags Track'.



Tarakan, Borneo, 13 May 1945. Trooper J.D. GILL, (Gunner 1), and Trooper A.L. ERWIN (2), members of C Troop, 2/4 Commando, in a Bren gun pit on the left side of Snags track.
Source: AWM

With C Troop again forward, and again pinned hard across the track by heavy machine gun fire, A and B Troops endeavoured to outflank the enemy. Here it was that the whole squadron encountered heavy going and B Troop striking particularly heavy counter attack was supported by a platoon of 2/48th Infantry Battalion. when that gallant soldier Lieutenant 'Diver' Derrick, V.C., met his most untimely fate. With the Japs persisting in mass attacks the Squadron not without loss to itself inflicted casualties out of all proportion to its own strength.

Soon the temporary deadlock in this area was left to the 2/48th Infantry Battalion and the Squadron, returned to it's normal role of patrol duties in the Djoata 'Oilfield area in the centre of the island and at Cape Djoata in the North.



(Ad)





Members of 2/4 Commando Squadron hoisting the Australian flag shortly after landing on Sadau Island, off Borneo. A Japanese pole and pulley were used.
Source: AWM



Australian blue wool bunting ensign with a colour patch for 2/4 Commando Squadron is sewn to the proper right star of the Southern Cross constellation. The cream linen hoist is marked in black ink 'ROLL of HONOUR' and bears the surnames and initials of the 15 men who were killed in action or died of wounds during the Tarakan campaign, together with the names of the 41 men who were wounded. The upper arm of the cross of St George on the Union Jack is marked in indelible pencil 'SADAU IS TARAKAN A.I.F. 2/4 COMMANDO SQN - MAY 1945'. The horizontal arms of the cross and the Federation Star, bear the signatures, or printed names, of some of the men in the Squadron, together with their states of origin.
Source: AWM

This the final operational area of the Squadron- was the most nerve wracking to date. Sections were reduced by casualties and sickness to less than half their strength and the incessant pro-gramme of patrols by day and Jap attack with small arms, spears and artillery shell bombs by night drove everyone almost into the ground.

The Japs were driven headlong from their fortress area at Cape Djoeata by C troop (Captain N. Nicolay), their defences there being exceptionally strong and consisting principally of four naval guns (fortunately pointing out to sea) and a system of concrete pillboxes connected by deep communication trenches.

Still based on Djoeata Oilfield the Squadron continued its role of patrol force right up to the cessation of hostilities and even after for the Jap didn't even have enough intelligence to know the show was over.



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LUKE GOSLING
MP FOR SOLOMON
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ADF Transition Program

Serving on operations or working in conflict zones isn't always the most confronting experience in many veterans' lives.

Sometimes it can be the experience of coming home or seeing our mates coming home from different theatres at different times.

It's distressing to learn about mates who fall through the cracks – taking the decision of death by suicide, after surviving sometimes dangerous training and avoiding an enemy round.

It's part of why I pushed so hard for a Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

As veterans, the transition to civilian life can be one of the biggest challenges we face.

We all remember when 'transition' was a matter of handing in your field gear and signing your life away on the way to civvy street, but finally transition support is improving.

The Australian Defence Force Transition Program provides veterans' and their families access to a broad range of advice, one-to-one support, workshops, and programs.

Rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, a Defence Transition Coach can build a personalised plan that works towards the post-transition goals of the individual – whether it's paid employment, further study, volunteering, retirement, or other forms of meaningful engagement (through the creative arts, for example).

All ADF members must transition through a Transition Centre regardless of length of service or mode of transition, and the national network of Transition Centre's are located on or near most major bases.

You can also access certain programs at any time in your career, with further programs becoming available once you commence transition and for up to 24 months post-transition.

In August, the Australian Government released our country's first Veteran Transition Strategy.

It's a major step towards establishing a more connected transition ecosystem, prioritising the individual needs of each veteran and their family.



The 'ADF to V of Creative Conversations' featured live performances by serving and former Defence members.

The Veterans' and Families' Hubs network also continues to expand.

In the Northern Territory – where I live and work – we've welcomed a Mates4Mates Veteran and Family Wellbeing Centre; providing assistance with transition, employment, family, advocacy services and mental health support to all current and former serving personnel, including reserves and their families.

As well as the Hubs, I'm also a big fan of the therapeutic benefits that sport, the creative arts, and support animals can provide both during and post-service.

I recently hosted an event with the Australian National Veterans Art Museum (ANVAM) at Parliament House in Canberra – the ADF to V of Creative Conversations – where the special forces community were out in force.

You might recognise a few familiar faces in the Rock4RnR band; Harry Moffit co-lead vocals, Cam Smith on drums, Matt Stevens on bass guitar, and some bloke providing dodgy supporting vocals (me).

When it comes to transition there is more support than ever to help you follow those post-ADF dreams.

Of course, there is more work to do.

There always is.

But support is there – please use it.

And always know you are not alone.

C4L

For more information on transition support for veterans and families visit, defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition



Member for Solomon, Luke Gosling OAM MP, addresses the audience at 'Creative Conversations.' (Credit James Baldwin ANVAM)



COMMANDO AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS MEMORIALS

Edited by Doug Knight

Coastwatchers Memorial Kalibobo Point, Madang Papua New Guinea

Description

The Coastwatchers Memorial light at Madang Harbour. The light is a memorial to the Coastwatchers still living and to those thirty-eight who paid the supreme sacrifice while carrying out their solitary and dangerous work during the second world war, and the loyal natives who made it possible for them to remain at their posts.

The PNG lighthouse was the idea of the RAN's brilliant Director of Naval Intelligence during the Second World War, Commander Rupert Long. It was built from many individual donations, including from Vice President Richard Nixon, Fleet Admiral 'Bull' Halsey, and Vice Admiral Sir John Collins.

Shaped like a rocket or a bomb, the eighty feet high reinforced concrete column has an attractive base surround and a cruciform pathway approach. This Memorial Lighthouse was also designed to be a practical navigational aid with provision for the installation of a powerful one million candlepower beam that would be visible up to ten miles out to sea. Part of the inscription on one of three dedication plates reads:

'In honour and grateful memory of the Coastwatchers and of the loyal natives who assisted them in their heroic service behind enemy lines during the Second World War in providing intelligence vital to the conduct of Allied operations. Not only did the Coastwatchers transmit by means of teleradio from their jungle hideouts information which led to the sinking of numerous enemy warships, but they were able to give timely warning of impending enemy air attacks. The contribution towards the Allied victory in the Pacific by a small body of men¹ who constituted the Coastwatchers was out of all proportion to their numbers.'

(ad)

¹This is not quite correct as there was one female Coast watcher Third Officer Ruby Boye.



Third Officer Ruby Boye. The only woman Coastwatcher.
Source: <https://www.navy.gov.au/media-room/publications/semaphore-07-17>

The light was officially switched on for the first time on 15 August 1959 by Senator John Gorton, Minister for the Navy, in the presence of Brigadier d. M. Cleland, Administrator of Papua New Guinea, Commander E. Feldt, who organised and expanded the organisation, Captain C. M. White, US Naval Attache in Australia, other officials and local residents, and an estimated 3,000 locals.

History

The Coastwatching Organisation, created and administered by the Royal Australian Navy, operated in the island's north and north-east of Australia from the earliest days of the war in the Pacific in the Second World War. Civilians and military personnel, who continued their work in enemy held territory throughout the war, staffed this organisation at extreme risk to themselves and those native people who assisted them. The Coastwatchers monitored Japanese ship, air, and troop movements, and would then relay this information to their own commands.

Coastwatchers made the first sighting of Japanese forces by identifying large flying boats off Madang in December 1941. The names of those who gave their lives are engraved in a memorial around the base of the lighthouse.

The man who was to do so much to ensure the success of the Coastwatcher concept, Eric Feldt, began his career as one of the first term cadets to enter the newly established Royal Australian Naval College at



Geelong in Victoria in 1913. He resigned a few years later to work for the Australian Government in New Guinea as a District Officer. As his association with the people and the land grew, he came to know and understand the island people, the plantation managers and assorted government officials, and they in turn came to know and trust him. With the outbreak of World War II against Germany in 1939, approximately eight hundred Coastwatchers were under the control of the Royal Australian Navy Intelligence Division. Eric Feldt was by now a Lieutenant Commander on the Navy's emergency list and resigned his position as a district officer in New Guinea, rejoined the Navy and was appointed Staff Officer Intelligence at Port Moresby. His main duty was to organise and expand the civilian Coastwatchers.

The Coastwatchers were supplied with teleradios, a heavy and unwieldy radio and telegraph combination set. It was battery operated, with a voice range of 650 km and a telegraph range of around 950 km. The radio was sturdy and very efficient but because of its weight, batteries, charging engine and benzene fuel, it needed several men to carry the lot. The Coastwatchers were trained in the use of the 'Playfair' code, a low-grade cipher based on a list of key words. Later coders, trained at HMAS Cerberus Signal School near Victoria's Western Port Bay, were drafted to parties of Coastwatchers and Australian Army Commandos who operated as guerrillas. As an example, Naval Intelligence asked one Coastwatcher for his wife to provide some key words for use with the Playfair code. 'What was the name of your sister's racehorse? 'Rainbird.' 'Where was your wife's first teaching appointment?' 'Deloraine.' These would easily have been decoded by Japanese decoders within a week or two, so they were for immediate use only and not to be repeated.

By March 1942, Coastwatchers were positioned around the coasts of Papua New Guinea, the adjacent islands, and the Solomon Islands and as they were now operating in enemy held territory, it was recommended that the Coastwatchers be appointed to naval rank although some opted to join the Army or the Air Force. This was not only for pay rates but primarily as active servicemen they would not be treated as spies but as Prisoners of War. As it turned out, the subtle difference of being a serving member in the Australian military or a civilian meant nothing at all to the Japanese as those who were caught were, in most cases, shown no mercy and summarily executed anyway.

Throughout the war, the information transmitted to the Director of Naval Intelligence by the Coastwatchers was comprehensive and accurate so there was little the Allies did not know about the strength and location of the enemy. Knowledge of the terrain in which they operated, and the friendship and assistance of the local natives were the essential elements needed for the Coastwatchers to operate and evade Japanese patrols. In fact, without local native cooperation, it would have

been very difficult, if not impossible, for the Coastwatchers to have achieved anywhere near the success they did. They were a mixed bag of soldiers, naval personnel, traders, planters, missionaries, colonial officials, a few women, and locals. In most cases, they were thoroughly familiar with the area, and many considered the South Pacific their home.



The Coastwatcher Memorial.
Source: Wikipedia



The welcome sign in front of the memorial.
Source: Wikipedia



Future Australian Coastwatcher Memorial

There is now a call for a dedicated Coastwatchers' Memorial to be built in Australia as there is currently no such Memorial on the Australian mainland.

A petition to the Brisbane City Council has been launched to create a Coastwatchers' Memorial at Newstead Terrace Park in Brisbane.

The instigator of the petition, John Gates has written that the memorial or statue, "would be a notable addition to narrative of Brisbane's role in World War II through the work of the Coastwatchers and their leader Commander Eric Feldt. This place would be the first memorial on Australian shores recognising the vital role the Coastwatchers played in the War in the Pacific. The Coastwatchers made immeasurable contributions to the Allies' success in the War in the Pacific through their spying on the enemy planes, ships, and troops."

The great-niece of Eric Feldt, Dr Betty Lee, who has written a biography of her famous relative said, "it would be wonderful have a memorial you could go to in Australia and reflect on the Coastwatchers' remarkable service and sacrifice."

Another keen supporter for a Coastwatcher's Memorial in Australia is former Coastwatcher James Burrowes OAM who celebrated his 100th birthday on 29 March 2023. His remarkable website – the <https://thelastcoastwatcher.wordpress.com/> provides a wealth of detail about the Navy's most decorated Second World War unit.

For those wishing to sign the petition it can be done on-line at: <https://www.epetitions.brisbane.qld.gov.au/petition/view/pid/1246>



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3 & 4 MAY 2024



VALE

Colonel C.B.E (Ed) Davis, RFD

Born on 03 September 1940 and passed away on 26 August 2023
34 Years of ADF Service

By Doug Knight

Service number 055435 Air Cadet Charles Barnett Edgar Davis joined the Active Citizens Air Force (now known as the Air Force Reserve) in April 1958 and progressed into the Permanent Air Force in 1965 when he completed his medical studies under an Air Force Medical scholarship program. Ed served in a number of routine Air Force medical positions including a posting to RAAF Base Butterworth. It was during this time that Ed was involved in a medical evacuation from Vietnam on the 24th February 1968 with 37 Squadron to the RAAF Hospital in Richmond, New South Wales.

Ed transferred from the Regular Air Force to the Reserves in 1970 to commence his civilian medical career and continued serving on the Inactive RAAF Reserve until 1978.

In 1978 Ed was motivated to join the Army Reserve and was posted to 6 Field Ambulance where he spent several years, prior to being posted to 2 Commando Company in January 1980. This was unusual not only because of his age but also he was a Major at the time and technically too senior for the position. Somehow or other he managed to 'work the system'. Ed stayed with 2 Commando Company for five years where he made a great impression on unit members, particularly as he was 40 years old at the time and he gave the younger unit members a challenge to keep up with the Doc.

This was noteworthy particularly during his participation in the arduous Small Craft handlers course, Parachute course, Roping and Rappelling, Diving and a number of other specialist skills while still undertaking a heavily committed severe medical career. It was very unusual for the Medical Officer to be specialist qualified, but Ed's view was that he had to experience what the Commandos did, so that he could provide full support, and in doing so he also qualified for the coveted Green Beret during his posting.

At the time the Green Beret annual arduous physical retests including a 2 mile equipment run in less than 16 minutes, 9 mile in 90 minutes and 20 mile cross-country navigation exercise in five hours. Plus numerous other physical and weapons, medical and other skill tests.

It was during Ed's time in the unit that the six-week SASR Patrol Medics Course was realigned for part-time training, including numerous hospital attachments at Ballarat Base Hospital (a major road trauma centre), and was delivered in 16 days continuous training with pre-course study and three subsequent weekends of hospital attachments. This course was continued for a

number years until replaced by the Combat First-Aid course.



Ed receiving a presentation Commando Fairburn Sykes fighting knife from the 1/91 Special Forces Patrol Medics Course, Capt Doug Knight.

Source: Author

In December 1985 Ed was transferred to 2nd Battalion, the Royal Victoria Regiment Ballarat where he was the battalion regimental medical officer, for two years and then returned to 6 Field ambulance in 1987 as the Commanding Officer where he served for four years, which is an unusually lengthy posting. Until January 1991 when he assumed the staff position in the medical component of the Headquarters of the 3rd Military district in 1992 where he remained serving until 1997.

Eds' military honours and awards are:

- Reserve Force Decoration
- Australian service medal 1945-75 with clasp Southeast Asia
- Australian Defence Medal



Ed's service medals and green beret on his casket at the funeral commemoration.

Source: Author





Ed's granddaughter Imogen Edwards holding the floral tribute at the commencement of the casket leaving the funeral commemoration.
Source: Author



ACA VIC and RAAMC personnel form an honour guard for the departure of Ed's casket.
Source: Author

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VALE

5/7012 Major Jack Harold Skipper MC

1RAR, 43/48 Battalion, 3RAR, 1 Cdo Coy

23 April 1930 – 24 August 2023

Born 23 April 1930 in Perth his early schooling was at North Perth Public School, and he finished his schooling in Perth.

He was accepted to the Royal Military College, Duntroon Canberra in 1948, and graduated in 1951. He was posted to Korea with the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR) in 1952 taking reinforcement draft by sea to Kure Japan near Hiroshima. He undertook additional training at battle school Hara Mura Japan, then to Korea by mid-1952 to join 1RAR B Coy 6 Platoon as Platoon Commander. He served 12 months in Korea with a second posting to Brigade HQ after being wounded. The Korean War mainly against Chinese forces was fought by a United Nations force including Australia.

1 RAR took over positions held by other UN troops in October 1952 on Hill 355, but those positions were not fully maintained, with Chinese trenches close to the wire and poorly maintained mine-fences. The Australian positions were very much like WW1 trenches, but more elaborate. They also included forward listening posts, which were some 100 yards to 200 yards from



the line. These positions were to alert troops to enemy attacks and patrols, which came largely at night. The Australians also had roving ambush fighting patrols almost nightly.

On the night of 27 August 1952, Lieutenant Skipper commanded a fighting patrol of around thirteen men who were to operate in the area of 'The Boot'. As they approached the creek crossing in that area, an enemy patrol was heard moving forward. Lieutenant Skipper withdrew his scouts and took up an ambush on the crossing. As the enemy attempted to cross, they were engaged and at least five were killed.

The patrol was then subjected to enemy fire. Lieutenant Skipper quickly reorganised his patrol and withdrew it from the scene of the action without casualties.

On the night of 15/16 November 1952, Lieutenant Skipper commanded a patrol sent out to collect a dead enemy soldier located in the middle of a minefield at 'Calgary'. Knowing the great importance attached to the recovery of this body, he probed the minefield for two hours until he had cleared a path through which he



could pull the body. The night was extremely dark and very little information was available concerning the minefield. During this operation he displayed a high degree of bravery and initiative.

On the night of 16/17 November 1952, Lieutenant Skipper commanded a patrol which was sent out to secure 'Calgary' a short time after a standing patrol had been driven back. Lieutenant Skipper conducted a reconnaissance in this area and moved a fighting patrol forward and was attacked by a large enemy party. Having inflicted many casualties and despite being wounded himself, he successfully withdrew his patrol to a new ambush position. Lieutenant Skipper's example and leadership during this action had a great effect on the morale of his company, as he was, at that stage, the only remaining platoon commander.

Lieutenant Skipper was evacuated to a UN hospital by an Indian field ambulance to a Norwegian MASH hospital. On the way to the hospital the ambulance with brown out headlights run off the road, rolling down an embankment. Luckily for him, he was sitting in the front passenger seat, if he had been on the stretcher, he would have been crushed. A British truck was flagged down, and after some 'cordial persuasion' did a U turn and drove them back to ambulance station to get a new vehicle to the Norwegian MASH.

For his courage, devotion to duty and actions on November 15, 16 and 17 as well as the earlier action in August 1952 he was awarded the Military Cross (MC).

Jack had a further 12 months posting back to Hara Mura Japan as Instructor Battle School. He returned to Australia in 1954 for Posting to 43/48 Infantry Battalion, South Australia as Adjutant and was promoted to Captain. During that posting he was sent to Maralinga in 1956 as Camp Adjutant during the British Nuclear Bomb trials. This took longer than expected due to unfavourable winds. He witnessed 3 atomic explosions and he and the Australian troops walked through the blast areas with gas masks and disposable smocks.

He was posted to Malaya with 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR) (1957/1958) based at Sungai Siput. He was promoted to Major at age of 28 and was Company second in command. The Malayan Emergency went from 1948 to 1960.

Jack posted to the United Kingdom (UK) in 1958 to



August 1952, 1 RAR, Korea, Jack Skipper at left.



Jack Skipper Korea 27 May 1953
Source: AWM

train with the Royal Marines. Jack recalled one training mission was to blow up an oil refinery. He was teamed up with a Royal Marine commando in his two man canoe. The canoes were blown off course and landed a long way from the intended point. The Brits running the exercise were so concerned the Commandos were lost that they went up and down beaches with loud hailer looking for them. Jack and his colleague, were not sure and kept quiet thinking it was a trap and proceeded to make their way to the refinery and oil tanks, leaving a message in chalk "Up the Aussies" on the oil tanks.

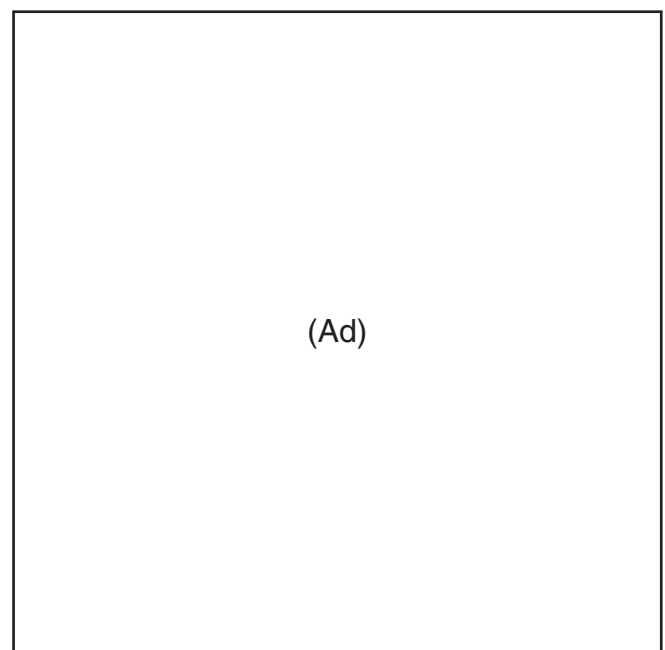
He returned to Australia and was appointed the second Commanding Officer of the new 1 Commando Company at Georges Heights, Mosman in May 1959. He was involved with exercises involving parachuting, cliff climbing, unarmed combat, diving and other water activities. Exercises at that time were frequently with Royal Australian Navy submarines.

Jack married Lynette in December 1959 at St Phillips Church in York Street and celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary before his passing.

Jack retired from the Army in 1961.

Post the Army he had several positions as a civilian including beef farming in the Southern Highlands.

Jack is survived by his wife Lynette, 2 children Mark and Juliet, 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.



(Ad)



335058 Geoffrey Frederick Cohen AM

OC 1 SAS Company, OC 2 Commando Company, 2IC 3RAR

27th June 1933 - 30th September 2023

By Barry Higgins

Geoff was born and grew up in Brighton, Melbourne. He lived there until he gained entry to the Royal Military College, Duntroon and commenced his three-year Officer Training course in February 1951, aged 17.

Early 2 Commando Company member Frank Read recalls a Small Scale Raids course in late 1958 when his Kayak partner was Geoff Cohen, then Captain Aide de Camp to the General Officer Commanding Southern Command, Lieutenant General Lt. Gen Edgar.

Among others on the course were John O'Rourke (2 Cdo Coy), Dave Gilder (then a captain in Armoured Corps), Neville Smethurst and Bruce Wade (then Lieutenants in the SAS Coy), with Tony Haley and Jim McFadzean (both Sergeants in SAS Coy).

Frank related, "After getting our canoes off the mother ship we had to paddle some distance up the Werrabee River and then get our canoes several miles inland to hide them while we completed our mission. We had to cover some 140 miles on foot over three nights and return to our canoes".

"Most of our party, including us, capsized. Geoff Cohen and I survived the night in the water sipping on his hip flask of rum and joking about our predicament," Frank said.

Geoff maintained his contact with the Unit over time. As Aide to the General Officer Commanding Southern Command, he and Lt. Gen Edgar visited the 1959 Commando annual camp at Point Addis with the GOC and observed the men training.



General Officer Commanding Southern Command, Lieutenant General Hector Edgar, with his Aide, Captain Geoff Cohen and Company Adjutant/ 2IC Captain John 'Jack' Fletcher observe soldiers in action at the 1959 Point Addis annual camp.
Photo supplied.

The SAS Company

Possibly Geoff's earlier involvement with 2 Commando Company and SAS men helped his path-

way to the SAS. With the rank of Captain Geoff assumed command of the 1st SAS Company Royal Australian Regiment from Major L.G. Clark in June 1962.

During his period of command the SAS Company took part in Exercise NUTCRACKER with 1RAR and 3RAR, the Company's first occasion of providing medium and long range reconnaissance for large conventional units.

In the week prior to 'Nutcracker' the SAS Company conducted field firing, parachute training, casualty evacuation by helicopter training and a short patrol training exercise. This period was designed to train about 30 soldiers, who had recently been accepted into the Company, in SAS techniques prior to deploying on Exercise NUTCRACKER.

The Company's next exercise under Geoff was Long Hop in Papua New Guinea in March 1963. It was the first complete movement of the 1st SAS Company outside of Australia and the first exercise by Australian troops with the 1st Battalion, the Pacific Islands Regiment. The SAS Company was tested in long-range reconnaissance tasks under realistic jungle conditions.

The platoons of the SAS Company were deployed independently into the Popondetta area with the task of locating, harassing and delaying the advance of the 'enemy'. The final phase saw the SAS Company conducting specialist training in the Port Moresby area, including free fall parachuting. Long Hop, with other overseas exercises, was invaluable in preparing the SAS for future operational deployments, including jungle fieldcraft. Working within an 'unfriendly' population was also valuable security training.



Presentation: Captain Geoff Cohen presenting the Officer Commanding's chrome helmet to Major Alf Garland, in March 1963 after their return to Perth from Exercise LONG HOP in Papua New Guinea. Cohen had commanded the Company from 24 June 1962 to 14 March 1963. Regimental photo, from SAS Phantoms of the Jungle, page 63, courtesy of David Horner.



2 Commando Company

In May 1963 Geoff succeeded Major Jim Stewart as OC of 2 Commando Company (2 Cdo Coy).

Fresh from commanding SAS Coy, then still an independent company, as was 2 Cdo Coy, he was thought to be the only officer to have commanded both units, certainly up to that time.

Greatly respected by all ranks, he oversaw a number of changes under his leadership. The influence of the SAS made an impact, with all Unit activities designed to achieve self reliance, teamwork, military competence and leadership, through tough, realistic training.

Competency in all arms skills was an essential prerequisite to specialist training. This saw some hair raising live firing practices, including grenade throwing and demolition tasks using natural cover, at Puckapunyal and Eildon, and the thought of wandering solo in difficult terrain for two days effectively injected some urgency into basic navigation lessons.

While at SAS Coy, Geoff had played a major role in wresting DZ control from the RAAF to the Army and so he was keen to build on this with 'operational' insertions (for the Commando Companies) particularly into the Eildon area. The associated excitement and bruising did much to improve parachuting techniques.

David Waterston, who served on Full Time Duty under Geoff, said, "He was an outstanding Boss; he changed the Unit from an Infantry Company to a Commando Company". David said Geoff built the Company's numbers and strengthened the structure, with higher ranks of officers and NCOs operating at all levels of responsibility.

With his SAS experience Geoff did what the men did. David recalls, "In 1964 we were out in the Unit Safety Craft, the Bell Boy 18 footer. At anchor just off the shipping channel Geoff and I were diving buddies doing a sea floor search. This amazing amount of noise came upon us; it was the USS Long Beach, the first nuclear missile ship going out to meet up with the

aircraft carrier USS Enterprise that was too big to come into the bay".

"Our WO Amphibious was WO2 Al Bayley, the Diving Supervising Officer on our craft and as the American ship passed our little vessel, he used the Addis Lamp and flashed "GO HOME YANK " - and they acknowledged the signal."

"The Australian Army in such a little craft alongside the American vessel - we all had a great laugh" David said.

Geoff was instrumental in arranging the transfer of the Company away from Ripponlea. Geoff later said, "...the unit was bursting at the seams and a new location had to be found." Late in 1965 he said that he, "...finally convinced a hard-nosed Colonel General Staff Southern Command that Fort Gellibrand was the spot". The movement of the depot from Ripponlea to Fort Gellibrand finally occurred in January 1968, after Geoff had posted out. When the Freedom of Entry to the City of Williamstown was conferred on 2 Commando Company in March 1980, Brigadier Geoff Cohen was the Parade Host.



In uniform: Company OC Major Geoff Cohen dressed and operated as "one of the men". Photo supplied.

3 Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment

Geoff served with the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) and was its second-in-command during its time in Vietnam from December 1967 until October 1968.

At the beginning of Battle of Coral-Balmoral in early May 1968, Geoff was tasked with coordinating 3RAR helicopter movements with units of the US 1st Infantry Division. With great difficulty, both in relationships with the US forces, and in radio communications, Geoff overcame many risks and difficulties to help secure the safety and tactical advantage of the Australians at FSB Coral.

Geoff was deeply involved in the tactics of the battles at Coral-Balmoral, an almost month-long major operation that has gone under the radar of public recognition. The Australian Task Force, including 3RAR, prevented the advance of the North Vietnam Army on Saigon, at the cost of significant casualties,

Back home after Vietnam, Geoff was Deputy Commander of the Kapooka Military Area in the late 1970s. Rick Moor recently recalled, "...I was the Adjutant at 1RTB at Kapooka. Each month there was compulsory Officer Training on some military subject which we all suffered in silence.

The notice for the next month's training subject came out and all the (Officers) were excited; 'Action Officers' was to be presented by Colonel Geoff Cohen, a man of renown - ex SASR, Commando and RAR Vietnam".



Under instruction: Captain Geoff Cohen, Lieutenant General Edgar and Captain Jack Fletcher watch on as WO2 Ron Smith instructs 2 Commando Company soldiers at Point Addis. Photo supplied.



"We all thought of blood and guts, stories of danger and glory - 'Action Officers'. On the night we all turned up . . . hardly able to contain our excitement. Geoff Cohen walked to the podium, adjusted the microphone and commenced to give a 90 minute presentation on the importance of being 'Action Officers' in a HQ and how diligent you must be to action the folders in your "In Tray" before they are placed in your "Out Tray" in a timely fashion."

"The term 'Action Officers' lost its glint, never to return, and I became a very poor Staff Officer!", Rick said.

In a distinguished military career Geoff fulfilled a number of senior military posts. He attained the rank of Brigadier and was appointed a member of the Order of Australia in the 1987 Australia Day Honours for his service to the Australian Army as Chief of Staff, HQ Training Command.

Geoff was liked and respected by all who served with him. The sympathy and thoughts of all of Geoff's former serving comrades go to his family and friends.

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VALE

GENERAL SIR PHILLIP HARVEY BENNETT AC KBE DSO

Officer Commanding

2 Commando Company 1958 – 1961

December 27, 1928 – August 1, 2023

By Barry Higgins

Former Chief of the Australian Defence Force and Governor of Tasmania, General Sir Phillip Bennett died peacefully aged 94, at Kyneton. His story had turned almost full-circle, as Victoria was the location of a defining moment of his illustrious military history, in a life of service across Australia and overseas.

Born in Perth, Phillip completed his secondary education at the Perth Modern School. His father was serving as an officer in WW2 at that time and, unsurprisingly, Phillip joined the School Cadet Corps.

He was selected to attend the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in the ACT, graduating as a Lieutenant in December 1948. Posted to the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), he served with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan until mid-1950.

With the unexpected beginning of the Korean War, the 3RAR began operations in Korea in the second half of 1950, with Phillip as the second-in-command of the mortar platoon. 3RAR was in a number of significant clashes with the North Korean forces, including Broken Ridge, with many of his comrades killed and wounded.



General Sir Phillip Harvey Bennett AC KBE DSO.
Photo supplied.

During this period he took command of the mortar platoon and was promoted to Captain, earning a Mentioned in Despatches for his exemplary leadership.

In March 1951 allied forces fought with great distinction against an overwhelming enemy force, in the Battle of Kapyong. Thirty-two 3RAR soldiers were killed and 53 were wounded. The Units involved, including 3RAR, were awarded the US Presidential Citation.

Phillip served in Korea until mid-1953, with brief intervals back in Japan and Australia. After Korea Phillip served in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Around this time an ethos of Special Forces (SF) training had developed following the raising of the first post-WW2 Commando Companies, in Melbourne and Sydney in 1955, to safeguard the specialist WW2 Commando skills.

Phillip completed parachute training and was then sent to the UK in 1957 to train with the Royal Marines. Attached to 45 Commando Royal Marines under his Commanding Officer Jack Richards, he was involved in the civil unrest in Malta during the independence struggles. He and Jack remained friends for life after



In the field: Major Bennett takes time out for a cigarette during a weekend in the field, with Jim Trainor, seated left.
Photo Joe Lamb



Jack and his wife Elizabeth migrated to Australia on retirement.

Following his commando training Phillip's next posting was as Officer Commanding (OC) 2 Commando Company in Melbourne with the rank of Major. Based at Ripponlea it was a CMF unit but many of its members and Regular Army training staff were WW2 or Korean War veterans. Some were both. Phillip's Quartermaster Sergeant was Jack Cousins, who also served with 3RAR in Korea and was awarded the United States Bronze Star 'for courage in assaulting the enemy' during 3 RAR's action near Yongju.

Among other significant Officers and NCOs who served with Phillip at Ripponlea were John Fletcher, John Sheldrick, Bruce Fox, George 'Taffy' Drakopoulos, Peter Askew, Col Barbour, John O'Rourke, Ted Malone, Ray Sanders, Don Bergman and Kevin Collins.

As with all military exercises, Commando training carried its own dangers. John Anderson, who was to be Phillip's predecessor at 2 Commando Company, drowned while training with the British Marines. A few months after Phillip took command in July 1958, Peter Herd drowned at Half Moon Bay during Frogman activities.

Further tragedy was on the horizon. In February 1960, under Phillip's command, 74 Commandos and Amphibious Platoon members set off from Point Lonsdale in kayaks, DUKWs and inflatable Zodiacs for a simulated attack on the Officers' Training School at Portsea, across Port Phillip.

A fierce ebb tide and raging seas caught the raid party off-guard, washing many craft out through the Port Phillip Heads. Kayaks, DUKWs and other safety craft sank or were swamped. Groups of Commandos

clung to overturned craft in the water for hours, some out in Bass Strait, before being rescued

Just before midnight, the bodies of Warrant Officer George Drakopoulos and Private Eddie Meyer were dragged aboard the pilot ship Akuna. Private Roger Wood's body was never recovered.

Subsequent coronial inquests and a rigorous military court of inquiry cleared Phillip of any wrong doing or incompetence. Because of the respect he had earned in his career his senior commanders supported him, despite some adverse political pressure.

Later in 1960 Phillip hosted the Commandant General of the British Royal Marines, Lt- General Sir Ian Riches, at the Ripponlea depot. Sir Ian presented the Company with the Commando knife unit emblem, to mark the alliance between 45 Commando and 2 Commando Company, formalized earlier that year.

After his three year term as the 2 Commando Company OC, Phillip immediately began advanced training at the Australian Staff College – the path to senior military positions. On completion, his next posting was as the Senior Instructor of the Officer Cadet School at Portsea before carrying out senior management duties at Army Headquarters in Canberra.

Inherently an Infantry officer, Phillip then Commanded 1st Battalion RAR. During its time in the Vietnam War its most significant actions were in the Battle of Coral-Balmoral in mid-1968. The Australian Task Force, including 1RAR, prevented the advance of the North Vietnam Army on Saigon, at the cost of significant casualties, many suffered by the 1RAR Mortar Platoon. For his service in Vietnam as CO of 1RAR Phillip was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.



Left: Captain David Gilder, left, Commandant-General of the Royal Marines, Lt-General Sir Ian Riches and Major Phillip Bennett, on the occasion of General Riches visit to 2 Commando Company at Ripponlea in October 1960. Photo supplied.



Right: Lt-General Sir Ian Riches presents the boomerang and dagger plaque to Major Phillip Bennett, during his 1960 visit to 2 Commando Company. Photo supplied.



Left: Sir Phillip with World War 2 resistance heroine Nancy Wake at 2 Commando Company's 40th anniversary celebrations in 1995. Photo Graeme Wilson.



Right: Sir Phillip unveils the Commando Rip memorial at the inaugural dedication at Queenscliff in the year 2000. Photo supplied.



Over time, displaying the qualities that saw him through Korea, Vietnam and beyond, Phillip was appointed Chief of the General Staff in 1982. He became the first Chief of the Australian Defence Force (CDF) in 1984 when the new overarching position was created.

During this period of change many issues were in play within the Defence Force and also between the civilian and military components of the Defence Department. With his quiet and dignified manner but steely determination, coupled with his deep military knowledge, Phillip dealt with the organizational politics that arose. He oversaw significant changes during his tenure.

While in office he was bestowed a knighthood. No CDF since has been granted this honour. As Sir Phillip he retired from the Defence Force in 1987 and soon after was appointed Governor of Tasmania. During his eight years as Governor, with periods of political turmoil, he dealt with matters in his firm but considered manner.

Over the years Phillip maintained his relationship with the Victorian Commandos. He was the life patron of their Association and attended formal functions. He unveiled the newly dedicated Rip memorial at Queenscliff in the year 2000 and attended many annual observances. He was later a life patron of the Australian Commando Association.

Returning to Canberra in his final 'retirement', Sir Phillip served as chair of the War Memorial Anzac Foundation, as president of the Order of Australia Association, with Legacy, and enjoyed golf with his wife Margaret.

Phillip and Margaret lived for a number of years in Ainslie, Canberra. Margaret predeceased him and he remained in Ainslie but later moved to a residence in Kyneton, near his daughter Jane and her family.

Phillip was the devoted husband of Margaret and beloved father of Michael (deceased), Jane and Stephen and father-in-law to Sue, Chris and Anneleen. He greatly adored his grandchildren and great grandchildren.



A family affair. Then Governor General Michael Jeffery and his wife Marlena, with Lady Margaret and Sir Phillip Bennett at the 2 Commando Company 50th anniversary celebrations in 2005.
Photo Sean Burton.



Officers Commanding. Former 2 Commando Company OCs at the Company's golden jubilee dinner at the Power House, Melbourne, in 2005. Rear: Chris Wallis, Michael Hoffman; seated: Bill Billett, inaugural 2 Cdo Coy OC Peter Seddon, and Phillip Bennett.
Photo Sean Burton.

A military service to honour Phillip's life of distinguished service was held in the Anzac Memorial Chapel at the Royal Military College, Duntroon. Governor General David Hurley, former GG Sir Peter Cosgrove, Australian RSL president and Australian Commando Association president Greg Melick, former serving comrades and many friends attended to say farewell and support Phillip's family.

A number of former 2 Commando Company members, some of whom served under Phillip, travelled from Victoria and elsewhere to pay their last respects. At the formal military procession Don Bergman, Doug Knight, Bruce O'Connor and Peter Beasley gave the salute as the gun carriage bearing Phillip went past. Steve Pilmore and George Wing were also present.



A final farewell. Victorian ACA members, including some who served under Phillip, pay their last respects as the gun carriage cortege goes past.
Photo supplied.

As Major General Melick said of Phillip, "He was a man of great humanity and compassion, with an incredible work ethic and a great desire to serve his country".

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A FAMILY TRIBUTE ~ VALE

Glen Conna Stuart Doyle

12 February 1940 - 28 August 2023

Glen grew up in the Ascot Vale area, attending Essendon Technical School then night school at the Printing College in North Melbourne whilst completing his printing (compositing) apprenticeship at The Age in Melbourne - a trade he worked in for most of his working life, either side of several years of military service.

Glen was called up for National Service in January 1959 and, having enjoyed it immensely, he immediately after joined the Citizens' Military Forces - first with the Engineers (1 Medium Workshop) in March 1959, then 2 Commando Company in May 1959, which was then based in Ripponlea.

Glen revelled in the gruelling Commando training, which included the basic parachute course and, despite being involved in the notorious Rip Incident in February 1960 - in which three Army comrades perished and Glen very nearly drowned - he decided that he wanted to be a fulltime soldier. Glen rose to the rank of Sergeant by the time he left the Commandos in April 1962.

With Australia's Defence Forces seeing very little in the way of action at that time, and with Australians still considered British subjects with strong ties to Britain, Glen decided to travel to Britain to join the forces there. He again underwent gruelling training, to this time obtain a much-coveted Red Beret; serving with the Second Battalion of the Parachute Regiment from 9 August 1962 to 24 November 1965, during which time he was deployed on active service in Bahrain, Aden and Borneo.

Glen also completed his UK SAS training but, whilst on deployment in Borneo with 2 Para, Glen became ill and was repatriated back to England. Medical tests revealed that Glen had contracted Type 1 Diabetes, bringing an end to his days of active service, and seeing him return to Australia.

Returning to Australia, Glen began working at Stockland Press and became reacquainted with Jill, whom he had first met during CMF days (Jill having been a member of the RAANC). They married in December 1969.



A family affair. Glenn with his wife Jill and their daughter Kathy at a recent Commando Association dinner.

Photo supplied.

Glen transferred to the Herald and Weekly Times where he remained for 25 years, reaching the position of Head Night Printer before his retirement in 1996.

As well as having been an elite soldier and highly respected in the printing trade, Glen was a loving and dedicated family man, committee man, Freemason and Coburg RSL stalwart, and was extremely busy in retirement, despite his declining health.

For many years he was Honorary Secretary of the Australian National Flag Association, fighting to preserve our current National flag.

He spent many years as an active member and Master of numerous Masonic Lodges in Brunswick and Preston, having recently been awarded his 50-year jewel.

He was a member of the Coburg RSL Branch for 50 years, serving several years on the Committee, 4 years as Vice President and manning numerous ANZAC and Poppy Appeal stalls over the years. Both he and Jill were made RSL Life Members in 2018.

Glen is survived by his wife Jill, daughter Kathy, son Ralph, daughter-in-law Marianne, and grandsons Sam and Will.

(Continued next page)

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3785108 / 3165830 Glen Doyle

2 Commando Company 1959 – 1962

2nd Battalion British Parachute Regiment 1962 - 1965

A young Glen Doyle did his compulsory National Service at Puckapunyal in early 1959 and shared a hut with Bob Dunball. Bob said that post-full time Nashos they were sent to Medium Workshops RAEME to continue their compulsory part-time commitment. Bob later related, "Glen came up with this great idea of joining the Commandos so off we went and we never reported to 1 Medium Workshops and went straight to Ripponlea. Glen and I lived around Essendon and we travelled together to the unit".

Only a month later Glen was delighted to be selected for the much sought-after Basic Parachute Course. He easily qualified alongside other Unit notables, including Claude Gillard, Lyn Gardiner and Ian Wischusen. The course triggered a lifetime of Skydiving for Claude, that saw him serving as president of the Australian Parachute Federation for more than 30 years and president of the International Parachuting Commission from 1994 to 1999.

The Company Adjutant/2 IC, Captain John 'Jack' Fletcher, who was also on the para course, saved Glen's life a few months later.

After less than a year of intensive training in 2 Commando Company, Bob and Glen were severely tested in the Rip incident. At their first annual camp, in the evening of February 1960, under the command of Major Phillip Bennett, the Company and Amphibious Platoon members set off from Point Lonsdale in kayaks, DUKWs and inflatable Zodiacs for a simulated attack on the Officer Training School at Portsea, across Port Phillip.



Wings parade. Glen, second from left, as the 17/1959 Basic Parachute Course march past on their formal award parade. Photo supplied.

A fierce ebb tide and raging seas caught the raid party off-guard, washing many craft out through the Port Phillip Heads. Kayaks, DUKWs and other safety craft sank or were swamped.

Glen was in a kayak with Neville Birch and they were finally taken on board Eddie Meyer's DUKW. Soon after as the DUKW began to sink in the wild seas, all jumped overboard. Glen recalled, "As the DUKW went down my life jacket became entangled with one of the canopy supports and I went down with her . . . after a frantic struggle I got free . . . and made my way to the surface".

Glen and all from the DUKW gathered around a single life buoy, Glen with his life jacket ripped and useless. Captain John 'Jack' Fletcher supported him for hours. Glen said, "I spent the rest of the time with my arm around Jack's neck".

Hours later they were picked up by the pilot ship Akuna, with Eddie Myer (41 Amphibious Platoon) and 'Taffy' Drakopoulos both dead from drowning when they were taken on board.

Further out in Bass Strait, Bob Dunball and his comrades were finally rescued by the Italian liner Toscana and taken on to Adelaide. Sadly Roger Wood was lost when boarding the Toscana.

After the Rip disaster the Unit worked hard to return to normal working life and, no doubt due to the Rip media exposure, recruitment into the Unit increased markedly. Soon after Glen, Bob Dunball and others completed their obligatory part-time National Service (NS) commitment. Unsurprisingly, Glen and most of his NS comrades chose to re-enlist as CMF members in 2 Commando Company.



Members of Glen's Basic Parachute Course watch events in the sky. From left, standing, Phil Meekins, Glen Doyle. Front, Captain Jack Fletcher, BJ Hiam, Claude Gillard, Rob Dunball. Photo supplied.





*About to explode. Glen and his colleagues inspect their handiwork on a demolition course. From left, unknown, Alan Schwab, Col Barbour and Glen Doyle.
Photo supplied.*

Glen was a fierce advocate for Eddie Myer's memory to be remembered alongside Roger and Taffy on the Company memorial at Fort Gellibrand, even though Eddie was not a Company member.

Around this time Glen, Jim Trainor and Lyn Gardiner began a long-standing relationship with the Royal Marines' Association, at a time when some Unit members drank and socialized at the Royal Marines Club in Victoria Parade in East Melbourne. This friendship later led to the formal affiliation of the 2 Commando Association with the RM Association, with much mutual friendship and support.

Glen did specialist courses, as well as the regular weekly evening parade and unarmed combat training that all enjoyed. At times Glen and a couple of unnamed comrades, who lived near Glen, would stop at

a North Melbourne café for supper on their way home. In those times of strict drinking laws, with typical Commando, or youthful, initiative they would fill an empty lemonade bottle with clear Vodka and enjoy it with their food!

Reaching the rank of Corporal in mid-1960, Glen was promoted to Sergeant a year later.

In 1962, aged only 22, the call of adventure rang in his young ears and he went to the UK and with his Commando background soon after qualified to join the British Parachute Regiment. Glen served with distinction for over three years including on active service in Aden, Borneo and Bahrain. For his service Glen was awarded the General Service Medal and the United Nations Medal.

On returning to Australia the usual active life of family, work and community commitments began, and Glen was outstanding on all three fronts.

Like so many, he found the Commando Association a tremendous support and a conduit to keep in touch with his former Commando comrades and old Royal Marine friends. He regularly attended the Royal Marines birthday lunches and the Commando Association annual Rip observance at Queenscliff.

An old friend, Marshall 'Aussie' Power, served with Glen in 2 Commando Company and in the British Parachute Regiment. Although in separate Battalions, Marshall said, "From time to time we did catch up for a pint and reminisce over old times in 2 Cdo Company. They were good days . . . I will have a beer to his memory tonight. Lest we forget."

Glen's many early friends and all Association members offer their sincere sympathy to Jill, Kathy, Ralph and Marianne, and grandsons Sam and Will.

(Ad)



Honouring 'Rusty', the last Navy Beach Commando

Private Nicholas Marquis reflects on the colourful life of his grandfather, Alfred 'Rusty' Marquis, one of the first Warrant Officers of the Navy, who died on July 12, 2023 at age 97.

The death of ex-Warrant Officer Alfred James Marquis, believed to be the last living Royal Australian Navy beach commando, is the end of an era. Known by everyone as 'Rusty', his friends knew him as a sailor, warrant officer, father and overall a true gentleman. But to me, he was Grandpa.

Born in Katanning in 1925, he enlisted in the RAN reserves at 17 and three months old. In 1945, he first saw action during the assault on Tarakan, Borneo. Able Seaman Marquis, then of B Commando, was in a landing craft speeding towards the enemy shore. Seeing a young sailor cowering in the corner of the craft, Grandpa told him to "get a grip" as they were about to hit land.

On exiting the craft, the unit's job was to place flags where ammunition, stores and men would head as they stepped ashore, while providing covering fire. Then, their job was to keep the beach clear of enemy as the rest of the landing ships arrived.

At the time, Naval Beach Commandos were seen as the elite – trained in advanced first aid, escape and evasion, unarmed combat and vehicle skills ranging from Jeeps to amphibious DUKWs. A piece of this history is now in the Australian War Memorial's War in the Pacific section.

A RAN ensign hangs on the wall, my grandfather's name inscribed in the top right: "To Cappy. From RAN Commando 'B'" inked into the flag's lower left canton. Grandpa would recall when this flag was handed to the Salvation Army from his unit in appreciation of the support and service that Captain Clifford 'Cappy' Radford gave at Tarakan.

He deployed to Japan in late 1945 and would tell stories of what the country looked like after the atomic bombings. Deciding to stay in the regular Navy, Grandpa volunteered for the Fleet Air Arm and deployed to Korea between 1953 and 1954 fixing aircraft on HMAS Sydney.

Grandpa was qualified on propeller, jet and rotary aircraft across a service career covering six ships, several shore bases and four air squadrons. With family service stemming back to World War 1, it was only fitting that the baton was handed down to son, Craig and then to me, his grandson.

On December 17, 2021, the 50th anniversary of the re-establishment of the Warrant Officer rank was held in Nowra. Grandpa was among the first sailors to be promoted to Warrant Officer in 1971 and attended the event with fellow ex-WO Robert 'Bob' Brown. Held by the Keith Payne VC Veterans Group, this anniversary brought a new spark of life to my then 96-year-old grandfather.



Chief Petty Officer Alfred James Marquis on the deck of HMAS Melbourne in 1970.

Source: CONTACT magazine

Each Monday morning for the past year and a half, Grandpa waited for his mate Bob to go for the group's weekly walk, ending at a local café.

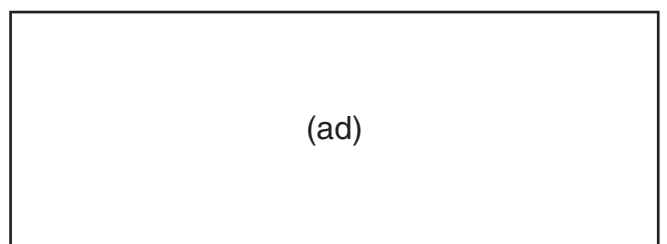
Grandpa said each time the deck was scrubbed bits of dust and bone would every now and then appear for weeks. The stories I have are endless; most will be kept in my heart. One that he loved telling was about attending the world's longest burial – one that might still be going today. Two old sailors were cremated, and their wish was to be spread at sea. After the on-board ceremony, as the ashes were being tipped overboard, a wind picked up and blew them back on deck. Grandpa said each time the deck was scrubbed bits of dust and bone would every now and then appear for weeks.

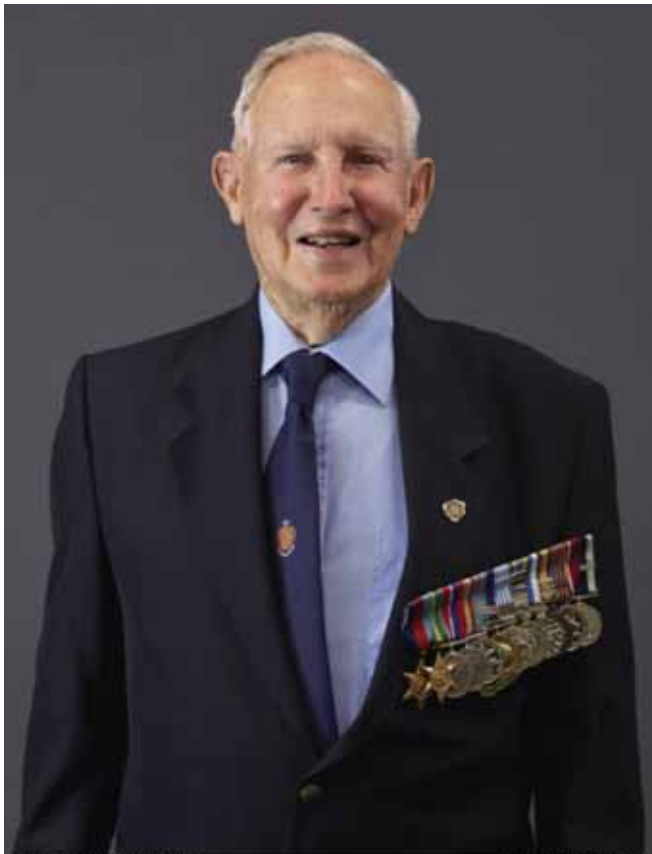
Most people grow up hearing stories of their grandparents and live vicariously through their memories. I was lucky to have almost 30 years with someone who was well respected, in not only the south coast community he lived in for more than 60 years, but by everyone he met.

I'll miss the birthday cards with a simple 'have a beaut day' written on the inside; feeding kookaburras from his back door with my grandma while the grandchildren raided his fridge for his box of chocolates, and later in life, his beer.

Victoria Cross recipients Keith Payne and Willie Apiata, along with George Cross recipient Michael Pratt, attended the funeral at Worrigeer, NSW on 21 July 2023.

(Continued next page)






AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2017.520.1.5994

Studio portrait of R 34611 Alfred James Marquis who served during the Second World War. Photo taken between 2015-2017. Source. AWM

With the recent death of my grandfather comes a lot of memories and the revelation of so much more family history.

A picture can tell a thousand words, but a thousand photos wouldn't show the life this man lived.



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230530 - 2149013 RAYMOND XAVIER DELVES

Former Sergeant 1 RNSWR (Cdo)

By Audie Voormeulen

I have been asked by Ray's wife Patricia to present some background as to Ray's military service and most particularly to 1 Commando Company.



Ray as a Sergeant at
1 Commando
Company circa early 1970s.
Source: Author

I received the following message from Maj Gen Greg Mellick AO RFD SC (at his time in service he was a Sergeant in 1973 prior to attending his Officer training course).

"I remember Ray well. He was quietly determined, very professional and very competent without being flashy. He would sit back and calmly smoke his pipe before giving a considered opinion which one would ignore at their peril.

He would always be relied upon to performing his duties but because he

lived a fair distance away from Georges Heights he very sensibly did not often join many of the over indulging in the demon drink after training.

He cared very much for his family, and I offer them my sincere condolences.? Best Greg

Maj Gen Greg Mellick

National President RSL & Colonel Commandant 1st Commando Regiment

From formerly of 1 CDO Coy & AATTV Captain Mike Wells – I am sadly unhelpful on this one. All I can offer is memories of Ray sitting back puffing on his pipe, quietly organising things with his diggers. He was very tolerant, but anyone stepping out of line suffered a terrible physical retribution. I think he took after me!! I guess why I don't have more is that Ray was such a quietly efficient Senior NCO, he required less overview, we knowing he prepared well for every activity.

To me they were indeed task masters both of the first order for those of us serving at that time

Our ACA NSW Welfare Officer Brian Dumber was very helpful in providing some of the information for this vale.

Prior to entering 1 Commando Company Georges Heights I am informed that Ray served with the Field Ambulance at Erina Depot.

Ray and I commuted for some years out of Gosford to Central and had a very good time on the Friday night Newcastle Flyer "dog box carriages indulging in

a little libation and bluffing each through pontoon. From memory Ray was not too successful at the latter.

I first became acquainted with Ray when he was qualifying to be an Assistant Instructor in Small Craft operations and I as a qualified operator.

On page 125 a short article in the first edition of STRIKE SWIFTLY The Australian Commando Story published and released in 2005, Ray recollects the following – "A the end of a two-week exercise on the Hawkesbury River in the 1970s we stopped for the last night, to relax and catch up on a little energy. We found lots of oysters, which we all proceeded to eat, along with a beer or two. Everything was going along swimmingly until we all got carried away and decided to throw WO2 Danny McClymans, who was fully dressed in his usual white overalls, into the water. When he surfaced, Danny walked out of the water and gave the order "get all the gear into the boats we are leaving right now! Don't turn on the motors, grab a paddle and start paddling, boys." We paddled for many hours throughout the night eventually arriving at Pittwater tired and exhausted. It was the best time of my life."

It was returning to civilian life that Ray and I became participants of a rag-tag group of commuters from Gosford to Sydney on various occasions. This presented a different side of Rays at the unit he was already an established senior green beret qualified SNCO, and I was still a very raw 'black beret' recruit member.

On Friday nights the various group members would congregate in the front carriages of the Newcastle Flyer "dog box" carriages indulging in a little libation and bluffing each other through pontoon playing.

This was the other side of Ray – he was a rogue, quiet achiever and in for it in the money although not very successful on the Friday night pontoon sessions enroute home! The betting stake was limited to five cents per bet. The normal rules applied, and some members were very adroit at applying their interpretations to them. From memory of those time Ray and I were generally not very successful on the Friday night pontoon session on the way home!

Ray had an endearing influence on our rag-tag mob on that train and was very social.

That commuter group also arranged for homeward bound Easter and Christmas parties in the old silver single decker trains with the assistance of Central staff to "reserve" the front two carriages for us. No worries about non-smokers in those days.

Ray worked Coca-Cola Amatil at that time, and as



we were both pipe smokers, we purchased some strange concoctions purchased from Levy Bros tobacconists in George Street. One wonders how we both escaped prosecution for creating unsafe travel environments in the carriages sometimes being designated as non-smoking.

Ray had an endearing influence on our rag-tag mob on that train and was very social. No worries about non-smokers (we were both pipe smokers) and from some of concoctions from Levy Bros in George Street one wonders how we both escaped prosecutions for creating unsafe travel environments.



Ray having a celebratory beer taken post brain tumour operation and after restrengthening his body post rehabilitation.
Source: Author

From former SNCO Jim Pullin I received the following text message – *“Hi Mate – at this stage of my rehab it’s very difficult to sit with the knee bent for any long period of time plus would miss the rehab appointment which is fine by me but the rehab nurse? Please pass on my condolences as after Commando Ray worked with me when I was the Safety Consultant for Coco-Cola Amatil and we had some fabulous adventures. Ray was the most dedicated SNCO who cared for every digger he had responsibilities for – range day he was in his element on the grenade range -M72 he loved as well as the Carl Gustaf – he was with me when one of the diggers put an Energa round outside the WRAAC guard room from the oval. If things improve I’ll definitely be there.”*

To me as well as to other members of the Unit, Ray always espoused the ethos of Commando as we knew them in those days of professionalism, quietness in fulfilling our duties, loyalty and support to our brother special forces members and our national security.

In all these facets we all had a great time unbeknownst to the outside world that they were paying for it. Vale Ray to a friend, fellow Commando and one to remember always – Audie a fellow C4L

At the conclusion of his commemoration service all serving and former Commandos formed an honour guard to escort his coffin.

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CWT Chairman's Report: 2023 Wrap Up

I am very proud to present to you the Chairman's Report which wraps up a strong year for the Commando Welfare Trust (CWT) especially with a record-breaking year in terms of fundraising, which has been critical to this year's success.

One of our primary focuses is financing the education of 33 children. We believe every child from a Special Forces family deserves access to a quality education, regardless of their financial circumstances.

I would like to thank our donors, notably Roy Hill, Omni Executive, Sitzler Constructions, Provactus, and Next Peak whose generosity allowed us to fulfil our mission of providing emergency and long-term financial assistance to Special Forces soldiers, veterans, and their families where the system cannot.

It is also important to thank our Board of Trustees who volunteer their time to give the CWT strategic guidance and ensure we are heading in the right direction.

In addition, I would like to thank our small, but effective, operational team, formerly under the leadership of Major Steve Pilmore OAM RFD (Retired) and currently led by Major Paul Dunbavin OAM. They play a crucial role in ensuring the support and well-being of our beneficiaries.

Despite a strong year, on 28th July, our community was met with one of the biggest tragedies since 2010, which saw us lose four brave soldiers from the 6th Aviation Regiment where during a training exercise for Exercise Talisman Sabre, the MRH-90 helicopter carrying Captain Daniel Lyon, Lieutenant Maxwell Nugent, Warrant Officer Class Two Joseph Laycock, and Corporal Alexander Naggs crashed into the waters near Hamilton Island.



The brave soldiers we lost this year in the MRH-90 crash, from left, Captain Daniel Lyon, Corporal Alexander Naggs, Lieutenant Maxwell Nugent and Warrant Officer Class Two Joseph Laycock.

These courageous men made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our country, leaving behind devastated family members who have lost their loved ones.

The families of these fallen soldiers are now grappling with grief, emotional pain, and financial uncertainty. The loss of a loved one is often an overwhelming burden, especially when it comes to managing immediate expenses and planning for the future.

We remain dedicated to helping these families throughout their long journey and ensuring the five children receive the education needed to overcome the challenges associated with growing up without a father.

If there are any silver linings in these kinds of circumstances, it is how quickly Australians banded together to support the family members of these soldiers. The generosity we saw was enormous and it makes me proud to know Australians are always willing to help those who have served our country.

As Christmas time draws near, we are now sending out Christmas and back-to-school payments to our beneficiaries. Given this, the recent funding will play a critical role in supporting this increase.

For this reason, we will look to build upon our strong platform in 2024 to ensure we can better serve our Special Forces community.

The MRH-90 Crash served as a timely reminder of the dangers Special Forces soldiers face; even when there is no conflict. Special Operations Command members train under extremely dangerous conditions,

(ad)



are disproportionately deployed into combat and are 50% more likely to experience a casualty.

Due to this, in 2024, we will continue to increase our fundraising efforts so we are prepared for the likelihood of more casualties.

A key element has been our strategy to increase our public presence, which is allowing us to meet the needs of our rapidly growing base of beneficiaries.

Through this endeavour, we have organised two successful events, secured significant media coverage and led a major fundraising campaign. This increased visibility has played a pivotal role in securing additional funding and major sponsors, which are crucial.

We plan to build upon that momentum in 2024.

In the New Year, we will also focus on delivering more events and programs that will support our community.

Following the success of the Krait Foundation, a career readiness course, and our canine program, which connects retired military dogs with Special Forces soldiers so they can live a fulfilling life as a pet, we are looking to deliver more initiatives.

If you know of any areas where you believe there are shortfalls in our Special Forces community or have any ideas on how we can serve them, please reach out to us. We welcome any assistance you can offer in our mission to provide essential support to those who have devoted their lives to serving our country.

Alternatively, if you require support, or know someone who does, please contact us or pass this message on to them.

Our next event will be held on Saturday 23rd March 2024, which will be a Summer Cocktail Party at the prestigious Victoria Barrack in Sydney and if possible, we would like to see you there.

Please forward this report on to your friends and family so we can expand our network, which will enhance our ability to support the Australian Special Forces community even further.

In closing, we are committed to providing ongoing support to the 47 families on our list and preparing to sustain future beneficiaries, because there will be some! Our goal is to ensure that no one is left without assistance during their time of need.

Thanks to all our supporters, sponsors, and members who have made this year possible, and I wish all members and friends of the Australian Commando Community, along with their families, a peaceful Christmas period and a great 2024.

Yours Sincerely,

Mark Smethurst DSC, AM
Chairman

The Commando Welfare Trust

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RSL Australia Calls for Greater Spending and Increased Army Priority in Defence Moves

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) has called on the Federal Government to increase defence spending and ensure that our nation's Defence Forces are balanced and appropriate for the current unstable strategic environment in our region.

Responding to this week's major re-organisation of the Army and particularly the northern deployment emphasis, the RSL said the Government must address its earlier decision which saw resources denied to the Army to fund appropriate enhancements to Australia's Navy and Air Force.

RSL National President Greg Melick says the reality is with current international instability and particularly increased tensions in the Asia Pacific region, Australia should not lose sight of the fact that the nation's defence capabilities have been grossly inadequate for too many years.

"Australia's defence spending should immediately rise from the 2.11 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) projected this financial year, to at least 3 percent or more," Greg Melick said.

"Restricting resources available to the Army to make appropriate enhancements to RAN and RAAF will create an unbalanced Defence Force. These proposed deployment changes may also mean that we will be unable to provide the necessary rotation and concurrency of our forces significantly further degrading the Army's capabilities.

"The strategic situation in our region has not been this unstable for 80 years and successive governments have been derelict in their duty to provide adequate resources for Defence for far too long.

"This latest response to the 2023 Strategic Defence Review provides the opportunity for the current Government to redress this situation."

Greg Melick said as well as developing our nuclear industry to support the AUKUS submarine program, Australia must also acquire more strategic reserves of fuel, ammunition, and other supplies to provide an adequate safeguard in the event of a defence emergency. It was concerning such reserves had been allowed to remain at such dangerously low levels but we welcome recent initiatives to increase the local production of ammunition.

"Lifting defence spending and increasing the Army's priority are necessary steps in ensuring Australia's defence preparedness and these steps must be taken without delay, there is too much hollowness within Army" he said.

"The RSL fully supports the enhancements to the RAN and RAAF, but these should not come at the expense of our Army.

"Our soldiers will continue to play a vital role at the forefront of our nation's defence and while the latest announcements regarding deployments and locations are in line with strategic needs, the broader issue of defence spending and the Australian Army's share of this must be addressed.

"The RSL remains an apolitical patriotic organisation and looks forward to continuing to work with the Government supporting policies to improve and maintain the security of our proud nation."

ENDS

National Media contact: Tony Harrison – 0417 318178 tony.harrison@rsl.org.au



MEDIA RELEASE

28 November 2023

UNVEILING OF THE CANUNGRA VIETNAM MEMORIAL RELOCATION AT KOKODA BARRACKS

After two years of limited access the Canungra Vietnam Memorial is now open to veterans, families and the local community following six months of dedicated volunteer work and community collaboration to relocate the poignant memorial.

Previously situated within the confines of the Kokoda Barracks in Canungra, the very place where all Vietnam soldiers were trained before being deployed, the Vietnam memorial has been moved to the front gates of the barracks to allow access to the wider public.

The original memorial site was constructed in 2000 by veteran volunteers and community but the need for relocation arose due to heightened security measures, limiting public access and ongoing maintenance of the original site.

Thanks to the leadership of Doug Henderson from the Kokoda Youth Foundation, a collaborative committee, and generous support from various organisations, the memorial finds a new accessible home.

"The Land Warfare Centre, once known as the Jungle Training Centre, holds deep-seated memories for us Vietnam veterans" says Doug, a veteran from 6RAR. "This project pays tribute to the sacrifices and resilience of everyone tied to the Vietnam War, recognising their sheer courage and unwavering strength."





Integral to this monumental project has been the tireless dedication of volunteers who wholeheartedly believed in the significance of this memorial. Volunteers from various backgrounds, including veterans' families, local community members, and passionate individuals, lent their time, expertise, and commitment to ensure this relocation became a reality.

Designed by architect Tony Battams of Choice Homes, the new memorial site maintains its essence while offering a refreshed landscape paying homage to the Vietnam War, symbolised by the iconic Long Tan Cross of which the memorial is shaped. At the heart of the site stands a life-sized bronze statue of a Vietnam soldier, an evocative addition funded by the Commonwealth Government's Saluting Their Service grant program.

"It is wonderful that we have been able to continue and add to the good work of veterans from 23 years ago by bringing this memorial back into public access and with a few additional items that will ensure the story of the Vietnam war is shared for generations to come". said Graham Gordon, Vietnam veteran, secretary of Runaway Bay RSL and committee member of the Relocation Project.

Scheduled for unveiling on Friday December 1st, 2023, at 11 am, this event marks a significant moment for the community. It commemorates the sacrifices of our veterans and their families while serving as an educational legacy for future generations. Information tables sharing the historical significance of the Vietnam War and its connections to the Land Warfare Centre will enrich visitors' experiences.

"Kokoda Barracks and the Kokoda Youth Foundation have established a wonderful partnership over the years. This memorial honours those brave soldiers who have come before us and will serve as a place of reflection for those who continue to serve now and into the future" says Lieutenant Colonel Wendy Say, the Senior Australian Defence Force Officer for Kokoda Barracks. "I am so very thankful for the amazing work of the Kokoda Youth Foundation – not just in relation to what they have achieved with leading this memorial project, but also what they do on a daily basis to support Australia's youth."

This achievement is the result of remarkable collaboration and support from entities such as Coast 2 Coast Earthmoving, STA Consulting Engineers, Axis Surveys and Australian Lawn Concepts. RSL Queensland, local RSL sub-branches, and numerous volunteers that generously contributed time, resources, and expertise.

Join us on December 1st, 2023, as we come together to unveil this cherished memorial, inviting the community to pay tribute, reflect, and honour the indelible legacy of those who served in Vietnam.



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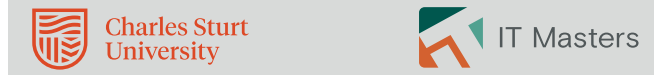
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You must complete your transition with ADF Transition Support Services so you understand the process, your administrative requirements, and the support available to you. We encourage you to involve your family throughout your transition experience.

Transition support network

Transitioning to civilian life is a shared responsibility. When you decide to leave the ADF you should engage with your family, your Unit, and ADF Transition Support Services.

Your Unit can speak to you about the transition process and connect you with your local ADF Transition Centre. Your Centre will introduce you to a Transition Support Officer who will help you and your family through the transition process and:

- provide you with an individual transition plan
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- help you meet your administrative requirements
- help you leave with all documentation like service, medical, and training records
- facilitate connections to Defence and government support services

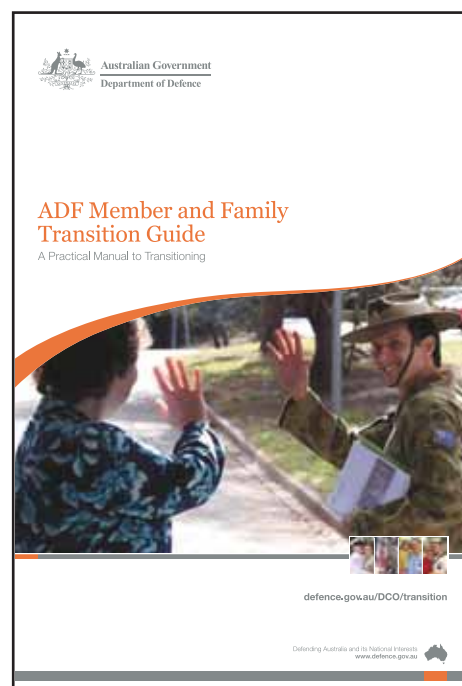
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You and your family can attend an ADF Transition Seminar at any time during your ADF career to help you prepare for your transition. Seminars are held

nationally throughout the year. You'll receive information from Defence and other organisations on topics like finance and superannuation, health, relocating, employment, and ex-service organisation support.

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RTV Training have gained approval to offer subsidised qualifications in several states, Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales. Feel free to contact us for more info.



#1 Thing ADF Candidates Do to Block Their Own Career Transition

By Next Job Now, ADF Career Transition Experts – 1300 112 114

...When it comes to job interviews, Navy, Army and Air Force candidates just don't see shades of grey. Ask any of the thousands of Defence members I've coached over the years and you'll almost always get the same response.

The answer to one simple question is a major reason why military professionals struggle to transition quickly and effectively.

So here's the 64,000 dollar question...

'Do you have **EXPOSURE** to....(DESIRED SKILL)?'

When we hear that little gem of a question our military training kicks into gear. In fact, the preferred answer to this common question is:

'Oh no... **I couldn't claim to be an EXPERT** in that...I'd be lying.'

After so long collecting the Queen's coin and working in an environment where integrity is paramount...**we self-impose a rule** that we need to be considered a Subject Matter Expert before we can stake a claim to even having 'exposure'.

Civilians aren't normally burdened by any such impediment: You can almost picture the worst offenders sitting across from the interviewer explaining, 'I've got a friend who knows someone that can spell that word...so I've had some exposure.' Sure, I'm exaggerating...but not by much if the latest research into resume fraud is to be believed.

So, we have two groups of candidates (military and civilian), each at different ends of the spectrum (black and white). The big question now is '**How do we get ADF folks to start seeing shades of gray and move them closer toward the other end of the spectrum whilst still holding true to their values.**'



Nuance is the key

The answer lies in our willingness to accept that its okay to be 'less than an expert'...and that we do indeed have exposure to a great many skills that we can talk about in an honest fashion. Its simple. If you are an expert, then claim expertise. If you are not, then just claim whatever level of skill you possess. Here are a few suggestions for claiming different levels of capability:

- I do have an awareness of...
- I've had exposure to...
- I'm okay at...
- I'm good at...
- I'm very good at...
- I'm competent at...

Think about the reality of the situation. Even a soldier who graduated Kapooka yesterday has exposure to leading teams, since they can't graduate without being assessed as a supervisor even for a short period. So rather than say 'I'm not a supervisor' that sailor could say 'I've had some exposure to supervising teams in a training environment for specific work activities.'

Similarly, a Sergeant might be slow to claim expertise in human resources (perhaps due to an ADF understanding of what a civilian views as HR) but when prompted they typically agree that they have **exposure** to specific HR skillsets such as coaching, mentoring, training, counselling and leadership development.

At the end of the day saying that 'I've had some exposure to XYZ' could be validated by the fact that you've seen it done, maybe assisted once, and can read the policy if needed.

Opportunity helps those that help themselves

If you want to give your Defence transition the best possible chance of success, then you need to start seeing shades of grey. 'Exposure' is your new best friend.

Stop being your own worst enemy. Never claim what you don't have, but always claim what you do have...to the degree that you have it!

David Penman is a Certified Professional Resume Writer, ex-Commando and one of Australia's leading ADF career transition experts. Call 1300 112 114 to enquire about NJN's ADF resume services.





The Positive Relationship between Sport and Physical Activity and PTSD

Exercise has a positive clinical effect on depressive symptoms and may be as effective as psychological or pharmaceutical therapies for some individuals with PTSD.

Rosebaum *et al*, 2014 suggests Physical activity/exercise is a highly effective method in reducing symptoms of depression and for people experiencing other mental health disorders.

Evidence demonstrates that an appropriate exercise intervention can achieve significant benefits to symptoms, depression, anxiety and stress, changes in body shape and sedentary time associated with PTSD, and non-significant trends for sleep quality improvement according to Rosenbaum, 2013.

The associated symptoms and the improvements may be related to psychosocial benefits of the intervention, rather than functional capacity, but there is also a strong empirical (observational) link between improvements in functional capacity and psychological status according to the author, 2016.

People with PTSD are four times as likely to have type 2 diabetes (Lukaschek *et al*, 2013) and rates of overweight and obesity are as high as 92%.

To add to these statistics, sufferers of PTSD are shown to be less physically active due to a number of factors including pain, dysfunctional and general lack of desire or both, according to Boscarino *et al*, 2004.

Adding some form of regular physical activity can have a significant effect on a sufferer of PTSD. It's important to note, the type of activity doesn't matter, what matters is that the person is moving and also having fun doing it.

If you would like to become physically active again and help to combat some of your PTSD related symptoms then please consult your GP and discuss your options for referral to another health care professional (exercise physiologist or physiotherapist) for help with your other associated or co-morbid conditions ie lower back pain, arthritis and or obesity.



Women in defence - shaping a new civilian life

Looking for a new passion and purpose post ADF? Owning a franchise business may well be your pathway to shaping a fulfilling civilian life. The military discipline, teamwork, and skills you gained are the perfect makings of a successful MAXIMUS Trade and Retail Centre. With the added bonus of enjoying the work-life balance you crave!

Following are excerpts from an article written by Sarah Stowe for Inside Franchise Business.

Maximus, the industrial franchise with a difference, is a standout opportunity for women seeking pathways to business ownership in a unique market sector.

“Maximus is for women exploring business ownership but are not attracted to the predictable opportunities in beauty, fashion, wellness and food,” says the brand’s marketing director Wally Davey.

This new-generation one-stop-shop is a solutions-driven business merging hydraulic, industrial and irrigation products for the first time. Its trade and retail centres cater for customers in multiple industries.

Wally, who co-founded the internationally successful industrial brand Pirtek, is keen to see women take up exciting opportunities that empower them as business owners. In franchising, there are still very few women entering the industrial sector. Women became business owners as a consequence of a family crisis or personal circumstance, Wally points out. “These transitions are often highly successful yet we don’t recognise women’s leadership skills as being natural, with gender stereotyping coming into play,” he says.

“The Maximus business is particularly favourable to women with a farming background, trades experience or simply with an interest in mechanical disciplines,” Wally says.

Yet Maximus franchisees don’t need to come armed with technical expertise. Wally points out that the trades-oriented skills of a prospect franchisee are secondary to relationship-building knowhow, a skill set that women easily excel in. As for management acumen, the brand’s robust training and support system can quickly develop novice franchisees into knowledgeable business operators. Maximus also has tech forward digital business tools that enable franchisees to optimise their business potential.

“There are lifestyle benefits for the family oriented,” says Wally. “Within the business there are diverse roles for young and old members, from admin to warehouse operations. You can build, train and then rely on an invested team that can easily run the business while you pick up the kids or help look after the elderly.”

“The role also involves sales work in the field,” Wally says, “you’re not tied to the desk.”



Defence Personnel Primed to Thrive In Franchising

Kerry Miles, Director, FranchiseED

While entering the world of franchising may not be top of mind for most Australian Defence Force personnel planning a transition to civilian life, it is a career path that presents many synergies and can play to your proven strengths.

The battleground of franchising requires strict adherence to systems and procedures, hard work, dedication, leadership and teamwork to achieve the shared mission of business success.

This makes those leaving the Australian Defence Force perfect candidates to conquer the challenge of franchising when returning to civilian life. The structure of a franchise system provides franchisees with the ability to work to set policies and procedures while at the same time allowing the independence to lead, inspire and develop their own teams to achieve shared goals.

These are all concepts very familiar to those who have train and served in the Australian Defence Force, and ones that make you suited to forging your own path to business success in franchising. Indeed, the transition from defence to the franchise sector can be a 'win win' situation for franchisors and franchisees alike.

Franchise businesses are actively seeking out high quality and committed candidates as franchisees, while you may be targeting a new autonomous career where you are calling the shots and putting your considerable skills to good use.

Where others may fail, those trained in the Australian Defence Force bring an appetite for hard work, a hunger for success, the proven ability to lead teams and the discipline to adhere to set systems to survive and thrive in the world of franchising.

Your life experiences and skills sets could be highly suited and transferrable to owning and operating your own franchise business, of which there are countless options to choose from. Everything from fitness franchises, food franchises, home improvement franchises and everything in between are available. It all depends on what you love doing and where you see yourself thriving.

There are over 1200 franchise systems operating in Australia, from the world's biggest consumer brands to local success stories and up-and-coming franchisors providing just about every product or service imaginable. Within these systems, there are nearly 100,000 franchise units in Australia, which are local and usually individually owned and operated businesses.

The opportunities are endless in franchising and whatever path is chosen, it is one in which the owner-operator is in charge and driving their own destiny, with the security of a set plan of attack and supporting systems for long-term sustainable success.

As former Australian Defence Force personnel are



comfortable with following systems and procedures in order to successfully complete a mission, you are therefore very well equipped to deal with the challenges of franchising and make a new owner-operator business work.

While having the right skills set, experience and attitude is a competitive advantage in franchising, they do not alone guarantee success. Just like in the Australian Defence Force, preparation is the key to setting the course for victory.

Knowledge is power and nowhere more so than in the world of franchising where new franchisees are taking the ultimate leap of faith into owning and operating their own business.

Thoroughly researching the sector, the options that are available and are best suited to each individual circumstance, and fully understanding and managing the financial and lifestyle expectations and demands, should be the starting point in any franchising journey. I cannot emphasise this point enough. While there are considerable opportunities in franchising, you need to work out which one is right for you and to ensure the franchise you choose is both ethical and sustainable.

While a franchise provides a set structure to follow, compared to buying an independent business, this in itself is no guarantee of success. Seeking out quality information and resources on franchising in order to make informed choices, and exploring the reality of being a franchisee, is the logical starting point for any former Australian Defence Force personnel considering their future career options.

If you are wanting to educate yourself about franchising, there's a lot of free information at www.franchise-ed.org.au.

If you are looking at buying a franchise and would like to understand how FranchiseED can help you, book a free 15-minute conversation with Kerry at <https://calendly.com/kerry-franchise-ed/meeting-with-kerry-miles-1>

About the Author:

Kerry is at the forefront of understanding what it takes to create thriving franchises with a comprehensive perspective encompassing both the franchisor and franchisee. Shifting from 5 years owning a business within the franchise sector, to more than 10 years heading up Griffith University's Franchise Centre as General and Business Manager Kerry's work is unique and driven by maintaining an independent perspective. Her clients include prospective franchisees, large and small franchise organisations and not-for-profits looking to scale up their operations. For more information visit www.franchise-ed.org.au. You can connect with her via LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/in/kerry-miles-franchiseed/





Buying a franchise can be an exciting experience. However, before you commit to a franchise opportunity, it's important that you understand your rights and obligations under the Code.

- Franchise agreements
- Before entering a franchise agreement
- Doing your due diligence
- Know your 'cooling-off' rights
- Marketing funds
- Sourcing stock and services
- What is 'churning'?

Franchise agreements

A franchise agreement is a contract (written, verbal or implied) under which:

1. one party (the franchisor) grants another party (the franchisee) the right to carry on a business in Australia supplying goods or services under a specific system or marketing plan substantially determined, controlled or suggested by the franchisor or its associate
2. the business is associated with a particular trademark, advertising or a commercial symbol owned, used, licensed or specified by the franchisor or its associate
3. the franchisee is required to pay, or agree to pay an amount to the franchisor or its associate before starting or continuing the business (this excludes certain payments).

If an agreement meets this definition, it will be covered by the Code regardless of whether it's referred to as a 'franchise' or not.

Note: A motor vehicle dealership agreement (including a motor boat dealership agreement) is taken to be a franchise agreement even if the above definition has not been met.

Before entering a franchise agreement

The Code requires franchisors to provide you with certain information, including:

- a short document setting out some of the risks and rewards of franchising.

The Information statement for prospective franchisees (PDF 102.79 KB | DOCX 53.38 KB) must be given to you when you formally apply, or express interest in, buying a franchised business.

If you decide to proceed with the franchise, the franchisor must also provide you with:

- a disclosure document
- the franchise agreement (in its final form); and
- a copy of the Code.

You must receive these documents at least 14 days before you sign an agreement or make a non-refundable payment.

Note: Make sure you receive, read and have a reasonable opportunity to understand each of these documents.

Doing your due diligence

When considering a franchise opportunity you should also:

- seek advice from a lawyer, accountant and business adviser with franchising expertise
- speak to current and former franchisees about the system and their relationship with the franchisor
- take steps to identify it's a genuine business and reconsider a business opportunity if you see warning signs
- undertake some franchising education to help you assess business opportunities and decide whether franchising is right for you. For example, FranchiseED offer a Free franchising education program.

Know your 'cooling-off' rights

You are entitled to terminate a new franchise agreement (not a renewal, extension or transfer) within seven days of:

1. entering into the agreement (or an agreement to enter into a franchise agreement); or
2. making a payment under the agreement.

Note: The cooling-off period will commence from whichever of the above occurs first.

If you choose to exercise this right, you are entitled to a refund of the payments you have made. The franchisor must provide this refund within 14 days, although they may keep an amount to cover their *reasonable* expenses if the franchise agreement allows this.

Marketing funds

Marketing fund income must be kept in a separate bank account from other money held by the franchisor. Under the Code, the marketing fund can only be used to meet expenses that:

- have been disclosed in your disclosure document
- are legitimate marketing or advertising expenses
- have been agreed to by a majority of franchisees; or
- reflect the reasonable costs of administering and auditing the fund.

The marketing fund financial statement must be prepared, and audited, within four months of the end of your financial year. Copies of these documents must be provided to contributing franchisees within 30 days of their preparation.

Note: It's the franchisor's responsibility to provide these documents. A franchisee shouldn't have to request this information.

The marketing fund doesn't have to be audited if 75 per cent of franchisees who contribute to the fund vote against undertaking an audit.

Sourcing stock and services

In franchising, it's common for franchisors to request that franchisees purchase products or services from either the franchisor, a related entity or a specified third party.

Such arrangements are illegal if they *have the purpose, effect or likely effect of substantially lessening competition in a market.*

In most situations, franchisor-imposed limitations are unlikely to raise competition concerns.

What is 'churning'?

Churning is the repeated selling of a franchise site by a franchisor in circumstances where the franchisor would be reasonably aware that the site is unlikely to be successful, regardless of the individual skills and efforts of the franchisee. Although churning is not prohibited under the Code or the Competition and Consumer Act, a franchisor's conduct may raise concerns if it is false, misleading, or unconscionable. If you suspect churning, you should contact the ACCC.



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www.nzdia.co.nz

Free 12 Month Health and Fitness Program

- Returned Veterans, Peacekeepers & ADF Firefighter Scheme -

Run on behalf of the DVA by Corporate Health Management, the program aims to help you increase your physical health and wellbeing through practical exercise support and 12 months of telephonic health coaching and advice on healthy lifestyle choices provided by one of our team of highly qualified allied health professionals.

The Heart Health Program is flexible and able to accommodate participants living in metropolitan areas, rural or remote areas, those still working or retired, studying or with other time constraints.

www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility



Am I eligible?

Started over 20 years ago for those returned from Vietnam, the Heart Health Program is free and open to all veterans with operational service, peacekeepers and those covered under the ADF firefighters scheme who have not previously participated in the Heart Health Program before.



Program Exercise Resource - Exercise how you like to

The program can provide an exercise resource to help participants to exercise the way they like to or provide an opportunity to try something that's different than the usual.



Registering Your Interest

Registering your interest or checking eligibility is easy.

Simply visit our website and follow the steps.

Call the program phone number 1300 246 262 at any time to speak to one of our team.

Heart Health Team - DVA Heart Health Program

Program proudly delivered on behalf of the DVA by:
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